

Congratulations!
May God bless you for choosing the Sacrament of Marriage!

WE CARE. Your engagement is a time to focus on each other, and to prepare for the vocation of life-long sacramental marriage. It should be rewarding, affirming, and FUN!

Why should you “prepare” for marriage? Why does the Church require a MINIMUM of 6 months to prepare you?

Many couples prepare for the “big day”, but not for the 14,600 days (40 years) or more after the wedding day.
Shouldn't two adults invest time to prepare to live as husband and wife for the rest of their lives?

Most couples prefer to give themselves 9-14 months to prepare. More time = more couple time and more fun!

It is our hope to AFFIRM EACH COUPLE in their choice to marry, to PROVIDE TOOLS to help them grow with each other throughout married life, and to give them the OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE supportive relationships with other Catholic married couples in our FAITH COMMUNITY.

So, here's what we ask you to do within 6 weeks of setting your Wedding Date:

- ♥ Complete Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 13, and Appendix D, in the For Better & For Ever Workbooks;
- ♥ Provide all required documents (see list below);
- ♥ Reserve your retreat weekend (see below);
- ♥ Complete the FOCCUS Inventory* (the 150-200 “fill-in-the-bubbles” communication exam);

THEN:

- ✠ Bring witnesses to sign the Church's Affidavits for Freedom to Marry with a priest*;
- ✠ Meet with the priest for your pre-nuptial interview, FOCCUS discussion, and homework review*.

*Contact the parish secretary to schedule FOCCUS exams and meetings with priests.

Priests will not meet with you or your witnesses until AFTER you complete the other requirements above.

AFTER ALL THIS, we hope to pair you with a Marriage Sponsor Couple (depending on availability).

These are parish couples who meet with you in their home every few weeks to assist you in completing the rest of the workbook. We allow a minimum of 4 months for this process. This gives you the opportunity to regularly talk to a couple who is faithfully living out the Sacrament of Marriage every day; plus, it's a great way to make new friends in our parish community. All meetings are strictly confidential.

- ♥ If you enjoy the preparation process, consider serving as a Sponsor Couple for others. We do need couples to help with this ministry.

AFTER YOU MEET WITH THE PRIEST,
WE WILL GUIDE YOU WITH PLANS FOR YOUR CEREMONY.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- ♥ **All Catholics:** New original Catholic Baptism certificate - including all Sacraments you have received to date. This certificate must be dated within the last 6 months.

NO COPIES or OLD CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Please note: If your new Baptism certificate does not include the other Sacraments you have received (First Communion, Confirmation), please bring in old copies of certificates for those missing Sacraments.

- ♥ **Non-Catholics:** A certificate (old ok) or letter from the church of Baptism. If not baptized, nothing is needed.

REQUIRED RETREAT: *Register via the “links” page on the parish website!*

- ♥ **Engaged Encounter:** This is a “Couples Weekend” for those who are engaged only.
- ♥ **Marriage Encounter:** This is a “Couples Weekend” for those who are civilly married and preparing to marry sacramentally in the Catholic Church.

After your weekend, bring your certificate or a letter verifying your attendance to the parish.

We HIGHLY RECOMMEND that you attend a retreat as soon as possible after you set your wedding date. This retreat will bring you closer and make your engagement time more meaningful.

We hope that you will set your marriage date soon so you can begin this journey!

The Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Community

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