

Why do we Prepare Couples for Marriage?

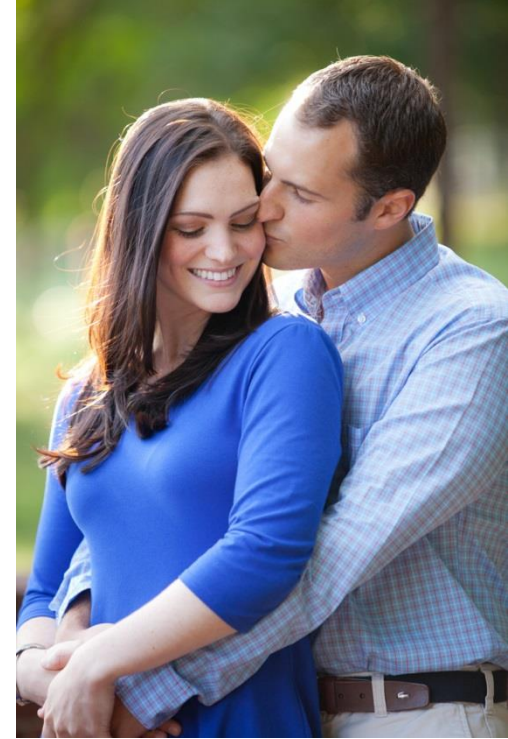
So that the "I do" of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance.

The example and teaching given by parents and families remain the special form of this preparation.

The role of pastors and of the Christian community as the "family of God" is indispensable for the transmission of the human and Christian values of marriage and family...

It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love...

CCC #1632



The Goals of Pre-Cana

- **Divorce Prevention**
 - Provide the tools, skills, resources, witness and community of support for lifelong marriage
- **Informed Consent about Catholic Marriage**
 - Understanding the true nature of the sacramental marriage – total gift of self
 - Each couple adds a new chapter to salvation history – part of a larger story
 - Implies discipleship, full and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church



Pope Francis – “The Joy of Love”

“The complexity of today’s society and the challenges faced by the family require a greater effort on the part of the whole Christian community in preparing those who are about to be married...

(there is a) need to involve the entire community more extensively by stressing the witness of families themselves and by grounding marriage preparation in the process of Christian initiation by bringing out the

connection between marriage, baptism and the other sacraments.”



Pastoral Policies and Guidelines for Marriage Preparation for the Catholic Church in New Jersey

Experience has proven the value of the witness of married couples, who live their vocation in light of the Gospel, in preparing couples for marriage. When married couples speak out of their own conviction and from personal experiences about God, Church, love, commitment, sacrifice, forgiveness, prayer, stewardship and service, they offer a powerful witness.

Married couples who serve in this capacity find that their encounter with the engaged enriches and strengthens their own marriages. Pastoral wisdom warrants that these successfully married couples should form the core of a marriage preparation team.

Toward this end marriage preparation programs will strive to make ample time and space for the engaged couple's reflection and discussion, and for dialogue with those serving on marriage preparation teams.



Stages of Marriage Preparation

- Remote – birth through adolescence
- Proximate – young adulthood (college years)
- Immediate – period of engagement and preparing for sacramental marriage (one year process)
- Aftercare – Caring for marriage throughout the lifecycle

