

Your Wedding



at Grace

Congratulations

On your engagement and upcoming wedding! We hope this season of life will be a rich experience as you prepare to join together in Christian marriage.

We want to be helpful in your preparation for marriage and the planning of your wedding. This wedding information booklet will be useful as you go through the process of premarital preparation as well as plan your wedding. It details the steps you will be going through and lists helpful information which will assist in preparation for your wedding day.

A wedding ceremony coordinator will assist and guide you through the process of preparing for the wedding ceremony itself. She will be a valuable resource to you.

May God bless you in this exciting time of engagement and in your future married life.

The Staff at Grace

Step by Step

Contents

Step by Step Wedding Process.....	4
Cost Breakdown.....	6
Due Dates for Fees.....	7
Other Information.....	8
Grace Specific Standards.....	9
Suggested Planning Timeline.....	10
Basic Etiquette Resources.....	12
Frequently Asked Questions.....	13
Suggested Resources.....	19

STEP 1 –Get Started:

Your first step is to complete his and hers Wedding Registration/Questionnaire form and submit it to Grace's Administrative Assistant. This form can be found at our website at www.grace-erie.org (in the Resources section) or a hard copy can be requested through the church office at 814.790.4973. Someone from the church office will contact you to set up a preliminary meeting with a pastor who is available for your wedding date. In preparation for this meeting you should read through the companion piece to this booklet entitled "*7 Requisites for Getting Married at Grace.*"

STEP 2 – Preliminary meeting with Pastor:

You will then meet with the pastor whom you have selected or who has been assigned to your wedding for an initial interview. The purpose of this session is to assess the couple's readiness to get married and to be sure that the couple understands the expectations of the marrying pastor. This is also an opportunity for the couple to assess the pastor and be sure that there is a good fit from their perspective.

STEP 3 – Facility Reservation and Deposit:

Upon a successful preliminary meeting with the marrying pastor and a mutual agreement to move forward with the wedding and date, you must fill out a facility rental form (this can be completed online or a hard copy is available at the church office), review the financial commitments involved in a wedding at Grace, and give a deposit to Grace Church to reserve your date (see fee structure and due dates on pages 6-7 for details).

STEP 4 – Register for the Premarital Class Seminar

The fourth step is to register online or at the Grace Church office for the next available premarital class. These classes are offered 2 times per year and they are 8 weeks long. Classes include such topics as God's design for marriage,

communication, personality, finances, sex, gender differences, family of origin other important topics. In preparation for this class, you also must complete a his/ her Prepare/Enrich® online survey. Your contact at the church can provide you with an entry code to access this survey.

STEP 5 – Wedding Ceremony Coordinator Contact

With completion of registration and survey, a wedding ceremony coordinator will be assigned to you and will contact you to go through wedding planning information. She will cover facility policies and procedures, give you a tour of the facility, review every detail of the wedding ceremony, assist in coordinating the efforts of the florist, photographer, musicians, and wedding party. She will also set up one other meeting with you closer to the date of the wedding to finalize all the service details.

STEP 6 - Premarital Mentoring

During the Premarital Class you may be partnered with a mentoring couple who will walk with you as you prepare for your wedding day and a lifetime of marriage.

STEP 7 – Pastoral Counseling

You will meet with your marrying pastor to cover what you learned in the class and any specific issues that came up through the Prepare/Enrich resource. Your pastor will be available to you as needed throughout this process.

STEP 8 – Rehearsal/ Wedding

When the big day finally arrives, your Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will walk you through the ins and outs of the wedding rehearsal and make the final preparations for your ceremony.

Cost Breakdown

Wedding Ceremony

- A. Worship Center Facility Fee (Members) - \$0
- Worship Center Facility Fee (Regular Attendees) - \$100
- B. Wedding Ceremony Coordinator - \$100
- C. Custodian - \$50
- D. A/V Tech - \$75
- E. Pre-Marital Class materials - \$75
- F. Pastoral Honorarium (there is no set fee, but a suggested minimum is \$100)

Total for members (including suggested minimum Pastoral Honorarium) - \$400

Total for Regular Attendees (including suggested minimum Pastoral Honorarium) - \$500

*Costs for musicians should be negotiated with the individuals involved. Grace will recommend individuals, but has no control over their fee structure.

*Facility usage for the ceremony includes the church worship center, lobby, and changing areas.

Reception

Obtain separate form from church office, marrying pastor, or wedding coordinator with specific usage fees.

Due Dates for Fees

Fees Due When Locking in Wedding Date

- **Grace Members Ceremony**
\$125 is due to Grace Church (this deposit is non-refundable within 60 days of the ceremony).
- **Grace Regular Attendees Ceremony**
\$225 is due to Grace Church (\$125 of this is non-refundable within 60 days of the ceremony).
- **Grace Members Reception**
\$100 is due to Grace Church
- **Grace Regular Attendees Reception**
\$250 is due to Grace Church

Fees Due When Registering for Pre Marital Seminar

- \$75 fee due to Grace Church for Premarital Seminar

Fees Due At the Rehearsal

- \$100 fee should be paid directly to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.
- Pastor Honorarium should be given at the rehearsal or rehearsal dinner.
- Any additional fees for extra services.

Other Information

Wedding License – The couple's marriage license should be given to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator at the rehearsal.

Sound Technician – A sound technician will be assigned to your wedding to provide a basic setup and run the sound during your rehearsal and wedding. You will arrange sound setup through the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator. You are responsible for your own video technician if you would like your ceremony to be video taped.

Audio Recording – An audio recording of your wedding ceremony is included in your wedding contract with Grace. It will be presented to you in CD format after the ceremony.

Honoraria for Musicians, etc. – An honorarium is normally given to any other professionals who are involved in your ceremony. Your wedding contract includes fees for the sound technician, wedding ceremony coordinator, and custodian. Any other parties should be paid directly by you. Custom dictates that this gift should be placed in a plain envelope and given to the individuals before the ceremony by a designated person.

Worship Center– equipment available includes:

- 2 platform candelabra
- Unity candle base (bride provides candles)
- Podiums for guest book and reader
- Sound system setup
- Platform trees and plants (if desired)
- Communion table

Grace Specific Standards

Alcohol – no alcohol can be served on church property.

Smoking – there is no smoking inside the church facility. Smoking receptacles are located outside for your convenience.

Dancing – discreet dancing only is allowed at the reception.

Time Restrictions – Saturday weddings (including photos) must have vacated the Worship Center by 3:00 pm so that church can setup for the Saturday evening service.

Reception End Time – Saturday receptions in the Grace commons should be finished by 8:00pm so the church can be cleaned and re-set for Sunday services.

TIPS Trained Bartender – If alcohol is served at an off-site reception, a tips-trained bartender must be hired to monitor consumption.

Ceremony Music – The marrying Pastor/Coordinator must see and approve all music used during the ceremony.

Reception Music – should be in good taste.

Photography During Ceremony – flash photography is allowed at Grace Ceremonies with discretion.

Videography During Ceremony – the videographer must work with the Pastor/Coordinator to determine where to set up.

Clean Up – There must be a designated person to remove ceremony décor from the worship center immediately after the ceremony (even if the reception is on-site). The Wedding Coordinator should be notified of the person's name.

Send Off – There will be no confetti or other “litter creating” material used during the sendoff on church property.

Suggested Planning Time Line

1 YEAR BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Complete Grace Wedding Questionnaire.
- Determine your Wedding Date.
- Meet with Marrying Pastor.
- Reserve Grace Facility and make initial deposit.
- Register for an upcoming premarital seminar.
- Put an announcement of your engagement in the local paper.
- Discuss & choose the style and formality of your wedding.
- Meet with families & come to agreements on a budget.
- Choose a color scheme and possibly a theme.
- Hire a wedding consultant if you need to.
- Select a reception site.
- Interview caterers if your reception site does not provide one.
- Select your bridal party and request their participation.
- Interview for photo/video needs.
- Audition bands and DJ's.
- Decide on attire for bridesmaids.
- Shop for your gown, headpiece, veil, etc.
- Start compiling names & addresses for the guest list.
- Sign up for a gift registry.

6 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Meet with the Ceremony Coordinator at Grace.
- Obtain completed guest lists from fiancé' and both families.
- Order your wedding invitations, thank you cards, etc.
- Select your wedding cake.

4 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Interview and reserve your florist.
- Choose your wedding music, secure your musicians and soloists.
- Shop for your wedding bands.
- Select Mothers gowns and accessories.

3 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Schedule follow up Pastoral counseling meeting.
- Select tuxedos for the groom.
- Rent items needed for your ceremony and reception.
- Discuss finalized menu options and costs with your caterer.
- Arrange accommodations for your out-of-town guests.

- Arrange transportation/limousine service for the wedding party.
- Order wedding favors.
- Shop for bridal party gifts.
- Confirm your order with the florist.

2 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Meet with Wedding Ceremony Coordinator to finalize your Order of Service for the ceremony.
- Address and mail invitations.
- Design or order the wedding programs.
- Prepare music selection list for band or DJ.
- Select a location for your rehearsal.
- Confirm any last details with your wedding day professionals.
- Confirm with formal wear shop that they have received all measurements of every male attendant.
- Schedule your alterations and final fitting for the gown.

1 MONTH BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Discuss and finalize details with Wedding Ceremony Coordinator (and other wedding vendors).
- Apply for your marriage license if you haven't already.
- Have a final gown fitting.
- Submit wedding announcements to local paper.

2 WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Pick up your marriage license.
- Obtain any legal information regarding changing your name.
- Complete floor and seating plan for reception.
- Prepare lists for ushers, band, and photographer/videographer.

1 WEEK BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Call any guests that haven't sent back their response card.
- Make any last minute seating arrangements/adjustments.
- Give your DJ or Band your list of songs.
- Confirm rehearsal plans with attendants.
- Confirm reservations for the rehearsal dinner.
- Pack your wedding day emergency kit.

1 DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Decorate for the ceremony and reception.
- Pay Pastoral Honorarium and Wedding Ceremony Coordinator.
- Try to get a good night's sleep!

Basic Wedding Etiquette

The following are links to websites that have comprehensive etiquette suggestions. Feel free to also ask your Wedding Ceremony Coordinator about standard ceremony etiquette. Grace does not claim responsibility for the validity of any of the following, though we do hope they are helpful to you in your planning:

- http://www.theknot.com/keywords/sc_161_527.shtml
- Email for the customs and etiquette editor at the Knot: anjaw@theknot.com
- http://ourmarriage.com/html/wedding_etiquette.html
- <http://www.weddingchannel.com/wedding-must-knows/wedding-etiquette.html>
- <http://www.elegala.com/etiquette.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who can get married at Grace?**
You must be a member or regular attendee of Grace Church. Due to the number of requests in this ministry area the order in which dates are assigned will be as follows:
 - Members of Grace involved in serving
 - Regular attendees and involved in serving the Grace body in a small group or other ministry capacity
 - Regular attendees
- **When can we start preparing for the Wedding?**
Start as early as possible. You do not have to be engaged. If you would like help in the decision to be married, feel free to contact the Grace office at 814.833.5384. We would be glad to assist you!
- **When should we book a reception hall?**
Please do not reserve an outside reception hall until your wedding date has been scheduled and confirmed at the church.
- **How do I find a Grace Pastor to officiate our wedding?**
On the on-line registration form there will be an opportunity to request a Grace Pastor to officiate your wedding. If you do not know who is available for officiating your wedding, please contact the Church office and the list of pastors can be attained. Once selection is made the office staff will make contact with the pastor to affirm availability for rehearsal and wedding date and communicate results during the consultation.

Couples can approach pastors personally, but must communicate confirmation through the church office and understand that the requested officiating

pastor does not make the final decision to approve your wedding.

- **What if we want a pastor that is not on the Grace Church staff to marry us, but we want to be married at Grace?**
Some couples have a pastor that they identify with from their hometown before transitioning to the Erie area and request them to officiate their wedding. We acknowledge the fact that this is important for the couple, and will accommodate this request only if the pastor is of like faith and belief. The name and contact information of the pastor is to be forwarded to the office staff per on-line registration form and contact will be made by one of our Pastors for approval. Couples will still adhere to the marriage preparation plan to be married at Grace Church.
- **Can a Grace Pastor marry us off-site?**
Yes. All premarital preparation requirements are still in effect.

Note: If you are getting married out-of-state make sure the pastor has authorization, or a license to officiate a wedding ceremony in that location.
- **Who will help us in planning for the wedding ceremony?**
A wedding coordinator will be assigned to you to assist you in planning for your wedding ceremony. During your marriage preparation either the Wedding Coordinator or the couple can also schedule an appointment with the officiating pastor for further planning or clarification.
- **What does the Wedding Coordinator actually provide in preparation and the day of the wedding ceremony?**
The Wedding Coordinator will explain her role, materials available for the wedding ceremony, and

give a tour of the facility during your scheduled consultation meeting. She will also assist you in finalizing your order of service for the ceremony itself, selection of vows, readings, etc. She will take a lead role in running the rehearsal and will coordinate all efforts on the wedding day.

- **Can we have our wedding reception at Grace Church?**

You are able to reserve the Grace Commons for a reception (please note additional fees).

- **Once we register on-line and take the survey, can we go ahead and secure a reception off campus?**

No, we recommend couples wait until completing the consultation meeting with the Officiating Pastor before securing a reception hall off campus. This assures that your wedding is approved, and facility dates are secured. We highly recommend that couples register with us as early as they can so they can make a deposit on a reception hall once they received approval.

- **How and when should we secure a marriage license?**

A marriage license can be secured in the county in which you reside. Each county has certain requirements which usually require a valid driver's license, birth certificate, and a small fee. In most counties the marriage needs to be solemnized within 30-33 days of application and a waiting period of 3-5 days. If you are getting married in Erie, you can make arrangements through the Erie County Courthouse.

- **My fiancée lives long distance from Grace Church, how are we to participate in the premarital preparation process?**

Some couples are faced with the proximately issue in preparing for marriage and making wedding plans. Since the wedding registration, questionnaire, and the survey are all on-line we can receive vital information that will aid in determining the status of your relationship for marriage without a fiancée being present.

There is some flexibility in the pre-marital process for out of town fiancés. The officiating pastor will review such cases and determine alternative plans that will effectively prepare couples for a lifetime of marriage with one another.

- **How many people does Grace Church seat?**

The Church will seat 650 guests for a wedding. The front section of the church (before the center aisle) seats approximately 300.

- **Are there any circumstances where a Pastor would refuse to marry us?**

There are some cases in which major concerns may surface during the counseling process. The officiating Pastor will review these major concerns with the couple during a consultation and request a postponement of marriage while offering an extended preparation plan.

If the couple is willing to work in specific areas of their lives or relationship, we are willing to walk with them in their journey to prepare for a lifetime of marriage. We will marry a couple after they successfully work through the extended preparation plan designed for them.

The following questions are explained in greater detail in the booklet “7 Requisites for Getting Married at Grace.” This is the “Reader’s Digest version:”

- **Can a non-Christian and a Christian get married?**
We will postpone a booking arrangement for a wedding date until the future bride and groom are spiritually compatible. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- **What if one of us is divorced?**
The Bible values the permanence of marriage. To protect couples in this important matter, we won't perform a marriage involving divorced persons unless they meet biblical exceptions for remarriage.
- **What if we are sexually active?**
God speaks directly to this subject through His Word, calling on the benefits and blessings of self-control and obedience, rather than the denial of physical pleasure. We ask that you would commit to remaining sexually pure until your wedding day. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)
- **What if we are living together?**
We believe that couples should not cohabit prior to marriage and will postpone booking a wedding for couples who are living together. If the couple wishes to be married by one of our pastors they must find temporary separate residences during the counseling process.

Many couples who are cohabitating have greater tension in the relationship than married couples, and have a higher divorce rate after marriage. God wants marriage to be a true commitment, not a trial run. Consider the payoff as you prepare for a lifetime of marriage. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

- **If divorced, how long should we wait before remarrying?**
We believe that a new relationship should not be pursued until the potential of a healthy reconciliation has been exhausted and time for personal recovery has passed. We encourage at least two years to have elapsed from the time the divorce was made legally final.
- **Is divorce recovery counseling necessary?**
Yes, we encourage a divorced person to participate in counseling sessions that address recovery from a divorce, as well as to explore the possibility and/or wisdom of reconciliation, remarriage, and singleness. Grace Church provides Divorce Recovery group 2 times each year.
- **How long do we have to be a couple before we consider marriage?**
We recommend of at least six months of dating and six months of engagement. We highly encourage couples to patiently wait prior to rushing to the altar of marriage. This is one of the most important lifetime decisions and commitments a couple will ever make. Take time to truly know each other and make the proper preparations and relational work that needs to be completed prior to saying “I Do.”
- **How long does it take to prepare for a wedding?**
At least 9 months is highly recommended due to preparation process and the need for advanced booking of outside reception halls. We advise you to come into our marriage preparation process as soon as you are thinking seriously of being married or well before your desired wedding date. Depending on many variables, six months is the shortest possible time to be able to effectively prepare for a life-long marriage.

Suggested Resources

“The Most Important Year in a Man/Woman’s Life”
- Wolgemuth and Devries

“So You’re Getting Married”- H. Norman Wright

“Getting Your Sex Life Off to a Great Start”
– Penner

“Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts” – Parrot

“Money Before Marriage” – Burkett

“The First Five Years of Marriage”- Focus on the
Family

“For Women Only” – Shaunti Feldhahn

“For Men Only” – Jeff Feldhahn



7300 Grubb Road
McKean, PA 16426
814.790.4973
www.grace-erie.org