



Marriage Preparation Checklist for Engaged Couples



At least one year before your wedding...

Congratulations! Now that your engagement is official, you should notify your parish and schedule your first meeting with your pastoral minister (priest, deacon or lay minister), who may also serve as the officiant for your wedding. *If possible, it's best to book your reception venue after you've confirmed your wedding date at the parish.*



What should happen at your first meeting(s) at your parish:

- If you are newly registered in your parish or have been away from the area for some time, this is a getting-to-know-you session. It's also a time to discuss your hopes and dreams about marriage.
- Catholic persons should be prepared to present a recent certificate of Baptism with notations of all other sacraments (communion, confirmation and any prior marriages in the Church).
- Marriage preparation in the Church requires a pre-nuptial investigation (PNI), which is all about your marital readiness. When Part I of your PNI is complete, you may officially schedule your wedding Mass or ceremony, and may register for a Pre-Cana class – www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana

Pre-Cana options include:

***Parish Pre-Cana Conferences**

***Diocesan Pre-Cana Conferences**

***Catholic Engaged Encounter weekends**

***Better Together Remarriage Retreat** (for all couples in which one or both parties have a prior marriage, and for civilly married couples who wish to bring their marriage into the Catholic Church)



By nine months before the wedding...

- It is recommended that all couples take a pre-marital inventory such as FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study), so that all key aspects of the marital relationship are discussed, and couples enter marriage with full knowledge of their situation (www.FOCCUSinc.com).



By nine months before the wedding (continued)...

- Once your pastoral minister (PM) receives your FOCCUS results, you'll want to schedule a few sessions to discuss your responses. If FOCCUS isn't offered, you'll have sessions with your PM to discuss the important elements of Catholic marriage as they apply to your relationship.
- This is the time to sign up for the *Better Together* Free Email Program from Dynamic Catholic, with engaging videos on marital topics once a week for six weeks, and additional content (dynamiccatholic.com/better-together/email-program), along with a host of other free resources for engaged and married couples.
- It's also time to select your mentors – having a married couple you admire from your parish accompany you through the marriage prep process is an invaluable resource. If you need help selecting a couple, speak to your pastor or an active member of your parish.



By six months before the wedding...

- Attend your (Pre-Cana) marriage preparation class (it is suggested that you complete your marriage preparation program after the FOCCUS pre-marital inventory, ideally between 3 and 8 months before your wedding). Elements of the *Better Together* program will be used at Pre-Cana.
- Take an online Natural Family Planning class for a full understanding of reproductive health.
 - *learnnfponline.com
 - *www.ccli.com (Couple to Couple League)
- Once you've completed your marriage preparation instruction and all paperwork, you'll meet with your pastoral minister to affirm your readiness for marriage and begin planning your wedding liturgy.
- If your meetings with your PM uncover some serious concerns in your relationship, you may wish to schedule additional sessions, consult with your pastor, or ask for a referral through the parish counseling program. The Church's primary concern is a fulfilling, lifelong marital relationship for both of you.



By two to three months before the wedding...

Work with your pastoral minister to plan a meaningful ceremony that reflects the sacredness of your marriage and the uniqueness of your relationship.

- If you are both Catholic, a nuptial mass is recommended. If you're an interfaith couple, a nuptial ceremony may be a better option. Your parish may have a wedding planner to assist you in planning your wedding liturgy.
- Catholic persons should plan to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding to fully prepare you for the graces of sacramental marriage.
- It is highly recommended that all aspects of marriage preparation at the parish be completed by six weeks before the wedding, allowing you to focus on personal reflection and last minute details.



After the wedding...

Once you've settled into daily married life, be sure to set aside Sunday as a day of rest and renewal, and make Mass a priority in your lives. The graces and blessings you'll receive as a couple are an immeasurable source of strength to meet the challenges of daily married life.

- Plan to get involved in your parish community together as a couple. Your marriage is a vocation and a call to loving service. Always remember that your marriage is a sign of Jesus' unending love for his people. May your marriage always be blessed by his presence.