

Take a retreat to plan for your marriage

New for 2010: a diocesan weekend retreat for the engaged

By Andy Galvin
For the Catholic Herald

I remember when my wife and I became engaged what great fun it was to go to the department stores and put together our gift registry. In fact, the greatest gifts I received (I mean, we!) were three different grills! I ended up returning them all and getting the daddy of all grills – what a gift!

Now that *we* just passed our 16th wedding anniversary, and the gas grill rusts on the back porch, I realize that there were other gifts far more important than the grills. In fact, perhaps the most meaningful gift was attending a weekend retreat for engaged couples *before* our wedding.

My wife and I had talked about many, many things during our dating relationship – I didn't think there could be much more to discuss. But the opportunity to focus only on us - for a full weekend led by married couples sharing their own experiences and the wisdom of the church - would have a far greater impact on our marriage than I realized at the time. In fact, I credit that experience for the ongoing success of our marriage.

New weekend retreat

I am very pleased to announce that the Diocese of Madison is now offering its first Weekend Retreat for Engaged Couples on April 23 to 25. Over the past 9 months, a team of four married couples and a priest have developed a phenomenal retreat that will no doubt have a profound impact on the couples that attend and the success of their future marriage. Why? For three basic reasons:

First, the weekend is about the engaged couple. It will speak directly to the love they feel deep in their hearts. It will provide ample time for couples to discuss, ponder and dream free from the distractions of everyday life. The sacraments of confession and Mass will be offered. More time to talk together, romantic candle-light dinner for two, and some fun sprinkled in, too!

Second, married couples will share their experiences of the joys and struggles of everyday married life. Marriage isn't always pretty! But it's real life...and it's important for engaged

couples to understand the realities of two people joining together for life and the challenges of starting a family.

Third, as Catholics we believe that Christ must be the center of our marriages. What does that mean? How is that played out in day to day living? We will explore God's plan for marriage, with the assurance that joy is the fruit of following His plan.

How it's different

How is this different from the other two Marriage Prep days offered by the diocese?

The weekend retreat will include the content of both programs. **If a couple attends the retreat they do not need to attend the other two days.** But the material is packaged within a quiet, restful weekend that allows the couple to focus on themselves. And, you get two requirements taken care of in one weekend!

The cost of the weekend is \$195 per couple, including all materials, meals and lodging. The weekend will be held at the retreat facilities of the Bishop O'Connor Center on the west-side of Madison.

I urge engaged couples to fit this opportunity into their schedules. We spend so much time, energy and money on the wedding (the average price of a single wedding day is \$26,000!). - a \$200-weekend that will put your marriage on the right track hardly seems a burden. Isn't it worth a lifetime of love and joy?



Spring 2010 Weekend Retreat

April 23 – 25, 2010
Bishop O'Connor Center, Madison

Starts 6pm on Friday and concludes at noon on Sunday. Registration closes on April 10, so register early. Space is limited.

For more information and registration, go to www.madisondiocese.org/MP or call Andy Galvin at 608-821-4517.