

Marriage Instructions

The purpose of this course of preparation for matrimony is to enable a couple preparing for that great sacrament to do so on line and by telephone.

1. The first step is to contact the priest that you want to officiate at your wedding. Then he will give you some forms to fill out, and begin determining if you are truly free to marry. For example, you might be free to marry canonically, but if you are cohabiting, then you will need to come up with a plan to separate as soon as possible.

Then a tentative date will be set, with a rehearsal time. This will be confirmed once the testimonials have been received. Keep in mind that it is Archdiocesan law that from the first contact with the priest to the date of the wedding, there needs to be at least eight months. This can be dispensed for good reason, but not lightly.

It is very important for the groom to be praying every day for his bride and vice-versa. The enemy of us all will seek to disrupt or ruin the preparation by things like impurity or contention. Each couple should have a clear idea of what is permitted in physical contact, and what is contrary to their state of betrothal.

After that first meeting with the priest, listen to the first audio lecture entitled courtship. You should listen together. Please read together later the encyclical *Casti Conubii*, (Of Human Life), by Pope Pius XI.

2. The next step will be to read the pamphlet on Betrothal. Betrothal sanctifies the engagement, and turns the ring into a sacramental. It is not required for Matrimony, but it is a great blessing. If you wish to be betrothed, contact your priest to set a time and date.

Keep up the daily prayer for each other until the day you die. Begin praying for future children, in particular that they might have good companions. If they have good friends, they will probably do just fine in life. If they choose bad friends, they will be in great peril.

Consider the Archdiocesan marriage preparation sessions. These may be found on the website of the Archdiocese. Although not required for matrimony, most of our couples who have attended these thought that they were of real benefit.

Read the pamphlet on parish norms, and if you have any questions on them consult the priest. They answer many questions about the details of the wedding.

Lastly for this step, begin praying a novena to God the Holy Ghost, asking Him for wisdom, counsel and understanding regarding holy Matrimony. You can make up your own novena using the Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost in your missal, or get one off the internet.

3. Step three is to listen to lecture #2, called The Key to the Sacrament.

Contact your priest after this, and inquire about taking the FOCCUS Inventory. He will explain what it is and how to do it. This is done on line. Once the inventory is taken, then the priest will receive a copy of it, and this will be a tool for the couple to discuss those areas

of married life that are very important, but which perhaps have not been discussed at this point.

4. Step 4 will be to listen to lecture #3 called Modesty.

After listening to the lecture, you'll want to send the priest a picture of the wedding dress and the dresses of the bridesmaids, to insure that these are modest.

Then, in a telephone conversation, the priest will inquire about your financial situation. Poverty is not an impediment to Matrimony, but finances are nonetheless a very important component of a good home.

If you don't know much about the finances, then taking a short course, such as Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University is as good a place to start as any.

For your reading, read the papal encyclical of Pope St. John Paul II called *Familiaris Consortio*. These encyclicals are on line.

5. Step five will be to listen to lecture #4 called The Rings.

Make sure you have contacted the Music Director of the parish, regarding what music you want at the wedding, and whether it will be a high or a low Mass. It is not required that there be a Mass at your wedding, but it is most desirable.

After this, pray a novena to the Blessed Virgin; for sanctity in the courtship and in your marriage.

6. Step six will be to listen to the lectures on Marriage in a Church, I and II.

Then, for your reading, read the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* by Pope St. Paul VI.

By now your FOCCUS inventory will be finished and collated. A mentor couple will help you learn how to use this tool effectively. If they are not available, then the priest will help you through it.

7. Step 7 is to listen to lecture #7, The Betrothal of Saints Joseph and Mary.

Earnestly review your own betrothal and the promise you made, and firmly resolve to fulfill the promises by the examination of conscience for Marriage. The document is on this part of the website. At this point, simply substitute fiancée for spouse.

Read the article called Contrapuntal Order.

Then pray a novena to St. Joseph that the husband might be a good head of the family.

8. Step 8 is first of all to remind yourselves of just how important the virtue of chastity is in preparation for matrimony. To obtain and keep this virtue, you'll need other virtues such as

prudence and patience, and good habits like keeping a proper distance, a clear idea of what chastity is, and to see its beauty.

Allied with chastity is charity and respect for the other. In this, you need to have a good idea of how to communicate well and with courtesy. Read the document called *Conversation in Holy Matrimony*. It will give an idea of how to converse well, so that charity and peace may reign in the marriage.

Then listen to the audio file on the definition of love, and the four kinds of love, and how they can apply to matrimony.

9. Step 9 is to read the Pastoral Letter of Archbishop Samuel Aquila on marriage which is called *The Splendor of Love*.

Sign up for a class on Natural Family Planning. This is required by the Archdiocese, and many classes are available at different times. See the Archdiocesan website for that information.

Pray a Novena to the Sacred Heart, for blessings to the family you are to form.

10. Step 10 is to listen to the audio file on culture in the home.

If you have not done so already, have the Sacred Heart enthroned in your home. The purpose of this devotion is to avail for yourselves and your family the 12 promises made by Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state in life.
2. I will establish peace in their families.
3. I will comfort them in their trials.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and, above all, in death.
5. I will shed abundant blessings on all their undertakings
6. Sinners will find in My Heart an infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls will become fervent.
8. Fervent souls will rapidly grow in holiness and perfection.
9. I will bless every place where an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. The names of those who promote this devotion will be written in My Heart, never to be blotted out.
12. I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

11. Step 11 is to listen to the audio file on recreation.

Read the essay of Dr. Alice von Hildebrand on the Theology of the Body.

12. Step 12 is to read Dr. Harville's work on Conscious Marriage.

Begin using the Examination of Conscience for Married Couples.

Read the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI called *Deus Caritas Est*.

Make a novena: To St. Anne; that the wife may be a good center of the home and marriage.

13. Step 13 is to read *The Key to the Sacrament*.

Before the wedding rehearsal, make a general confession. This is a good practice for anyone entering a new state of life. St. Francis de Sales says this of it: “You see, my child, that I am now speaking of a general confession of your whole life, which, while I grant it is not always necessary, I yet believe will be found most helpful in the beginning of your pursuit after holiness, and therefore I earnestly advise you to make it. Not unfrequently the ordinary confessions of persons leading an everyday life are full of great faults, and that because they make little or no preparation, and have not the needful contrition. Owing to this deficiency such people go to confession with a tacit intention of returning to their old sins, inasmuch as they will not avoid the occasions of sin, or take the necessary measures for amendment of life, and in all such cases a general confession is required to steady and fix the soul. But, furthermore, a general confession forces us to a clearer selfknowledge, kindles a wholesome shame for our past life, and rouses gratitude for God’s Mercy, Which has so long waited patiently for us;—it comforts the heart, refreshes the spirit, excites good resolutions, affords opportunity to our spiritual Father for giving the most suitable advice, and opens our hearts so as to make future confessions more effectual. Therefore I cannot enter into the subject of a general change of life and entire turning to God, by means of a devout life, without urging upon you to begin with a general confession.”

14. Step 14 is ongoing. It is to learn about the education of children, and their formation. It is to read and go deeper into the sacrament of matrimony. To this end, here are a few books to get you started:

The sacrament: [Three to Get Married](#), by Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Discipline for Children: [Discipline that Lasts a Lifetime](#), by Ray Guarendi.

Education of Children: [Out of the Classroom and into the World](#), by Roy Peachy. This last subject needs far more reading and discussion than just one book, but Mr. Peachy has a good amount of references to choose from.

NB: This last step can be begun at any time in your preparation.