**THREE OPTIONS FOR MARRIAGE PREP COURSES**

**Witness to Love**
The preferred option for Catholic marriage preparation in the Diocese of Madison: ask your pastor if Witness to Love is available at your parish! Choose your own trusted mentor couple to walk with you before and after your wedding day. Cost: $100

**CATHOLIC MarriagePrep.com**
This online pre-cana Theology of the Body marriage prep course is ideal for couples with irregular schedules or those separated by distance during their engagement. Registration instructions at madisondiocese.org/mp. Cost: $194

**Diocese of Madison Weekend Retreat**
Get away from the hustle and bustle of planning your big day to focus on each other and your lifetime together with God. A whole weekend, in a beautiful setting, with no distractions! Register at madisondiocese.org/mp. Cost: $275

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**Checklist**

- Make an appointment with your priest or deacon before you set a wedding date.
- Take the FOCCUS inventory and meet with facilitator to help you process results.
- Participate fully in an approved marriage preparation course.
- Complete instruction in an NFP method and provide your priest with certificate of completion.
- Meet with your priest or deacon to finalize plans for the ceremony.
- Prepare yourself spiritually through the sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Required Documents**

- Current baptismal certificate
- Marriage license from city or town clerk

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**7 STEP MARRIAGE PREP**

**Diocese of Madison**
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madisondiocese.org/mp
608-821-4517
A Message from the Bishop

Congratulations on being called to the sacrament of marriage! Marriage is the center of Catholic family life and the vocation through which most people live out their baptismal commitment. The Catholic Church wants to serve, form, support, and help married couples and families to live their essential vocations with faith, hope, love, joy, and generosity. Our theology and spirituality of marriage and family life is so rich, deep, and beautiful! This sacred covenant is a sacrament of God’s inner Trinitarian life and the spousal relationship between Christ and the Church. Christian marriage and family lived well manifest how God loves and relates to us. Yet we all know how challenging marital love and commitment can be. Our diocesan marriage preparation process, the steps of which are outlined in this brochure, will provide you with the spiritual resources and practical tools you need for a strong and healthy marriage, not only as newlyweds, but for a lifetime.

Yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Donald J. Hying
Bishop of the Diocese of Madison

1. Meet with your pastor
   When: Before you set a wedding date. After you become engaged, you should contact your parish right away to set up a meeting. This gives your pastor an opportunity to determine if both parties are free to marry. He will also provide you the information you need for the rest of the marriage preparation process.

2. Take inventory
   When: As soon as possible after meeting with your pastor. Most parishes will require you to complete the FOCCUS marriage preparation inventory, which is designed to assess each of your habits, expectations, and values to provide you with a personalized profile of your relationship’s strengths and weaknesses. Ask your pastor to set up the inventory for you.

3. Enroll in marriage prep course
   When: Five to six months before the wedding. There are currently three options for Catholic marriage preparation courses approved for the Diocese of Madison:
   (1) Witness to Love
   (2) Online Pre-Cana
   (3) Weekend Retreat
   Your pastor will help you determine which option to pursue.

Get started at madisondiocese.org/mp

4. Learn Fertility Awareness
   When: Four to six months before the wedding. To ensure you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in accord with God’s plan for marriage, you will have the opportunity to learn a fertility awareness based method of natural family planning. Register for classes at madisondiocese.org/nfp

5. Plan the ceremony
   When: Four to six weeks before the wedding. Meet with the priest or deacon who will be witnessing your marriage to finalize liturgical plans for the ceremony and address any additional needs.

6. Go to confession
   When: One to four weeks before the wedding. Prepare yourself spiritually to receive all the love that God desires to pour out upon you in the sacrament of marriage. Make an appointment or check normal confession times at your parish.

7. Get married!
   Congratulations on making it to your big day! But remember, this is only the beginning! Stay connected to God by daily prayer and weekly Mass on Sundays and talk to your pastor about ways to get involved in the parish so that you can nourish and sustain your love for each other in a welcoming and supportive community.