Couples married 50 years share their advice for a successful marriage
“I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”
Marital Bliss

What a joy it is to me to introduce this incredible compilation of marital experience and wisdom. In the pages ahead, you will read of 64 couples married for 50 years – representing over 3,000 years of marriage! The respondents completed a short survey sharing their stories and lessons learned in the hopes that it will benefit those already married or considering marriage in the future. What emerges is a picture of true marital bliss that is only possible this side of heaven because of the steadfast commitment of love and faith kept by each of these couples.

Here are some interesting facts for the 64 responding couples:

- The average marrying age for respondents was 21 years for women and 23 years for men.
- The average number of children per couple is 2.5. The largest family includes 6 children.
- The average number of grandchildren per couple is 5; John and Betty Bauer have the largest number of grandchildren at 19.

The survey questions asked of each couple included:

- How did you meet one another?
- What did you love most about each other when you were engaged?
- What did you find to be most challenging in your marriage?
- What helped you most to overcome these challenges?
- What is the most rewarding part of being married?
- How has your faith helped your marriage?
- What advice would you give to couples getting married?

I invite you to flip through these pages and read the insights of couples who have experienced the true joy and happiness of the Sacrament of Matrimony. May God continue to bless each of the celebrating couples in this special anniversary year and all the years ahead.

In Christ’s Love,

Beth Ulaszek
Associate Marriage & Family Coordinator
Diocese of Madison
Tom & Mary Acker
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet?
Introduced to each other by Mary’s sister and then Tom’s sister helped us to get together.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Tom’s sense of humor always kept a smile on my face! Mary’s fun loving and easy going personality always made our time together special.

What challenges did you face? Starting and raising a family at a young age.

How did you overcome them? The love, support, and help of our families and friends made this a much easier task. Having a good work ethic and knowing when to play and have fun also helped.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Always having your best friend at your side. Being there to support you in good times and especially those difficult times.

How has faith helped your marriage? Being active members of our parish from the time that our boys were young until now has helped us have faith in ourselves and what we can accomplish. It keeps us grounded in knowing that God will help us through whatever happens in our lives.

Advice for engaged couples? Remember the vow that you made before God so if times get tough, work on that love you have for each other. And find a common interest to help keep you together as time goes on.

Alan & Terry Allbaugh
# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? In college at WSU-Oshkosh. She was taking classes for her teaching degree and Al was taking courses for his graduate degree. We were residents in the same student dorm.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? She had lovely, sparkling eyes - still does. We enjoyed being with each other and still do. We had many happy moments.

What challenges did you face? Like many newlyweds, we struggled with paying bills-many times living from month to month. Sometimes this led to communication problems. At our age now, we face the challenges of staying happy and healthy.

How did you overcome them? We had a lot of faith in each other and God. We always believed we would have a good future marriage. The birth of our son helped bond our marriage.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We love each other and always have since the beginning of our being together. We share so many experiences and create so many memories. Now we have 2 fantastic grandchildren.
**How has faith helped your marriage?** We pray together often, for our family and our friends. Praying together has helped keep our marriage strong.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Trust each other. Honor each other. And obey the vows that you made when you were married. And always pray that the good Lord will be part of your daily life. Say, “I love you” as often as possible. Never be afraid to say, “I’m sorry.”

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**Thomas & Lois Altenburg**

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 3

**How did you meet?** Blind date.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Christmas Eve 1920. Sense of humor.

**What challenges did you face?** Patience and compromise.

**How did you overcome them?** Time and experience.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having a partner to share life’s joys and challenges.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Fr. Tom Coyle has always been a spiritual support for the family and has been there whenever needed.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Never give up on your partner.

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**James & Charlotte Austin**

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6 # of Great-Grandchildren: 2

**How did you meet?** At his mother’s house.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** His smile.

**What's most rewarding about being married?** Spending time as a family.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Don’t give up. Be true to your vows. Choose your words carefully.

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**Bill & Alice Battista**

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4

**How did you meet?** We met in high school. Started dating our senior year. We were born the same day, 5-7-49, different hospitals, but the same town!

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Planning our wedding and starting our life together. Graduated from college, Alice June 6 and Bill June 7, and we were married June 26. We had so much fun together and enjoyed it with our families. Came to Madison for grad school and never left.

**How did you overcome them?** We are a matched pair. We have always appreciated working together as a team to solve any problem.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having a lifelong companion to share everything with; faith, family and friends. The joy of our life has been raising our three daughters.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our Catholic faith has always been a priority in our lives growing up, through college and our marriage and raising our three daughters. It is who we are.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Be kind, enjoy each other, appreciate the qualities and uniqueness of each other and of course love each other.

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**Advice:**

*Live your faith and let God guide you in everything.*
Name Withheld
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? At a wedding.
When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Time together.
What challenges did you face? Working all the time.
How did you overcome them? Tried to make time for vacations. Going to church.
What’s most rewarding about being married? Being together and doing things together.
How has faith helped your marriage? Got us through challenges.
Advice for engaged couples? Keep your faith. Faith will pull you through.

John & Betty Bauer
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 19

How did you meet? We met September 3, 1967 at a freshman mixer in Winona, MN.
When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Hard to identify one thing.
What challenges did you face? Raising children.
How did you overcome them? Faith. We worked together and discussed everything. We loved each other and always found a way.
What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship and having a close family.
How has faith helped your marriage? It made it complete.
Advice for engaged couples? Make God part of your marriage.

Donald & JoEllen Bigelow
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 9 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? Met through the bride’s Aunt and Uncle.
When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We enjoyed being with each other and shared same interests and our faith.
What challenges did you face? Raising children is always a challenge since they are all different with different needs. Sometimes money issues to be able
Bill & Alice Brickl  
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 12

How did you meet? We were next door neighbors so we knew each other all our lives.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Just being together and talking about anything.

What challenges did you face? Agreeing on finances and talking about it.

How did you overcome them? Talking about it and having faith in God.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Knowing we are still together. Looking forward to the next day and the next adventure. Big or small!

How has faith helped your marriage? It’s the superglue!

Advice for engaged couples? Worship regularly. If you’re angry, make peace. During mass, you have the sign of peace. It’s your time to make peace with God and with your spouse.

Advice: Having a positive outlook, a good sense of humor, humility and strong faith really helps.

Tom & Janet Block  
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? We met through mutual friends.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Watching our children become outstanding individuals. They have wonderful families of their own.

Advice for engaged couples? Communicate and make family life a major focus in your life.
Name Withheld
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 9

How did you meet? We met in high school.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Everything.

What challenges did you face? Finances and developing common goals.

How did you overcome them? Our love and commitment to each other. Parents and Grandparents were married fifty years.

What's most rewarding about being married? The relationship and family.

How has faith helped your marriage? The Lord is always there for both good and bad.

Advice for engaged couples? Marry your best friend. Make sure you like the person you are marrying for who they are. Have fun!

Del & Sue Brown
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? We met in Madison when we were both attending the UW. We were next door neighbors on Adams Street. Sue invited Del to a party at her house along with Del's roommates. We had a great time at the party and Del asked Sue out for a first date.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Del loved Sue's great kind spirit. Del also loved the fact that Sue was going into the health field and becoming a nurse. Sue loved Del's adventurous spirit and his deep respect and dedication to Sue. Sue and Del were also very physically attracted to each other.

What challenges did you face? One of the most challenging periods in our marriage was having two full time careers and 4 children. Trying to meet our children's needs and our work challenges was difficult at times. We were constantly on the go and had to support each other daily.

How did you overcome them? We worked together as a team with excellent communication. We respected each others needs. Taking each day at a time and staying present moment focused was important. Our family of origin and friends were also supportive and helpful. In addition, making time for having fun and gathering people in our home helped.

What's most rewarding about being married? The most rewarding part of being married is having someone who knows you really well and is able to support you in good times and challenging times. Sharing experiences together is such a rewarding part of a marriage as well.

How has faith helped your marriage? Going to Mass weekly and praying for many of the same things has been an anchor in our marriage. Knowing that we are not alone and that God is with us through our struggle and good times is awesome. It was helpful to pray together as a family especially at meal times.

Advice for engaged couples? Focus on the positive. Respect each other's thoughts and feelings. Communicate well. Pray. Make time for fun.

Advice from our priest was, “Pray together each and every night. You can’t pray with someone if you are angry.” We admit we saw a few dawns but we still hold hands and pray every night.
Donald & Deborah Colling  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? Playing football on opposing teams.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We couldn’t wait to be with each other and make plans for our future.

What challenges did you face? Communication.

How did you overcome them? We learned to be more open with each other.

What’s most rewarding about being married? I am married to my best friend.

How has faith helped your marriage? Because of our faith, we knew we could weather anything.

Advice for engaged couples? Make sure to communicate, it is so important.

Wayne & Paulette Crook  
# of Children: 2

How did you meet? Siblings wedding. We were maid of honor and best man.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Respect, kindness, happiness being together.

What challenges did you face? There can be good and bad. Love gets you past those challenges. Love understands differences.

How did you overcome them? Worked out difficulties together, for the reason we gave each other something nobody else can.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We were meant to be. We went through up and down times and came out stronger.

How has faith helped your marriage? Prayer and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.

Gerald & Marlene Dammen  
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met through friends of Jerry’s.

How has faith helped your marriage? Pray and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.

Donald & Deborah Colling  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? Playing football on opposing teams.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We couldn’t wait to be with each other and make plans for our future.

What challenges did you face? Communication.

How did you overcome them? We learned to be more open with each other.

What’s most rewarding about being married? I am married to my best friend.

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Gerald & Marlene Dammen  
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met through friends of Jerry’s.

How has faith helped your marriage? Pray and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.

Donald & Deborah Colling  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? Playing football on opposing teams.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We couldn’t wait to be with each other and make plans for our future.

What challenges did you face? Communication.

How did you overcome them? We learned to be more open with each other.

What’s most rewarding about being married? I am married to my best friend.

How has faith helped your marriage? Because of our faith, we knew we could weather anything.

Advice for engaged couples? Make sure to communicate, it is so important.

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# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met through friends of Jerry’s.

How has faith helped your marriage? Pray and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.

Donald & Deborah Colling  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? Playing football on opposing teams.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We couldn’t wait to be with each other and make plans for our future.

What challenges did you face? Communication.

How did you overcome them? We learned to be more open with each other.

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How has faith helped your marriage? Prayer and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.

Gerald & Marlene Dammen  
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met through friends of Jerry’s.

How has faith helped your marriage? Pray and faith guided us through issues that arose.

Advice for engaged couples? Work to do it together. Be strong for each other.
Gary & Deborah Droessler
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet?
We attended the same schools. Gary-class of ’69 and Debra - class of ’70

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
Sense of humor and laughing together.

What challenges did you face?
Money struggles and seeing one of our children struggling.

How did you overcome them?
Persistence, prayer and hard work. We never gave up.

What’s most rewarding about being married?
Laughter, friendship and romantic love. Seeing our child find joy again.

How has faith helped your marriage?
It was constant and anchored us.

Advice for engaged couples?
Pre-Cana advice from our priest was “Pray together each and every night. You can’t pray with someone if you are angry.” We admit we saw a few dawns but we still hold hands and pray every night.

Robert & Mary Frei
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet?
Our 1st meeting was brief and only a sighting. He was a senior and I a sophomore. Our first in person introduction came after I graduated. I was searching for a way to make new friends starting out in college. I heard about a singles group, S.C.O.R.E.S (Single, Catholic, Organization, Religious, Educational, & Social). He was the president and I joined them for the social events.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
We shared the same faith, similar family values and we were friends before dating. I loved his winning SMILE and relaxed attitude. He said, “I always had places to go and it was never dull.”

What challenges did you face?
To find time for US when farming and children are demanding attention. To find a common communication skill so we could be on the same page. We usually were on the same page but it wasn’t always verbalized. We continue to have open communication and keep talking until we both see that we understand where we are coming from.

How did you overcome them?
Rule 1 Never go to bed angry. Rule 2 kiss each other good night, good bye, hello for life is not promised. Love each other. Be forgiving, compromise, commit, and communicate.

What’s most rewarding about being married?
Sharing our joys and sorrows of life together. Seeing our child find joy again.

How has faith helped your marriage?
It was constant and anchored us.

Advice for engaged couples?
Pre-Cana advice from our priest was “Pray together each and every night. You can’t pray with someone if you are angry.” We admit we saw a few dawns but we still hold hands and pray every night.

Robert & Mary Frei
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet?
We attended the same schools. Gary-class of ’69 and Debra - class of ’70

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
Sense of humor and laughing together.

What challenges did you face?
Money struggles and seeing one of our children struggling.

How did you overcome them?
Persistence, prayer and hard work. We never gave up.

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How did you meet?
Our 1st meeting was brief and only a sighting. He was a senior and I a sophomore. Our first in person introduction came after I graduated. I was searching for a way to make new friends starting out in college. I heard about a singles group, S.C.O.R.E.S (Single, Catholic, Organization, Religious, Educational, & Social). He was the president and I joined them for the social events.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
We shared the same faith, similar family values and we were friends before dating. I loved his winning SMILE and relaxed attitude. He said, “I always had places to go and it was never dull.”

What challenges did you face?
To find time for US when farming and children are demanding attention. To find a common communication skill so we could be on the same page. We usually were on the same page but it wasn’t always verbalized. We continue to have open communication and keep talking until we both see that we understand where we are coming from.

How did you overcome them?
Rule 1 Never go to bed angry. Rule 2 kiss each other good night, good bye, hello for life is not promised. Love each other. Be forgiving, compromise, commit, and communicate.

What’s most rewarding about being married?
Sharing our joys and sorrows of life together. Raising a family in love together. Having a caring, loving partner to talk to and sharing adventures life throws our way.

How has faith helped your marriage?
Sharing our same faith helps to make life go smoother when it gets tough. Faith is a commitment reminder to each other. Sharing praying the rosary on “highway journeys” keeping faith and family covered.

Advice for engaged couples?
#1 Keep the faith, each other and family first, then career and life. Life is not going to be easy. Learn to be friends as well as partners in your adventures while merging your life styles. Be sure to enjoy what God shares with us. Take time to stop and smell the flowers, see all Gods’ creatures around us and take care of our earth.
Pat & Sonya Goerg
# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? We met each other on a blind date. His friend had dated my roommate.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We had many common interests and desires which made us compatible.

What challenges did you face? There are many occasions of relative’s celebrations (such as graduation, etc.) that conflict. We decide together which of the occasions that we will attend.

How did you overcome them? Conversed about the problems and made decisions together. Lots of communication.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship. We like being together. Patience and love.

How has faith helped your marriage? Through prayer and lighting a candle.

Advice for engaged couples? Have patience. There will be bumps along the road, so then discuss the situation. Calm down. Find a plan. Work together as a team.

Always pray that the good Lord will be part of your daily life.

George & Jane Gilkey
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? After a 4 year enlistment in the US Air Force, Al was living with his parents in Janesville. Through an acquaintance, Marge and her sister learned of jobs in Janesville. After coming to Janesville, they rented an apartment in the house that Al was living in.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? April 21, 1956. We seemed very comfortable together and shared so many of the same ideas about life and marriage.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being together and raising our wonderful children.

Albert & Marjory Funk
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? After a 4 year enlistment in the US Air Force, Al was living with his parents in Janesville. Through an acquaintance, Marge and her sister learned of jobs in Janesville. After coming to Janesville, they rented an apartment in the house that Al was living in.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We seemed very comfortable together and shared so many of the same ideas about life and marriage.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being together and raising our wonderful children.
Advice for engaged couples? The future is not always predictable. Like any relationship one has to give and take. Marriage is a loving partnership that depends on mutual love and respect and also a good amount of faith, hope, honesty and trust. Having a positive outlook, a good sense of humor, humility and strong faith really helps.

Michael & Mary Heagney
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet?
Blind date set up by close friend and groom’s brother.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Mike was kind, caring and compassionate. Mary was loving, caring and funny.

What challenges did you face? Making time for each other. We owned our own bakery business for 30 years. This endeavor took 12-16 hours a day, six days a week. We were not only committed to our business but also community service.

How did you overcome them? Selling our business. Having more time for each other and family.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being able to help and share with each other. Working together on projects. We are able to look at our two children and know we made a difference in their lives. We are proud of both of our children, they are caring and loving adults.

How has faith helped your marriage? Could not have done it without the help of God and His plan for us. So many small miracles along the way.

Advice for engaged couples? Work with each other, talk through your troubles. Don’t just give up on each other. Learn to pray and have faith in God. He will help you and guide you. You just need to be patient. Last but not least, never spend more money than you make.
**James P. & Nancy J. Hellenbrand**  
# of Children: 2  # of Grandchildren: 3

**How has faith helped your marriage?** It has centered us on the important things in life like not being materialistic.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Keep your Catholic faith in the marriage, communicate, and take time for each other.

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**Allan & Elizabeth Hurst**  
# of Children: 2  # of Grandchildren: 3

**How did you meet?** My husband was stationed at the army base in New Jersey. A bunch of us girls would go the NCO club on base. We met there.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** The way we truly loved each other.

**What challenges did you face?** Finances. Fighting about money.

**How did you overcome them?** We really haven’t. We each have our own personal finances.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Friendship. Seeing our children grow up to be “good

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**Timothy & Jane Hineline**  
# of Children: 4  # of Grandchildren: 7

**How did you meet?** On the dance floor and a month later Tim left for the Army since he was drafted.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Tim was in the Army. We got to know each other through letter writing. Married 1 year after meeting.

**What challenges did you face?** Our son’s death after 21 years of marriage.

**How did you overcome them?** Our parish priest who was a professionally trained counselor.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Our children and grandchildren.

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**Dean Michael & Anita Marie Johnson**  
# of Children: 2  # of Grandchildren: 4

**How did you meet?** On a blind date.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Everything. It was love at first sight.

**What challenges did you face?** Money at times. Young adult children. Growing in our careers.

**How did you overcome them?** Prayer. A therapist once in a particular difficult time - death in the family.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Friendship. Seeing our children grow up to be “good
people”.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** My husband turned Catholic before we were married. So sharing prayer and Sunday Mass has been an important part of our marriage.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Be friends first. Take time as a couple. Especially when children come. Share important decisions. Be faithful. Trust each other, it’s as important as love.

**Thomas & Mary Kaiser**

# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 3

**How did you meet?** A blind date. Set up by a friend of my parents.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** The fact that we became friends right away. The fun we had. We “got” each other right away and the respect for each other’s feelings.

**What challenges did you face?** Tom was a truck driver so he was gone a lot. We had to work on private time for each other.

**How did you overcome them?** Communication. We also did marriage prep at church doing prep days at different parishes.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having your best friend always there for you!

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Always keeps us grounded.

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**Advice for engaged couples?** Make sure you are friends and respect each other. Don't worry about the little things.

**Daniel & Susan Kelly**

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 3

**How did you meet?** Dominic Club picnic

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** 2/14/1971

**What challenges did you face?** The grooms travel for work.

**How did you overcome them?** Listen to each other.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Two children.

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**Most Rewarding:**

You feel accepted for who you are and no longer have to put on a facade. You never feel alone, especially when you see your spouse doing everything they can to put you first.
David & Sally Kochendorfer
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4

**How did you meet?** We met in high school.

**What challenges did you face?** Trying to always make ends meet. Also juggling work and the kids.

**How did you overcome them?** Working together to make things work out.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Our love for each other and being able to lean on each other through the tough times.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Having our faith in God and prayer helped.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Always lean on each other in good times and bad. There should always be give and take.

James Frank & Carol Jean Kramer
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4

**How did you meet?** After military service returned home and met through friends. We were highschool classmates. Graduated in 1965. Never said a word to each other in HS.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Felt very comfortable with her. Nice guy with a nice car.

**What challenges did you face?** Raising the kids

**How did you overcome them?** Working together with family and friends.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Children and grandchildren.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Prayers during tough times helped get us through.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Always communicate to each other.

DuWayne & Nina Kurt
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 9

**How did you meet?** We met in high school.

**What challenges did you face?** Just went with the flow.

**How did you overcome them?** Just dealt with one thing at a time.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Our two children and our grandchildren.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Gave us a calming and a stable feeling. Prayers were answered many times.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Patience, kindness, understanding, compromise.
William & Deborah LaBerge
# of Children: 6 # of Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet? Paths first crossed when I was in the 6th grade and Bill was in high school. He dated an older sister. Then years later we met at Tombstone Tap a beer bar. When we first met he gave me a Fair Button and I thought he was the handsomest guy I met! Later he was still handsome and we just got to know each other. Everything just seemed so right!

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? He was Catholic. Debby was level headed, easy going and cute.

What challenges did you face? Moving away from family right away. Bill got a job in Chicago at the Sears Tower.

How did you overcome them? I’m sure Jesus was there even if I didn’t acknowledge Him!

What’s most rewarding about being married? The companionship-doing things together. Having a best friend you can count on.

How has faith helped your marriage? My faith helped me in my later years. After the kids were grown. When they were little, Sunday mass and prayers before meals was my faith. Later I started going to Bible study, etc. and Bill and I started praying together each day. That was the big help!

Advice for engaged couples? Bring Jesus into your everyday life. Pray with the little ones and with your spouse. Always acknowledge Jesus, who makes all things right!

Tom & Carla Lauber
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? Mount Horeb High School

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Listening to each other and enjoying each others company.

What challenges did you face? Both worked hard, raised our children, and went to Church weekly.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Family.

How has faith helped your marriage? Kept us close and our faith got us through hard times.

Advice for engaged couples? Get married in church. Raise your family with faith.

Advice for engaged couples?
☞ Be patient and don’t let the little things distract you from living the life God intended for you.
Tom & Terri Lieder
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? We went to high school together and went to the same church (St. Mary’s in Mineral Point).

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? I loved everything about Terri. She was so considerate, kind, good looking and she could cook! His smile and attitude about life. He was fun to be with and we could talk about most anything.

What challenges did you face? Probably managing money or lack of. We made each other happy by doing the simple things in life.

How did you overcome them? We knew what we could afford and stuck to our budget. Neither one of us was a big spender.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Sharing like interest (traveling, sport events, musicals, etc.). Raising our children to be good, loving adults.

How has faith helped your marriage? It has strengthened our love for each other. We went to Sunday Mass, prayed the rosary and tried to live a good life.

Advice for engaged couples? Communicate with each other, always try to please when possible, smile and never go to bed angry.

George & Angie Loomis
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 7 # of Great-Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? Introduced in a bar in Madison.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? September 1970. We were two people seeking a permanent relationship and seemed to be attracted to each other.

What challenges did you face? We have considerably different interests. Raising children in low income family.

How did you overcome them? We looked for whatever shared interests we did have and tried to build on that. We worked hard at raising our family, involving ourselves in our kids activities. Worked hard to climb out of our poverty.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship and trying to continually find interests that we both shared. We work hard at coming to mutual agreement on things we do.

How has faith helped your marriage? The principles of the Church have given great guidance on how you should conduct your lives.

Advice for engaged couples? Hang in there. Don’t let difficulties overcome the joys that occur.
Phil & Sue Luedtke
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? At an event near Tomahawk WI.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We had several common interests.

What challenges did you face? Periods of unemployment and temper flare-ups.

How did you overcome them? Desire to solve the problems and not disappoint the other person. Supporting each other through challenges.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The continuous growth toward understanding wishes and thinking of the other. Being with your best friend, the person you love, every day.

How has faith helped your marriage? Seeing faith in God in each other. Asking God for help and support and knowing He is there to rely on.

Advice for engaged couples? When things get difficult, don’t give up easily. Try to find common ground to develop the understanding of the process of giving and receiving. Be there for each other. Marriage is not a 50/50 proposition but more like 80/80.

Roland & Cristi Maier
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? Met at a high school dance.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Both of us put the other’s feelings first. Talking about any topic was so easy and we loved spending time together. Even when apart we would call each other on the phone. We both knew we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together.

What challenges did you face? We had some significant challenges during our marriage, financial issues where we almost lost our home. Both lost our jobs at one time and each of us went through cancer treatments.

How did you overcome them? Our love for each other and our faith. We believed that God was always there and we prayed often. We felt whatever the future held we could get through it together. We always talked things out and set goals as to how to handle things and then right or wrong we stuck together.

What challenges did you face? We had some significant challenges during our marriage, financial issues where we almost lost our home. Both lost our jobs at one time and each of us went through cancer treatments.

How did you overcome them? Our love for each other and our faith. We believed that God was always there and we prayed often. We felt whatever the future held we could get through it together. We always talked things out and set goals as to how to handle things and then right or wrong we stuck together.

What’s most rewarding about being married? When you make a commitment to another you always feel they will be there for you in good times and in bad. You no longer have that fear if things get tough the other will decide to leave. You feel accepted for who you are and no longer have to put on a facade. You never feel alone, especially when you see your spouse doing everything they can to put you first.

How has faith helped your marriage? Our faith gave us the strength to get through the tough times.
Going to mass each week gave us hope for what was ahead in any situation. Prayer would make us feel closer to each other that with prayer and our devotion to each other we could weather any storm.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Enter into marriage knowing it is a lifetime commitment. Before you commit, get to know each other; what are your goals, do they want to have children, do they belong to a church, what are their likes and dislikes? Realize that no one is perfect and each of you will have strengths and weaknesses. Build on each other’s strengths to become a team. Discuss everything with each other and assume nothing. Be open and honest don’t keep things from each other, good or bad. Treat each other with respect and always say please and thank you even for the little things. Never forget to tell the other how important they are to you and always say, “I love you” every day.

**Gary & Patricia McClaren**  
# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 6

**How did you meet?** We met when Mary’s family moved in next door to Howie’s family. We were seniors in high school and we would walk home from Sunday Mass together. I asked him to my senior prom at St. Francis Academy and he asked me to his senior prom at Joliet Catholic High School.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** I loved Howie’s smile, gentle nature and how he looked at me. He was a good listener and I could be honest and share my heart with him. I loved Mary’s joyful bubbly personality and the way she accepted me for who I was.

**What challenges did you face?** Prioritizing our marriage and prayer life together and giving our relationship the time it deserved.

**How did you overcome them?** Working on our relationship, attending a Marriage Encounter weekend and a Retreat weekend, learning Natural Family Planning, growing in our faith.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having children and raising them. Children help you to mature and grow in ways you would never expect.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our faith saved our marriage. It helped us to grow, to heal, to truly love and to totally give ourselves to each other.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Be open about your past. Be willing to dialogue about those things that you try to keep secret. Don’t allow your relationship to become stagnant. Seek help when needed and keep growing. Keep Christ at the center of your marriage. Continue to learn about your faith and

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**Howard & Mary Mead**  
# of Children: 2

**How did you meet?** We met when Mary’s family moved in next door to Howie’s family. We were seniors in high school and we would walk home from Sunday Mass together. I asked him to my senior prom at St. Francis Academy and he asked me to his senior prom at Joliet Catholic High School.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** I loved Howie’s smile, gentle nature and how he looked at me. He was a good listener and I could be honest and share my heart with him. I loved Mary’s joyful bubbly personality and the way she accepted me for who I was.

**What challenges did you face?** Prioritizing our marriage and prayer life together and giving our relationship the time it deserved.

**How did you overcome them?** Working on our relationship, attending a Marriage Encounter weekend and a Retrouvaille weekend, learning Natural Family Planning, growing in our faith.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having children and raising them. Children help you to mature and grow in ways you would never expect.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our faith saved our marriage. It helped us to grow, to heal, to truly love and to totally give ourselves to each other.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Be open about your past. Be willing to dialogue about those things that you try to keep secret. Don’t allow your relationship to become stagnant. Seek help when needed and keep growing. Keep Christ at the center of your marriage. Continue to learn about your faith and
deepening your prayer life. Be open to life and children. Do not hinder God’s blessings by blocking what He wants to give to you.

Fred & Alysyn Miller
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 3 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1


When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? The fact that we were close and honest.

What challenges did you face? Raising 3 kids on very little resources.

How did you overcome them? Perseverance to make more money and get a better job.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We enjoy each other immensely!

How has faith helped your marriage? We are constantly asking the Lord for guidance.

Advice for engaged couples? You have to really LIKE each other to make the long haul.

Michael & Joan Morey
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? We met at the beginning of our junior year of high school, the year Joan returned home to attend public high school. Even though we lived in the same small town for six years, there had never been an opportunity to meet each other until we both participated in the construction of our junior class Homecoming float.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We dated on and off for more than six years. When we both knew we wanted to be married and became engaged, our love for each other was cemented, and we were excited to begin to plan a life together. We already shared so many things of importance: faith, family, goals and leisure activities. The decision to marry meant we trusted that our love for one another would bring both of us a life of happiness.

What challenges did you face? Finding a proper balance between work and family life has been very challenging, even as we became empty nesters! Mike started his business when our children were young, and his work demands were great. However, a benefit of owning your own business was his ability to take time to attend the children’s activities, and his involvement was so important in our children’s lives.

What’s most rewarding about being married? A marriage based on true love and a shared commitment to Faith and Family is the key to happiness. A life filled with happiness has rewards in so many ways: mental, physical and spiritual. Raising children and the companionship of a loving partner are great rewards of marriage.

How has faith helped your marriage? Marriage and life are filled with challenges. Faith is the foundation for believing in the will of God, and prayer provides the hope we will overcome any challenge together. Without a doubt the greatest challenge of our marriage has been the loss of our first child. Erik was twelve weeks old when he died of SIDS. Our grief was overwhelming, but our faith in a loving God gave us the courage to accept this loss and to eventually move forward with the birth of two
more children.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Our advice to couples contemplating marriage is to take time to really know each other. Articulate goals, especially relating to family and the practice of religion. Put your trust in the acceptance of the will of God.

**Neil & Claudia Moseley**  
**# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6**

**How did you meet?**  
We were introduced by a mutual friend at a college activity, and our first date was to Sunday Mass.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Her upbeat outlook on life, faith in God to guide us through life, and her loving and welcoming family. His strong sense of responsibility, loyalty and integrity.

**What challenges did you face?** Husband's work required significant time traveling away from home, sometimes for weeks at a time.

**How did you overcome them?** We are very grateful there were supportive family close by.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Children and grand children.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our faith has helped us find our way through some difficult health issues, and helps us to remember to help others in their time of need and comfort.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Remember the importance of supportive family, and respect and welcome your partner's family as your own.

**Daniel & Jane Niesen**  
**# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 3**

**How did you meet?** A blind date set up by Dan. Dan met Jane’s parents and 10 brothers and sisters before meeting Jane. Dan knew Jane’s sister Joan before setting up the date.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** I (Dan) loved and respected Jane's attention to other’s needs. Dan has a good sense of humor. His religion is important to him. He is a very hard worker.

**What challenges did you face?** (Dan) Financial hardships. (Jane) Balance helping Dan with the farm work and being a good mother to our children.

**How did you overcome them?** (Dan) God told me to enter the seminary for 4 years. He also told me to leave the seminary. He led me to jobs that gave me experience for the farming career he had in mind for me. He led us to our first farm and then to the next one to buy in 1982. Have trust in God.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** (Dan) Faith in God and a loving partner to share that love with. (Jane) Sharing life and faith experiences with the person you love.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** If we trust in God, all things will be provided and many more than we can expect. With faith we can get through anything and enjoy much happiness.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Live your faith and let God guide you in everything. This Dan and I both agree on!

**Name Withheld**  
**# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 7**

**How did you meet?**  
Our advice to couples contemplating marriage is to take time to really know each other. Articulate goals, especially relating to family and the practice of religion. Put your trust in the acceptance of the will of God.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Live your faith and let God guide you in everything. This Dan and I both agree on!
**How did you meet?** We met at a community dance. When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Our kindness and consideration for each other.

**What challenges did you face?** Finding agreement.

**How did you overcome them?** Consideration for all in the family.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Supporting each other, being there for one another. Enjoying doing things together.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Gave us confidence that we could make it through the hard times. We were blessed with children and happiness.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Remember why you fell in love. Respect your partner. Have a sense of humor, be positive, look at the bright side of life. Look at what you have instead of what you don’t have.

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**Larry & Nancy Olson**

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 1

**How did you meet?** Went to same high school. We were actually born in the same hospital just 3 days apart. We met in the nursery since the stay in the hospital at that time was about a week. Must have been fate.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** We always enjoyed spending time together, doing things together. Enjoy each other’s personalities.

**What challenges did you face?** Financial problems, never enough money to go around. It got better throughout the years.

**How did you overcome them?** Whenever we needed extra money, we got an extra job. It always seemed to work out somehow.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Peace and happiness that arrived with our children.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our Catholic faith is everything to marriage and life.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Know and Love God; you won’t do well without him. Live every day as a holy day. Keep yourself safe and on task. Seek Christ in others.

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**Name Withheld**

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 1

**How did you meet?** High school dance.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** April 9, 1971 We enjoyed each other’s company. Dated for 4 years. Loved to be together. Inseparable.

**What challenges did you face?** Being young as we were, at times we both conflicted with each other, as we were still growing up.

**How did you overcome them?** We loved each other and learned to forgive. We never went to bed angry.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?**
Having a family together. Seeing each other through all the different stages of life and partnership. We are very close friends.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Our faith has been extremely important as our relationship has developed through our Faith. Could not be successful without our faith.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Listen to your heart, your instincts. Listen to those who love you. Be honest with each other. Stand firm in your convictions.

**Ken & Elaine Rieder**  
*# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 3*

**How did you meet?** We attended the same school and our parents were in the same Bible Study Group.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** He was a kind, loving, patient, Christian man. She is beautiful and easy to talk to.

**What challenges did you face?** Agreeing on how to discipline our children.

**How did you overcome them?** Talking and compromising and praying.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having your best friend living with you.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Without God and our faith we would probably not be married today.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Communicate with each other and keep your faith in God important in your lives.

**Leo & Becky Ripp**  
*# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2*

How did you meet? Socially through friends.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? My husband would say I brought him out of his shell but in truth we worked through our strengths and weaknesses and this made us a complete couple who love each other completely.

**What challenges did you face?** Balancing work, family and finances.

**How did you overcome them?** Faith. We worked together and discussed everything. We loved each other and always found a way.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having two wonderful daughters. We enjoy our family and absolutely adore our grandchildren. Love being with my best friend every day.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Faith has always been the center of our marriage and led us through good times and bad.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Communicate and compromise.
Richard & Peggy Saeman
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? Mutual friends.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Being together and planning our life together.

What challenges did you face? Loss of our middle son, Brad, in February 2003.

How did you overcome them? Our religious belief and good friends and family.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Raising our 3 sons. Working together to where we are now.

How has faith helped your marriage? Prayer has helped us through good times and difficult times.

Advice for engaged couples? Love and respect each other. Work through your problems together.

“He even learned to dance because he knew how much I loved to dance.”

Tom & Phyllis Schicker
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet? We met one snowy Saturday January evening at a local bar. We started talking, danced to a few songs, and then Tom asked me out on a date for the next evening. Our first date was to Madison to see the movie, Love Story. On our second date, we went ice-skating at Haumerson’s Pond in Fort Atkinson. And the rest, as they say, is history.

What challenges did you face? Our 50 years together has not always been easy. Tom and I are both very independent, stubborn individuals. So we both had to learn to give and take a little and to be patient with each other. But we always remembered our wedding vows to “to love and to cherish, in good times and bad, through sickness and health, to death do us part.” And we thank God for bringing us together over 50 years ago.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We were blessed with 3 beautiful children and we now have 5 absolutely wonderful grandchildren. Family has always been an important part of our life.

How has faith helped your marriage? I think that a very important part of our marriage is our faith in God. When we met, I was Lutheran. I had spent 8 years in a Lutheran grade school, he had gone to the Catholic school. We both had come from “Church going” families. Interesting to note is that while we were dating, every Saturday night we had to go to mass, no matter what was going on. And going to mass regularly and our devotion to God has sustained us through the ups and downs we’ve encountered along the way of spending 50

“...and they said, ‘If you want to walk in the garden, you must stand in the middle, for you will be surrounded by evil spirits.’”
He's always there for you.

Advice for engaged couples? Never take each other for granted. Respect each other’s needs and opinions. Be interested in each other. Marriage is not an open book...it does not belong on social media. The two of you must solve your own issues. Have fun and enjoy each other.

Name Withheld

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet?
At Sunday night Old Time Dances at Turner Hall, Watertown.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
Being friendly, kind, respectful, attractive, friendly smile. Both having a Catholic background and farm oriented, enjoying dancing together. Mingled in with family - Sam was one of 12 siblings - names all starting with “S”. We were engaged on Marlene’s 21st birthday.

What challenges did you face?
When you're farming 24/7, it’s hard to have time to help raise the kids - going to boys sporting events or school activities. When parents had passed away, Sam had slight stroke right before.

How did you overcome them?
Patience and our trust and faith in God and one another. Parents help and supporting each other. Power of prayer to get through tough times and love one another.

What's most rewarding about being married?
You share a life of love together so close and intimate that you know you trust each other. You know you're there for each other and you always have someone to come home to.

How has faith helped your marriage?
We married Catholic. What better way to teach your children than when you both agree on “One God” and that

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Name Withheld

# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 9 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet?
Blind date.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?
We truly enjoyed each other. We couldn’t wait to see each other and he even learned to dance because he knew how much I loved to dance.

What challenges did you face?
Raising children with attitudes.

How did you overcome them?
Masses, devotions and prayers.

What's most rewarding about being married?
You share a life of love together so close and intimate that you know you trust each other. You know you're there for each other and you always have someone to come home to.

How has faith helped your marriage?
We married Catholic. What better way to teach your children than when you both agree on “One God” and that
God blessed us with a healthy family, children and grandchildren. It can show children and grandchildren that marriage can last if you're willing to work at it and pray!

**How has faith helped your marriage?** Prayer and trusting that God is always with us are priorities in our marriage. Going to Mass and being active in our Church and school community activities has helped us grow spiritually and socially.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Respect each other. Never go to bed mad or upset with each other, work through disagreements and forgive at days end. Start fresh tomorrow is a new day. Trust in God and forgive each other. Be patient, communicate all feelings and ideas of future plans and compromise. Pray together, love and sacrifice and God will make marriage work. Keep your Catholic faith alive in your family. Compliment and be supportive of your spouse, having common goals. Communicate.

**Mike & Kathy Sweeney**

*# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 8*

How did you meet? Kathy’s brother was in the same senior class as Mike at Queen of Apostles Seminary.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Mike was loving, kind, considerate, respectful, and sincere. I knew he would be a wonderful husband and father. Kathy was fun to be around but most of all, very family oriented and dedicated to those close to her.

What challenges did you face? Health issues revolving around our grandson’s cancer was probably the most stressful. Having three children in four years was challenging at times but we succeeded. We struggled with financial issues due to down turns in the economy like most people who run their own business. Caring for our aging parents over a ten year period required a lot of time and patience. Kathy was the anchor while we navigated these challenges. She was always looking at the positive side of things.

How did you overcome them? The Serenity Prayer always helped pull us through. Having a very close network of family and friends held us together during the challenges and good times.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having a wonderful life blessed with three children, three wonderful spouses of our children, and having seven grandsons and one granddaughter. Having a great spouse to share our journey through life with - especially planning our “adventures” - small and large.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** The Serenity Prayer has always helped us focus on important times in our marriage. Kathy’s saying, “give it up to the Lord, He will guide you” has always helped.

Advice for engaged couples? You won’t make it if you don’t have love and respect! Marriage is the most rewarding and complicated contract/relationship you will ever enter. There will be situations dictating that you must give 100% even when you absolutely feel there is zero left to give. You must visualize and keep your marriage vows at all times. But most of all - have fun!!

**Michael & Mary Trautschold**

*# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 1*
**How did you meet?** College.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Be good friends to one another.

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**John & Carol Treinen**

# of Children: 2  
# of Grandchildren: 7  
# of Great-Grandchildren: 4

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**How did you meet?** We met roller-skating at the Rainbow Roller Rink in Fennimore through 4-H.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** We loved the fact that we both enjoyed doing activities together such as dancing, roller skating, fishing and others. We wanted to be together and enjoy each other’s company.

**What challenges did you face?** Keith worked for a time as an over-the-road semi driver. There were nights when I got very lonesome for him. His job also required him to work at night. There were times when I felt like I was raising the boys by myself.

**How did you overcome them?** We talked on the phone when he was away. When we could, we had lunch together to catch up on what was happening with the boys and where he had been. If possible, on short runs we would all get in the semi and all go with him on weekends.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** The most rewarding part of our marriage has been watching our boys grow up and choosing a career that makes them excel. We also enjoy watching them bring up their children in the Catholic faith and teaching them right from wrong.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We have

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**Keith & Mary U’Ren**

# of Children: 3  
# of Grandchildren: 6

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**How did you meet?** My sister was dating John’s cousin and they were attending St. Bernard’s spaghetti dinner. They asked me to join them and they asked John to join them. That was how we met.

**When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other?** Spending time together and planning for our future. We discussed how many children we would have and where we would live.

**What challenges did you face?** Making ends meet financially and agreeing on how to raise the children. We found that it would take a lot of compromising for both of us to make it all work.

**How did you overcome them?** Staying calm and talking things over. Learning how to listen to each other and to make the best decisions.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Spending time with each other and realizing we did make good decisions because we are so proud of the two children we raised together.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We attended Mass as a family and prayed together as a family. This helped us stay close. We were both brought up with these values and examples.

**Advice for engaged couples?** Learn how to listen to each other and make compromises. Stay close and do things together. No obstacle is too big to overcome if you do it together.
learned to pray and worship together especially each week at our perpetual adoration chapel.

Advice for engaged couples? Give your spouse space. There are times when your spouse may need time to think. Tell them that you love them especially when they are stressed out about little things. Spend special time together whether it is just taking a walk or sitting outside listening to the birds.

Carl & Linda Wagner
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? High school sweethearts. We were in the same class.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Carl was in the Navy while we were engaged. Just trying to stay in touch and being able to communicate.

What challenges did you face? In raising a family and working full time jobs being able to find time for our time together.

How did you overcome them? Being thoughtful and finding time.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being with the person you love.

How has faith helped your marriage? Just knowing you have God in your life.

Advice for engaged couples? Always be truthful and open with each other.

Name Withheld
# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? At our study hall in high school.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? The things we both wanted in our lives. Able to communicate openly with each other. Our church beliefs and the fact that we each thought the other was perfect in our eyes.

What challenges did you face? Being accepted by family members for who we were and how we chose to live our lives.

How did you overcome them? Our love for each other. Keeping the lines of communication open to discuss things and work them out.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being there for each other in good times as well as the not so good times.

How has faith helped your marriage? Our belief in God and that He is there for us. Attending Mass every week.

Advice for engaged couples? Don’t be so quick to call it quits when times get tough. Pray, have strong faith and communicate your feelings to each other.

Phil & Mary Wegmann
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 3

How did you meet? We went to St. Mary’s Grade School in Bloomington at the same time.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We liked having so much in common. We could talk about religion, farming and science and so much more.
What challenges did you face? Communication has been a challenge. To make sure that we have heard the other person correctly, we find ourselves repeating back what we heard the other person say.

How did you overcome them? Marriage Encounter gave us the tools to help with better communication. Sometimes it means writing what we want to communicate to the other person. Realizing that feelings are neither right nor wrong, they are just are, helped us a lot.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The most rewarding part of being married is having someone to share our everyday lives and experiences. Knowing that the other person will be there no matter what, in good times and difficult times. It has been rewarding to raise our children together and now we have grandchildren to enjoy.

How has faith helped your marriage? Having God as the center of our marriage has helped us through difficult times. Attending Mass together is very important to us.

Advice for engaged couples? Pray together, thanking God for the blessings of marriage. Be faithful to your wedding vows, remembering that marriage is forever.

William & Nancy Woodward
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet? Worked with my husband’s sister.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? Kindness and caring about what the other one was feeling.

What challenges did you face? Money - managing.

How did you overcome them? Prayer and talking.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Always having someone to count on. Always being able to talk about anything.

How has faith helped your marriage? Can always turn to my faith and God when I have a problem.

Advice for engaged couples? Always keep God and your faith first.

Paul & Barbara Youngbauer
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 3

How did you meet? Paul and his best friend Tom went into the Army together after high school. Tom was dating Barb’s cousin, Judy, who suggested we write to each other. We started dating when Paul came home on leave.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? That we had such different personalities but enjoyed each other’s company. Getting to know the other’s families.

What challenges did you face? Learning to accept each other’s point of view on issues of money, raising a family and day-to-day matters.

How did you overcome them? Our strong Catholic faith and attending mass as a family. Compromise and trusting in each other also was essential.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship. Having two wonderful sons, granddaughters and extended family. Retirement and traveling.

How has faith helped your marriage? Having the same Catholic beliefs that taught us to respect and honor each other.

Advice for engaged couples? Take time to listen to each other. Be patient and don’t let the little things distract you from living the life God intended for you.
Bob & Kathy Spencer

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? At a teens party.

When you were engaged, what did you love most about each other? We were crazy about each other, loved everything about each other.

What challenges did you face? Just growing up and facing the reality of life.

How did you overcome them? Working together to make our lives better.

What's most rewarding about being married? Watching our family and seeing their success.

How has faith helped your marriage? When hit with hard times, it helps us through them.

Advice for engaged couples? Become best of friends.
Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,
it is not inflated,
it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered,
it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.
Pray with the little ones & with your spouse. Always acknowledge Jesus who makes all things right!

- William & Deborah LaBerge