

Marriage Preparation Checklist

Your marriage is the most significant life decision you may have to make in your life. As such, we want to offer you the best opportunities to discover who you are as a married couple. Therefore, advance preparation, ongoing discernment and prayer is critical of every couple wishing to be joined in matrimony.

A) Initial Contact with Priest or Deacon

- Familiarize yourself with the marriage preparation process requirements by visiting the website of the;
 - Diocese of Lafayette under Offices>Marriage and Family Life
 - Parish of St. Charles under Sacraments/Liturgy>Completing Sacraments
- Between 6 to 12 months prior to your anticipated wedding date, make an appointment with a parish clergy for the initial meeting to discuss the preparation process (even if they will not be the minister celebrating your wedding). If you are getting married outside of the parish, provide your parish clergy the following; name and address of the parish where the wedding will take place, celebrant's name and planned wedding date. It will be expeditious to provide a current baptismal certificate at the initial meeting with the parish clergy (obtainable from the parish where you were baptized).
- If you will be using St. Charles Borromeo Church building:
 - Complete the initial meeting with priest or deacon who will then initiate the form titled, Application to Reserve the Church Building.
 - If the Wedding ceremony is to be done by a visiting priest, the visiting priest will need to submit a form titled, Request Delegation to Witness Wedding at St. Charles Parish before the Application to use the building will be forwarded for pastor approval. This form can be downloaded from the Parish website.
 - All fees are to be paid before the dates for use of the church building are booked

B) Pre-Marital Inventory and Diocesan Preparation Class (www.diolaf.org/marriage)

- After initial meeting with parish clergy, complete the Prepare/Enrich online survey (www.diolaf.org/marriage).
- Fulfill the Diocesan Marriage pre-marital preparation (Workshop) class requirements
- Notify the priest or deacon when the Prepare and Enrich online survey is complete
- Learn the facts of Natural Family Planning (NFP) at: (<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/>)

C) Documents Needed to Complete the Pre-Nuptial File (Prior to Wedding)

- Certificate of Baptism for each Catholic party (less than six months old).
- Pre-Nuptial Inquiry (Filled with Couple, by priest or deacon)
- If previously married, Death Certificate of previous spouse or Annulment Decree
- Certificate of Participation from the marriage preparation class (Couple will receive it at class)
- Any required permissions or dispensations required by unique circumstances of the engaged couple
- Obtain your civil Marriage License from the Clerk of Court (the license is good for 30 days; do not obtain one earlier than necessary). Visit the parish-Clerk of Court website for more information.

D) Planning Your Wedding Liturgy/ Follow-up Meeting

- Meet with your priest, deacon, or parish wedding coordinator to plan your wedding and schedule rehearsal
- Using the Parish guidelines, select Scripture readings, music, Prayers of the Faithful, etc.
- Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (if Catholic) prior to marriage
- Rehearse at the Church
- Go to church and marry your beloved

Sacramental Marriage Preparation Handout – St. Charles

*Grace is a participation in the life of God.
It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life (CCC1997)*

Marriage preparation is a time of discernment and a journey of faith, not a class

We hope and encourage you to take this special time in your relationship to renew and strengthen your faith and better understand the commitment that you are making. We are thankful that you have come to the Church, and we are prepared to walk alongside you in this journey.

God is the model for our loving

God, who is love and who is a communion of persons, created us in his image, capable of tremendous love. God is the source and model of all love. We encourage you to explore how God's love for humanity – revealed in scriptures and in the sacraments – gives us the model for how to love.

Christ's love for the Church is our blueprint for marriage

St. John Paul II, pointed the attention of married couples to Jesus as the model for their loving, when he wrote: "Husbands and wives discover in Christ the point of reference for their spousal love." And, this model of love is the same love that we experience in the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Through the sacraments, Christ shows us his love in the following ways, He:

- embraces us and welcomes us into God's family to share in his divine life in **Baptism**.
- remains always present with us to give us strength through the Holy Spirit in **Confirmation**.
- gives himself completely to us in the sacrificial love of the **Eucharist**.
- forgives us and frees us from the effects of sin in **Reconciliation**.
- comforts, consoles, and heals us in the **Anointing of the Sick**.
- serves the Church through **Marriage and Holy Orders**.

Spirit and Goals of Marriage Preparation

On your wedding day, it is our hope that you are;

- closer to each other because you have come to know each other better.
- close to God, having learned that your love story is part of his love story and that Jesus Christ is present in your relationship.
- at home in the Catholic Church, because it is a community that welcomes you, and a place where you can grow spiritually.
- ready to make a permanent commitment to each other.
- ready to accept a role in society as a married couple because you understand that marriage is not a private affair but a relationship of service of each other, God, and society.

Opportunities for Sacramental Dialogue for the Engaged Couple

1. Baptism: “I accept you and welcome you to share my life.”

- a. *List the ways in which you think your parents were different from each other and describe how your parents accommodated each other’s differences.*
- b. *What behaviors, (words and actions) did your parents display when they disagreed or were angry with each other?*

2. Confirmation: “I am always present to strengthen and guide you.”

- a. *When disagreements cause you to feel distant, what do you do to reconnect once things have been resolved?*
- b. *Who in your family is a good example of commitment, loyalty, and faithfulness? Talk about in what way(s).*

3. Eucharist: “I give myself completely to you.”

- a. *When you and your fiancé work together as a team, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?*
- b. *At the center of Catholic worship is the celebration of the Eucharist, where we remember Christ’s total gift of self. How committed are you to attending Mass each week?*

4. Reconciliation: “I forgive you.”

- a. *How do you reconcile with your fiancé after you have hurt each other?*
- b. *What do you think about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?*

5. Anointing of the Sick: “I comfort, console, and heal you”

- a. *What do you think your fiancé needs the most from you in tough times? After writing down your thoughts, have your fiancé either confirm your ideas or bring a little correction of needed.*
- b. *How do you like for your fiancé to offer comfort to you? What does he or she do that gives you comfort and helps you heal?*
- c. *How did your family members cope with suffering (think about illnesses, death, financial troubles, emotional wounds, stress)? Did you talk about it? Fight about it? Did each person retreat to his or her own space to work it through?*

6. Marriage: “I serve you, and together we serve the Father.”

- a. *God created you as two persons with equal dignity who complement each other in your masculinity and femininity. How do you complement one another in your relationship?*
- b. *What are your thoughts about using Natural Family Planning? Have you talked to anyone who has used it? What questions do you want answers to?*
- c. *What do you do today as individuals or as a couple to help others in need? Do you want to do more? Brainstorm ideas about what you might do.*

If you can honestly express these same commitments to your spouse each day you will have a strong marriage. You will be happy because your words and actions will be in harmony with the blueprint of love that God imprinted in your heart when he created you – that same blueprint we learn about in the scriptures and we celebrate in the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.