

St. George's Sacramental Guidelines

Beloved Member of St. George Orthodox Church,

This article is meant to inform you of specific guidelines, procedures, and/or protocols which should be fully revered by any member of the St. George Church family wishing to celebrate one or more of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) within the Church.

Scheduling the Sacraments

“ No layman shall set a date or time for any liturgical service (i.e., to schedule a Baptism, Chrismation, or Wedding), without the knowledge and approval of his pastor. No layman shall have the right to invite any priest other than his pastor to any liturgical service; all invitations must be made through the pastor of the parish.” (*Clergy Guide 2011, p. 24, #26*).

Of course, the family can invite any priest as a guest or friend without participating in the service. The church canon law does not permit the active participation of Non-Orthodox Clergy/Pastors during the ceremony of the Orthodox wedding/ Baptism etc... etc. (**Please note that: NO Priest Orthodox or non-Orthodox may perform any sacrament at St. George in Fr. Kamal's absence, except the divine liturgy by a canonical ordained priest, that Fr. Kamal provides to substitute for him*)

Ample time should be given for the preparations that come with receiving any of the sacraments. The following is an example of an acceptable time frame for sacramental preparations:

- **1- 2 mos.** prior to prospective date of Baptism.
- **6 mos-1year** prior to prospective date of Wedding.

Chrismation of Non-Orthodox Christians (Reception of Converts)

If you are interested in becoming Orthodox, the process includes the following steps:

Please call Fr. Kamal for a meeting to discuss your intentions.

Chrismation time frame will vary from candidate to candidate and is at the Discretion of the Priest; 3 months – 1 year is a typical time frame, depending on their readiness and understanding of the Faith. (*cf. Clergy Guide 2011, p. 34, #1*).

Chanters

The role of Chanter falls within the Liturgical Canon, which is under the sole governance of the Parish Priest. Therefore Fr. Kamal will choose from among the current Chanters to serve in any given Sacrament, allowing all eligible Chanters the opportunity to serve the Lord. Due to the rotating nature of the schedule, the Chanter *assigned* by Fr. Kamal cannot be changed.

Baptism

Do not print or mail invitations or save-the-date cards before Fr. Kamal approves the date. St. George Orthodox Church cannot guarantee any date unless Fr. Kamal has approved it.

Baptisms cannot be scheduled on the following dates:

1. Christmas: December 25, and Epiphany: January 6.
2. Holy Week
3. Any Great Feast Day of the Lord

– “One or both Godparents of the child must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing.

– Adults wishing to be baptized into the Orthodox Church must first become a Catechumen (learner) and participate in religious education prior to scheduling the date for baptism. (*cf. Clergy Guide, p. 32, #1, 5*).

– God-Parents (*in Arabic; Shabayen or `Arabeen*) must be Orthodox Christians in good standing at St. George Orthodox Church, or they must be Orthodox Christians in good standing at another Orthodox Church and are required to provide a letter stating such from their parish priest. “The priest may accept only one non-Orthodox Christian as a witness only as long as he/she is proved to be a validly baptized Christian person.” (*Clergy Guide, p. 32, #4*)

Byzantine chanting during the service – Traditional Byzantine music is chanted during an Orthodox baptism.

Promptness – It is necessary that the baptism start on time. All care must be taken to ensure promptness.

Wedding

Setting the date – Fr. Kamal must approve the date and time of the wedding before it can be put on the church's calendar.

Please note – Do not print or mail invitations or save-the-date cards before Fr. Kamal approves the date. St. George Orthodox Church cannot guarantee any date unless Fr. Kamal has approved it.

Please note – “Understanding that the liturgical day begins at Vesper hour (sunset), the celebration of marriage is prohibited at the following times:

* Every Wednesday and Friday, and Great Feasts throughout the year:

1. The Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14), and
2. Commemoration of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29), during
3. Advent Fast (December 12- Dec 26), during
4. Great Lent, including Cheese fare Week and Bright Week, i.e., from Meat Fare Sunday to Thomas Sunday, and during the Dormition Fast (August 1-15).” (*Clergy Guide 2011, p. 35, #7*).

*Great Feasts in addition to theses mentioned above the following are included: Christmas (Dec. 25), Easter (Pascha), *Theophany* or Epiphany (Jan. 5 & Jan. 6), Annunciation (March 25), and Pentecost.

Please note – Orthodox Christians are permitted to marry other Christians who have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. A copy of the baptismal certificate must be presented to Fr. Kamal prior to the confirmation of the wedding date.

Please note – Orthodox Christians not living in Jacksonville, FL, are Permitted to be married at St. George Orthodox Church. However, they must provide a written letter from their parish priest attesting to their status as Orthodox Christians in good standing and need to be completed at least 2- 4 weeks prior to the wedding.

Pre-Marital Counseling – The priest shall be prepared to offer premarital counseling as a requirement to all asking to be married. (**Clergy Guide** 2011, p. 37, #10). This is to be scheduled prior to the wedding, and these sessions must be scheduled with Fr. Kamal.

Orthodox Christians in good standing – One or both members of the Engaged couple must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with St. George Orthodox Church. He or she must be an active steward of the church and must be current with financial obligations.

Location of the Wedding – The appropriate place for a wedding of the Orthodox Church is the Holy Sanctuary. It is not customary to perform Sacraments outside the Church...for example, in a home, backyard, beach, or local park.

Byzantine chanting during the service – Traditional Byzantine music is chanted during an Orthodox wedding.

Music in the Sanctuary: “No songs are permitted to be sung during the service except those Orthodox hymns prescribed by the rubrics. All other music is forbidden during the service. Appropriate music may be permitted before or after the service at the discretion of the priest.” (**Clergy Guide** 2011, p. 38, #19).

Promptness – It is necessary that the wedding start on time. All care must be taken to ensure promptness.