

Getting Married in the Catholic Church? Step by Step



The Catholic Church has a long history of helping couples to prepare for marriage. It has learned a great deal that can benefit any couple, regardless of religion. Because the Catholic Church wants couples to form strong, lasting marriages, couples who wish to marry in the Catholic Church are asked to:

- Contact and meet with your **parish priest** as soon as you are engaged.
- Take at least **six months** to intensively prepare for your marriage. This goes beyond choosing a date and church, reserving a place for the reception, and picking out dresses. It means using this time to delve more deeply into your relationship and approach this momentous day with prayer and reflection.
- Attend an approved **marriage preparation program**. There are many different formats for marriage preparation programs ranging from intensive

weekends, to a weekly series, to “in home” mentor couple programs. [Check out the most common national programs here.](#) To find what programs are available near you, [contact your diocesan family life office.](#) Catholic marriage preparation programs are usually presented by a team of lay married couples and a priest or deacon. They are not restricted to Catholics, but they are always in keeping with Church teaching.

- Most dioceses ask couples to take a [marriage preparation inventory](#) (such as FOCCUS, PMI, or PREPARE). These are not “tests” to determine whether you can get married in the Church, but rather discussion starters to assess what issues you already agree on and what you might need to discuss further.
- For more information on **planning your Catholic wedding**, [please visit this page.](#)
- If you are seeking to **convalidate your civil marriage** (meaning make it a valid Catholic marriage), please [visit this page.](#)
- More specific **questions?** [Contact us.](#)

Most importantly at the time of your engagement, the Church welcomes you to this sacrament of Marriage in the spirit of Jesus who said:

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

(John 15:12-13)