

06
STEP

ENGAGED COUPLE'S RETREAT

WHEN: WITHIN TWO MONTHS
OF THE WEDDING

To manage the challenging demands of your marital vocation, you will need God's help. Therefore, the Church asks you to make a weekend retreat as part of your spiritual preparation for marriage in order to deepen your relationship with God and to fully acknowledge the commitment you are making. You may choose from one of two retreats that the Diocese offers, either **Engaged Encounter** or the **Called To Love** retreat. Both retreats are offered in an overnight weekend format. Information and registration for these retreats can be found on the website for the Office of Marriage and Family Life at:

www.mfldiobr.org/marriagepreparation



07
STEP

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

WHEN: WITHIN A MONTH OF
THE WEDDING

As part of the spiritual preparation for marriage, the Church strongly encourages engaged Catholics to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Sacrament not only forgives your past failings but also fosters your on-going conversion as a disciple of Christ, preparing you for the selfless giving required in marriage.

08
STEP

PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

WHEN: WITHIN A MONTH OF
THE WEDDING

As the wedding date draws closer, you will need to meet with the priest, deacon or a trained lay person who will assist you in planning the liturgy for your wedding day. You will have the opportunity to choose your own Bible readings from those approved for weddings as well as various prayers and blessings. In addition, you will be able to "personalize" the ceremony by the décor, music and other symbols that you may choose. The local pastor will have the final approval of your choices.

09
STEP

GET A MARRIAGE LICENSE

WHEN: BETWEEN 30 DAYS & 24
HOURS BEFORE THE WEDDING

You must obtain a Louisiana State marriage license from the Clerk of Court in a Louisiana civil parish between 30 days and 24 hours before the planned marriage ceremony.



10
STEP

ON-GOING MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

WHEN: FOR THE REST OF YOUR
MARRIED LIFE

Your wedding day is only the beginning of a life-long adventure that will often be challenging. The Church urges you to continually make the effort to enrich your marriage by praying together as a couple, worshipping together as a family, sharing your gifts within the ministries of your parish and taking advantage of marriage enrichment programs and retreats. With God's help and your continued attention to your relationship, you will be able to enjoy a long and satisfying life together.

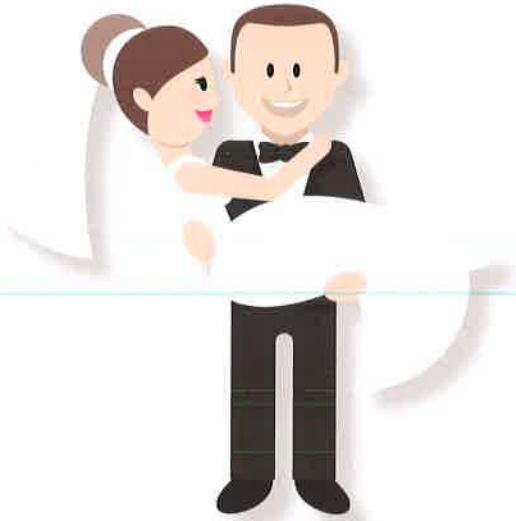
CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF BATON ROUGE

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS



10 STEPS

TO A HAPPY &
HOLY MARRIAGE



PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE IN THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE

Congratulations! God has called you to holy matrimony and you have generously responded by deciding to marry. The Church shares your joy and sincerely wants your marriage to succeed. To offer you the best chance of success, the Church will attempt to prepare you for entering and living out the Sacrament of Marriage. The diocesan marriage preparation program will provide you with the spiritual resources and practical tools you need to create a holy and satisfying marriage. The Diocese of Baton Rouge will offer you those resources and tools in a step-by-step process as outlined in this brochure.

01 STEP

MEET WITH PRIEST OR DEACON

WHEN: BEFORE YOU SET A WEDDING DATE

The preparation process begins by contacting your local parish to arrange a meeting with the priest or deacon. This meeting has three purposes:

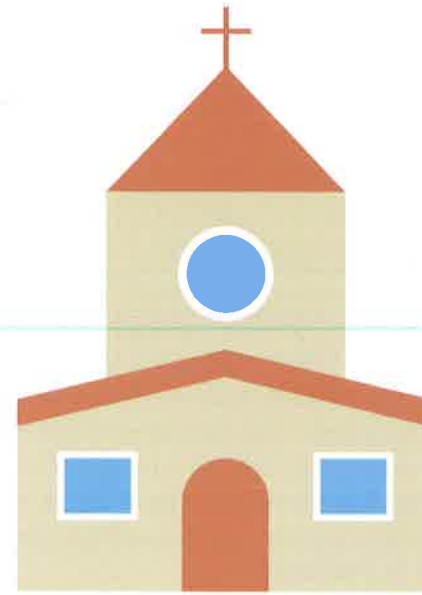
- a) *To establish a relationship with the minister, especially if that minister will be performing the wedding ceremony.*
- b) *To complete the necessary documentation which ensures that there are no obstacles to marriage.*
- c) *To get an overview of the marriage preparation process so that you will know what to expect.*

02 STEP

RESERVE THE SPACE

WHEN: AFTER MEETING WITH THE PRIEST OR DEACON

Once the first step has been completed, then you may tentatively reserve the Church for a particular date and time to celebrate your wedding.



03 STEP

PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY/ SKILLS TRAINING

WHEN: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER MEETING WITH THE PRIEST

The priest or deacon will make arrangements for you and your fiancée to complete a pre-marital inventory, such as **FOCCUS** or **Prepare**.

This inventory is intended to help you, and those involved in your preparation, determine the strengths in your relationship as well as the practical skills that you might need to fine tune in order to create a happy and successful marriage. This review and skills training process may take several sessions to complete.

04 STEP

GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

WHEN: THROUGHOUT THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS

To succeed in marriage, you will not only need skills, you will also need a vision of what marriage is all about. The Catholic Church views marriage as a gift from God the Creator that is part of God's plan for humanity. During your marriage preparation process, you will be given the opportunity to enrich your understanding of the Catholic Church's vision of what God intends for marriage. That deeper understanding can strengthen your desire to make this awesome, life-long commitment.

05 STEP

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING INSTRUCTION

WHEN: FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

The Church wants to ensure that you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in accord with God's plan for marriage. Therefore, your pastor may require that you attend a workshop on Natural Family Planning (NFP 101) or that you receive some personal instruction on a particular Natural Family Planning method. Information concerning these instructional opportunities is available on the Marriage & Family Life website at: