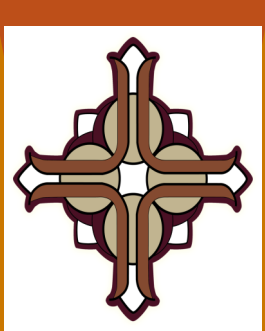




**Preparing for Marriage
in the Diocese of New Ulm**



**ENGAGED
COUPLES
GUIDE
2024**

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D I O C E S E
of NEW ULM

**Office of Family Life
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www.dnu.org**

Marriage Preparation Booklet

Introduction

This booklet is meant to be of help to engaged couples who are preparing for sacramental marriage. It reflects diocesan marriage preparation policy, and gives information about the Catholic marriage preparation programs available in central and southern Minnesota.

When engaged couples express a desire for sacramental marriage, the Catholic community strives to: build on their love and good will; help them discern their readiness and capacity for sacramental marriage; provide education and catechesis regarding marriage and family life; and call them to the dignity, joys, and responsibilities of sacramental marriage.

Sacramental marriage is a living sign of God's love in the world. God's love is faithful, enduring, and life-giving. Couples who enter sacramental marriage promise to love each other faithfully, until death parts them; and they express a willingness to cooperate with God in giving life and love to children. Sacramental marriage reflects the loving communion of the Trinity, of God and humanity, of Christ and the Church. Sacramental marriage is also a call to service. Spouses are called to serve one another's good and the good of their children; and they are also called to serve the good of society and the Church.

May God bless you in the weeks and months ahead, as you discern your vocation to sacramental marriage. And may you grow in friendship and love, with God and each other, throughout your time of preparation.

How the Church Helps You Prepare for Marriage

This booklet does not tell you how to engage photographers, caterers, or florists. Such things pertain to preparation for your *wedding*—we are talking about preparing for your *marriage*. A wedding is a *day*, marriage is a *lifetime*. We'll help you prepare for the wedding celebration, too, but first let us look at marriage preparation.

If you are engaged or seriously thinking about marriage, you start getting ready by arranging for a visit with the priest or deacon — hereafter referred to as priest/deacon—of your home parish. Nine months to a year before you expect to marry is not too soon to contact him/her; **six months** is the minimum time to allow.

Make an appointment for the first visit by contacting the parish office to say that you and your fiancé would like to begin marriage preparation. Even if you are going to school or living outside your home parish, you should visit with the priest/deacon where you intend to celebrate your wedding to familiarize yourself with parish and diocesan guidelines.

The reason we expect you to begin preparing at least six months before your wedding is so that you can enjoy marriage preparation at a reasonable pace, and still have time during the last month or two for final preparations for the wedding. The priest/deacon will work with you to plan premarital enrichment that meets your needs. You will have opportunities to build on your strengths as a couple desiring a strong marriage, and to prepare for a wedding liturgy that expresses your faith and commitment.

Marriage preparation is another stage of your journey as a couple, a journey that will be consecrated by the Sacrament of Marriage. We encourage you to look upon the priest/deacon as your spiritual director, a friend and guide for your journey.

During your first visit be sure to mention any special situation, such as a previous marriage, or concerns you have regarding your future marriage, or preparation for it. If you have a wedding date in mind, mention that too, but don't expect the date to be written in indelible ink just yet. When you are a little further along in marriage preparation and all is going well, you can confirm the date.

Personalized Preparation

Early in the preparation process, each couple in our diocese completes a premarital assessment instrument. This inventory will help you as a couple to explore your relationship and become more aware of your strengths, as well as marital issues that you may not have discussed. The premarital assessment instrument is a helpful tool for developing communication and problem solving skills that are essential for a successful marriage. The premarital assessment instrument will bring new awareness to your relationship. It will aid you and your priest/deacon in discussing various aspects of marriage.

You are also required to participate in an approved marriage preparation program. The marriage preparation programs of all six MN dioceses have common content and requirements and therefore are approved programs. If you are looking at completing a program other than one provided by a MN diocese, please contact the Diocese of New Ulm's Office of Family Life Director regarding approval of that program. The program is to be completed well in advance of your wedding (preferably 3 months before, and no less than 1 month before). You will find a schedule of these programs in the second part of this booklet.

Programs and Papers

The marriage preparation program offers practical information and introduces you to other engaged couples. The priest/deacon will direct you to one of the programs listed in the second part of this booklet.

You are encouraged to begin Natural Family Planning (NFP) instruction. If you are thinking, "we don't need that now," attend an introductory session without obligation and find out how NFP affects your whole way of thinking about marriage and family life.

Some minimal paperwork is required of you. Please obtain and present to the priest/deacon a recent copy of your baptismal certificate (acquired within the last six months), and two letters of freedom for each of you (forms are available at the parish). Also, you will be individually asked by the priest/deacon to answer the questions of the pre-nuptial inquiry regarding your freedom to marry and your views on Christian marriage. These documents will be kept on file at the parish church where the ceremony takes place.

Preparing Your Wedding Liturgy

If you begin marriage preparation more than six months before the wedding date, the last six weeks before your wedding day should be available just for wedding plans and spiritual preparation. The priest/ deacon or a parish liturgist will advise you on preparing the wedding liturgy. There are helpful planning booklets that conform to diocesan guidelines; you can order one listed below from a bookstore if the parish does not provide you with a liturgy aid.

There is a lot of help available from the Church as you prepare for your wedding and marriage. Be sure to seek the Lord's help, too, through prayer and the sacraments.

Wedding Liturgy Materials

Paulist Press: 800-218-1903 www.paulistpress.com

The Catholic Wedding Book paperback or e-book

Author: Rev. William Graham

A complete guide to planning the Catholic wedding ceremony down to the smallest detail so that the result is a beautiful and happy event. A best seller now revised.

Ave Marie Press: 800-282-1865 www.avemariapress.com

Together for Life Revised with the Order of Matrimony

Juntos Para Toda La Vida

Authors: Joseph M. Champlin and Peter A. Jarret, C.S.C.

Scripture readings, comments for couples, text for the Marriage Rite.

Liturgy Training Publications: 800-933-1800 www.ltp.org

Prayerbook for Engaged Couples

Author: Austin Fleming

Special Situations

Interfaith couples may wonder how the Church will respond to their desire to marry. Let us assure you that we are committed to helping you to prepare for this sacred union. Whether you want your ceremony to take place in a Catholic church or in another church, both partners should go to visit with the Catholic priest/deacon. He will offer much help as you face the challenges of an interfaith marriage. We suggest you allow extra time for marriage preparation so that you can learn more about one another's faith and consider how to share spiritually in your marriage and family life.

In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party is expected to actively participate in the Catholic faith. He/she must agree to do everything possible to share that faith with the spouse's children and to have them raised as Catholics.

An interfaith marriage may take place in a non-Catholic church provided that the necessary permission has been obtained from the bishop of the diocese. The priest/deacon will assist you in obtaining this permission.

Teenage marriages are a particular concern because of statistics of failure. If you are a teen considering marriage, we want to do all we can to strengthen your union. The priest/deacon may refer you to a premarital consultant if either of you is less than twenty years old. When either individual is less than eighteen years of age, a marriage in the Church should **not** take place.

Pregnancy in itself will not be considered a determining factor in proceeding with or delaying a marriage. The primary goal must be to evaluate a couple's readiness for marriage, exclusive of the pregnancy. When a teenager is pregnant and wants to marry, professional counseling *is required*. Oftentimes, a pregnancy constitutes grounds for proceeding with care.

Previous marriage: If either party has been previously married, including any civil or religious service) be sure to discuss this with the priest/deacon during your first meeting. This process requires additional time, and must be completed before a wedding date can be set. If you have already gone through a process with the Catholic Church and received a declaration of nullity (annulment), you will be asked to provide the case number, date, and name of the diocese.

Decisions, Decisions

You will be making many decisions in the coming months. You will choose clothes, flowers, music, and food for your wedding. Those choices will shape your wedding day, which you, your relatives, and friends will remember.

Choices that shape your lifetime together, your marriage, are even more important; how to pray together, how to go about planning your family, how to use money, and the many ways there are to show love and respect to a spouse.

Cohabitation

Some couples today are making a choice for an engagement lifestyle that can affect their marriage in ways they may not be aware of. Cohabitation or sexual intercourse before marriage hinder good marriage preparation, and are linked with problems after marriage.

If you decide to live together before marriage you should be aware that you choose to live in contradiction to what we believe as Catholics about the sacrament of marriage. We believe that marriage is a permanent and exclusive commitment of a man and a woman to one another, begun by wedding vows and expressed through complete sharing of their bodies and souls, a union that reflects Christ's love for his people. Cohabitation before marriage *pretends* to be this union, but it is *not*.

As a faith community our first concern is for you and your future marriage, and for that reason you ought to live apart until your wedding. Engagement is a special time, and preparation for your wedding and marriage holds plenty of excitement of its own. Reserve sexual intercourse and moving in together until after your wedding. Then we can all truly celebrate the beginning of your marriage!

Preparation Continues

By now you have probably figured out the difference between preparing for the *wedding* and preparing for the *marriage*. Wedding preparations concern the details of the celebration of the wedding day—a special day marking the beginning of your sacramental life together. Marriage preparation begins even before engagement and continues into your married years. Marriage preparation is really a formation or enrichment process that involves your whole self and is directed toward living a happy and holy life with your spouse.

Programs designed to enrich married life are available. You are encouraged to nurture and strengthen your marital partnership by taking advantage of some of the opportunities available.

All the policies and procedures for marriage preparation in our diocese are designed to benefit you and your future marriage. If you believe there is a very serious reason in your case for an exception to be made to these policies and procedures, you have a right to appeal. Your priest/deacon can help you initiate an appeal.

We pray that your marriage is happy and holy. We recall Jesus' words (Jn 15:11-12) "All this I tell you that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete . . . Love one another as I have loved you."

Notes:

DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

Marriage Preparation Program

The diocesan Marriage Preparation Program is designed specifically for engaged couples. It is time set aside for engaged couples to explore and strengthen their relationship.

Through presentations given during each day-long program, engaged couples are challenged to reflect individually and to dialogue privately with each other about key aspects of married life: **commitment** (the meaning of sacramental marriage), **communication** (including intimacy and sexuality issues), **conflict** (including gender and personality issues, addictions, and the appropriate expression of anger), **children** (including natural family planning and parenting), **career** (including financial planning, work, and lifestyle issues), and **church** (spirituality, faith, and interfaith issues). The objective is discovery through honest communication.

The presentations are given by married couples and individuals trained for this ministry. The presenters are motivated by their concern for engaged couples and by their desire to strengthen marriage and family life. They generously share their experience regarding the joys and challenges of marriage and family life.

Program registration begins on a Saturday at 8:30 a.m. with the first presentation scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and ends at approximately 6:30 p.m. Events are conducted at the Church of St. Catherine located at 900 E Flynn Street in Redwood Falls, MN. Registration for each day-long program is limited. Please register well in advance and indicate a second choice.

The program fee is \$150 per couple and includes all program materials, lunch, and refreshments. Fee payment must accompany your registration form. A \$35 non-refundable administrative fee is charged if you cancel your registration less than ten working days before your scheduled date.

The State of Minnesota recognizes the value of marriage preparation. Couples who complete at least 12 hours of pre-marital education receive a significant reduction on their marriage license fee. A certificate from your parish is needed to receive the fee reduction. Your parish priest will issue that certificate once you have completed all scheduled sessions.

Diocese of New Ulm
Marriage Preparation Program Registration Form

Bride's Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Religion _____ Parish & City _____

1st Marriage Yes No Children Yes No If yes, list ages _____

If not 1st marriage please check one of the options below:

Widowed

Annulment: Yes, in Diocese of _____ Case # _____ No

Groom's Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Religion _____ Parish & City _____

1st Marriage Yes No Children Yes No If yes, list ages _____

If not 1st marriage please check one of the options below:

Widowed

Annulment: Yes, in Diocese of _____ Case # _____ No

Priest/Deacon assisting you _____

Wedding Date _____ at Church & City _____

Concerns you hope the program will address _____

Physical or dietary needs _____

Program Dates—A 1st & 2nd choice is required. Your 2nd choice, as an alternative date, must be later than your 1st choice.

January 27, 2024

March 2, 2024

April 13, 2024

September 14, 2024

Return this completed form along with the \$150 per couple program fee to the Diocese of New Ulm, Office of Family Life, 1421 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073-2071

**ARCHDIOCESE OF
ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS**
Living God's Love Marriage Preparation Program

WEEKEND PROGRAM is offered monthly (*except for October & December*)

Time: Friday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and
Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Includes a light breakfast and catered lunch on Saturday.

Cost: \$250 per couple
Be sure to register online at least six weeks in advance.

2023 Dates

September 29 & 30; Our Lady of Grace, Edina, MN
November 11 & 12; St. Gerard Majella, Brooklyn Park, MN

2024 Dates

Check web site for upcoming dates.

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
November

Office for Marriage, Family & Life
777 Forest Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55106
651-291-4488

archspm.org/departments/marriage/marriage-preparation/

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Catholic Engaged Encounter

Location: Christ the King Retreat Center
621 1st Ave. S, Buffalo, MN 55313
(west side of Minneapolis)

Time: Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to Sunday 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$330 per couple, which includes four meals,
one night lodging and supplies.

Couples should register 2-3 months before the weekend they wish to attend.

2023 Dates

October 14 Christ the King, Buffalo, MN

2024 Dates

Check web site for upcoming dates.

February Christ the King, Buffalo, MN

April Christ the King, Buffalo, MN

June Christ the King, Buffalo, MN

October Christ the King, Buffalo, MN

For registration or information, contact:

ceeminnesota@gmail.com

www.ceemn.org

facebook.com/ceemn

651-426-9248

DIOCESE OF ST. CLOUD

Weekend Courses are Saturday 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

The \$175 fee includes refreshments, Saturday noon meal, and materials.

2023 Dates:

September 23

October 28

December 2

2024 Dates:

January 13

February 3

April TBD

May TBD

September TBD

October TBD

December TBD

Contact: Office of Marriage & Family
305 7th Avenue N, Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56303
320-252-4721 / 800-624-9019

Register at:
<https://stcdio.org/engaged-couple-marriage-preparation/>

Courses Outside of St. Cloud (contact the parish directly):

St. Paul's Parish (\$175)
304 Sinclair Lewis Avenue
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
320-352-3502

St. Henry's Parish (\$175)
234 SW 2nd Avenue
Perham, MN 56378
218-346-4240

DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER

Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Program

PO Box 588, Winona, MN 55987

507-858-1264

<https://www.dowr.org/offices/life-marriage-family/marriage-preparation.html>

Mankato

October 14, 2023

January 27, 2024

May 18, 2024

507-387-4154; \$150 per couple

St. Thomas More Newman Center

1502 Warren Street,

Mankato, MN 56001

St. Charles

March 2, 2024

507-932-3294; \$150 per couple

St. Charles Borromeo

1900 E 6th Street

St. Charles, MN 55972

tpadmin@hbcs.net

Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Program

PO Box 588, Winona, MN 55987

507-858-1264

<https://www.dowr.org/offices/life-marriage-family/marriage-preparation.html>

DIOCESE OF DULUTH

<https://www.dioceseduluth.org/marriage-and-family-life>

DIOCESE OF CROOKSTON

<https://www.crookston.org/offices/discipleship/marriagefam/marriageprep>

Re-Marriage Programs in other Dioceses

DIOCESE OF ST. CLOUD

The Second Marriage Preparation Course is for couples preparing to marry after the death of a spouse or an annulment. Marriage preparation must be completed at least three months before the date of the wedding celebration. It is recommended you complete the course well in advance (six months or more). Many couples take the course one year before their wedding.

Saturday Re-Marriage Courses are held at the Pastoral Center, 305 7th Avenue N, St. Cloud, and begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at approximately 5:00 p.m. The \$175 fee includes refreshments, noon meal, and materials.

2023 Date:

October 17

2024 Date:

March 23

Contact: Office of Marriage & Family
305 7th Avenue N, Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56303
320-252-4721

<https://stcdio.org/engaged-couple-marriage-preparation/>

DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

Marriage Preparation Program Dates

January 27, 2024

March 12, 2024

April 13, 2024

September 14, 2024

All scheduled dates will be held at the Church of St. Catherine, 900 E Flynn Street, Redwood Falls, MN.



Re-Marriage Program Dates

No 2024 dates scheduled at this time.

NOTES

NOTES



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