

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.



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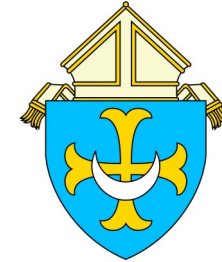
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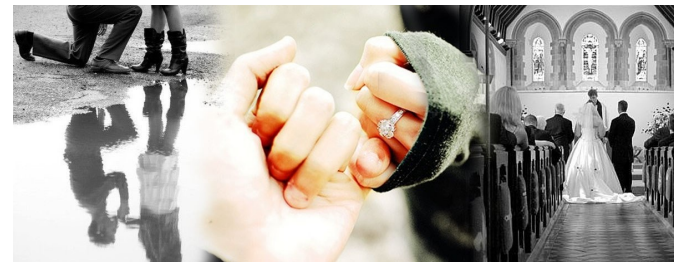
Diocese of Trenton



Marriage Preparation

Check List

For engaged couples



www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana

Congratulations on your engagement!

At least one year before your wedding...

As soon your engagement is official, but *before you set a date* you should call your parish and schedule your first meeting with your pastoral minister (priest, deacon or lay minister), who may also serve as the celebrant for your wedding.



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 should register for a marriage preparation program (www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana) and schedule your wedding date. Program options include:
 - *Parish Pre-Cana Conferences
 - *Diocesan Pre-Cana, God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage (based on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body)
 - *Catholic Engaged Encounter weekends
 - *To Trust Again Remarriage Workshop (for all couples in which one or both parties has a prior marriage)

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), and discuss the results with your pastoral minister (**PM**) (www.FOCCUSinc.com)
- Once your pastoral minister 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.

By six months before the wedding...

- Take a class in Natural Family Planning
 - *learnnfonline.com
 - *www.ccli.com (Couple to Couple League)
- Once you've completed your marriage preparation program 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 begin to uncover some serious concerns in your relationship, you may wish to schedule additional sessions, consult with your pastor, or ask for a referral for a professional evaluation. The Church's primary concern is a fulfilling, lifelong marital relationship for both of you.

