

MARRIAGE & WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

At Blackhawk, we believe that a wedding ceremony should be a Christ-centered celebration of a man and a woman being united by God, and that the basic principles of marriage outlined in the Bible offer the best way to pursue a journey of following Christ together.

We also believe that a God-honoring marriage goes well beyond the wedding day, so we want to help couples begin their marriage on a strong spiritual foundation.

Because it is designed to create deeper connections within our Blackhawk community, our pre-marital process is for couples who consider Blackhawk their church home.

The following guide is an overview of our practices, process and pricing that will help you plan a memorable ceremony as well as a healthy, life-long marriage. If you are not planning your ceremony with Blackhawk but are simply interested in our pre-marital resources – welcome! – some of the information below may not be relevant to you.

PRACTICES

Scheduling | We encourage couples to allow six to nine months for completion of our pre-marital process. We are able to work with couples on a shorter timeline but starting the process as early as possible will allow you to get the most out of it.

Officiants* | Blackhawk has a wonderful team of officiants available for weddings. We would also encourage you to hire a Wedding Coordinator to help with the many details. A Blackhawk Wedding Coordinator is required for onsite weddings and suggested for offsite weddings. They provide oversight and guidance for the rehearsal and ceremony.

**Please note: At Blackhawk we value marrying couples who are aligned spiritually (2 Corinthians 6:14). This means we will provide a Blackhawk officiant when the bride and groom are either both Christ-followers or both *not* Christ-followers. Wherever you currently land, we would love to hear from you!*

Wedding Venue Location | Weddings can be held onsite at our Brader Way (9620 Brader Way in Middleton) or Fitchburg (5935 Astor Dr) buildings. Our officiants are also available for offsite weddings within a 20-mile radius of Madison.

Wedding Date | Our building is not open, and our officiants are typically not available for weddings during holiday weekends, including New Year's, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Pre-marital Resources | Blackhawk offers two main resources as a part of our pre-marital process. An online assessment called [SYMBIS](#) (Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts) and a six-week, in-person course called [The Pre-Marriage Course](#), which we offer three times a year. See the PROCESS section below for more info.

PROCESS

The premarital process outlined below is *required* for all couples getting married at Blackhawk and/or using a Blackhawk officiant. It is also *available* to any couple who calls Blackhawk Church their home, regardless of whether they are using our facility or one of our officiants (if not, the last 3 steps do not apply).

Wedding Planning Guide | Read the entire guide and if you have any questions, please contact Rachel Metzger at rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org.

Couple Profile Form | Fill out [this form](#) to initiate a conversation about our pre-marital process, which is designed to draw engaged couples deeper into community at Blackhawk.

SYMBIS Assessment | Take the online SYMBIS (Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts) assessment, which includes topics such as mindset, wellbeing, social support, finances, expectations, personality dynamics, sexual intimacy, communication, conflict resolution and spirituality.

SYMBIS Appointment | Meet with a trained SYMBIS Facilitator, who will walk through the results of your assessment with you.

The Pre-Marriage Course* | A six-week course hosted at Blackhawk that helps build strong foundations for your relationship by learning skills of communicating well, appreciating differences, exploring beliefs, embracing commitment, and being supportive. Developed by Alpha, featuring expert insights and real experiences of couples from all around the globe, this course offers couples the tools to build a strong and healthy relationship that lasts a lifetime, as well as a chance to connect with other engaged couples and mentor couples.

**Please note:* There may be situations where professional Christian counseling is recommended instead of or in addition to the course, especially in the case of remarriage. There may also be times when we recommend or offer the additional step of meeting with a pastor.

Site Fee Payment | You will be billed 3-6 months before your wedding day and have one month to make your payment.

Wedding Coordinator Meeting | Meet with your Blackhawk wedding coordinator to discuss equipment available to you, your rehearsal and ceremony in detail (2 months before wedding).

Officiant Meeting | Meet with your Blackhawk pastor to discuss wedding ceremony details (1-2 months before wedding).

PRICING

Premarital Process

The cost of the SYMBIS assessment is **\$105** per couple, which includes the assessment itself, as well as a session with a trained SYMBIS Facilitator (lasts 1.5-2 hours). There is also a **\$30** fee per couple for the Pre-Marriage Course, which covers the cost of materials.

Onsite Wedding

Pastor honorarium | This amount is up to you (we recommend **\$400** as a guideline) and can be given directly to the officiating pastor at any time (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).

Wedding in the Atrium at Brader Way | **\$780**

- Seats up to 250 people; an open space with lots of windows that provide great natural light; no stage used in this space

Wedding in the Eastside Auditorium at Brader Way | **\$580**

- Seats up to 800 people; a large space with no windows

Wedding in the Westside Auditorium at Brader Way | **\$580**

- Seats up to 275 people; a smaller, more intimate setting with four large windows that can provide some natural light

Wedding in the Fireside Room at Brader Way | **\$580**

- Seats up to 80-100 people (depending on room set-up); a cozy space with lots of natural light

Wedding in the Auditorium at Fitchburg | **\$580**

- Seats up to 500 people; a large space with no windows

Included in the Onsite Wedding Fee:

- Facility Use (for rehearsal and ceremony)
- Wedding Coordinator
- Sound Tech (for ceremony only; extra **\$50** for rehearsal)

Offsite Wedding

Pastor honorarium* | This amount is up to you (we recommend **\$400** as a guideline) and can be given directly to the officiating pastor at any time (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).

**Please note:* In situations where our officiants have made an exception to the 20-mile radius rule, it is customary for them to be provided with compensation for gas and mileage (per the IRS's Standard Mileage Rates), as well as a hotel room, if necessary, on top of the officiant honorarium.

Wedding Coordinator | Suggested, but not required. A Blackhawk wedding coordinator is available for a **\$150** fee, paid directly to the coordinator (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).

Questions?

Email Rachel at rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org. Please don't hesitate to reach out...we're here to help!