



## Marriage Preparation Weekend Retreat

The weekend retreat combines the Real Life, Real Love and God's Plan programs into a weekend format and is an excellent way to make the most of your marriage preparation. This special weekend retreat will help you discover a deeper appreciation of your relationship and the natural and Christian vision of Marriage.

- Topics include: Communication, faith, sexuality, stewardship and God's divine plan for marriage.
- Greater dialogue time for deeper discussion
- Opportunity for Mass, Reconciliation and prayer.
- Meets the requirements of attending both marriage preparation days.

What past attendees had to say:

- "Absolutely excellent!"
- "All the presenters were open, very real and genuine."
- "Brought us closer together and really renewed my faith."

Retreats start at 6pm on Friday evening and end at 2pm on Sunday.

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to strengthen your marriage. Register early! Session size is limited.

For dates and registration, go to:  
[www.madisondiocese.org/mp](http://www.madisondiocese.org/mp)



## NFP Natural Family Planning

Many myths exist about the use and value of Natural Family Planning. Learn why NFP can be not only a morally acceptable way to plan your family, but also benefits a couple's relationship, including a nearly non-existent divorce rate among NFP-practicing couples.

- NFP 101 - offered monthly, this class provides a basic overview of NFP and the methods offered in the Diocese. Great starting point to select your method and complete your training.
- NFP Methods - Four different methods of NFP are available to fit a variety of needs and lifestyles. Classes are available at several sites throughout the Madison Diocese. For course descriptions, times and registration, go to [www.madisondiocese.org/nfp](http://www.madisondiocese.org/nfp).



## Marriage Prep Checklist Planning

- Give thanks to God for the love He has given to you as a couple! Pray together for God's grace throughout your engagement and make weekly Mass a priority. And ask your priest or deacon for an engagement blessing!
- Make an appointment with your parish priest or deacon before you set a wedding date
- Participate in the FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory if required.
- Attend the diocesan Real Life, Real Love program.
- Attend the diocesan God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage program.
- Complete the Natural Family Planning "NFP 101" class or full series for a NFP method.
- Prepare yourself spiritually through the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Meet with your priest/deacon to finalize the wedding liturgy and last-minute details.

### Checklist of Required Documents:

- Current Baptismal Certificate.
- Marriage License (from city or town clerk).

VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[www.madisondiocese.org/mp](http://www.madisondiocese.org/mp)  
or call 608-821-3175

Catholic Diocese  
of Madison

# 7 steps to a rewarding Marriage Preparation Experience



MARRIAGE PREPARATION  
PROGRAM

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION IN THE DIOCESE OF MADISON

A Message from  
Bishop Robert C. Morlino

Praise God for being called to the Sacrament of Marriage! It is through this most wonderful Sacrament that you will be the ultimate gift to one another as you journey together through life and toward your heavenly destination.

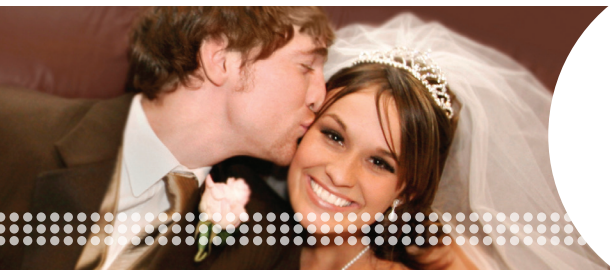


Marriage is also the center of Catholic family life and is a blessing and gift for your future

family and those around you. But, cultural influences today can work against a healthy Christian marriage and a lifetime commitment. Society expects marriages to fail, but the Catholic Church wants yours to succeed.

I believe our diocesan marriage preparation program, the steps of which are outlined at right, 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. I urge you to make the most of your experience, pour your hearts into your preparation and especially open your hearts to the beautiful vision of Marriage that Christ himself has gifted to us.

Yours In Christ,  
Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino  
Bishop of the Diocese of Madison



# 7 Steps to a Rewarding Marriage Preparation Experience.

### WHEN: BEFORE YOU SET A WEDDING DATE

After you become engaged, you should contact your pastor right away to set up a meeting.

## Step 1

Meet with your Pastor

During this initial meeting, the pastor can determine if both parties are free to marry. He will also

provide you with the information you need to complete the remaining steps of your marriage preparation process. Setting a schedule to complete the individual components during or shortly after this meeting is strongly advised.

### WHEN: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER MEETING WITH YOUR PASTOR

Your parish may require you to complete the FOCCUS marriage preparation inventory. FOCCUS is a series of questions designed to assess each of your habits, expectations, and values and will provide you with a personalized profile of your relationship's strengths and weaknesses. The inventory is an important starting place for couple discussion and a map of the areas that may need affirmation, attention, or problem solving.

## Step 2

FOCCUS Marriage Preparation Inventory

## Step 3

Real Life, Real Love

### WHEN: FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

A life skills component designed to deepen your discussion on important topics such as self-awareness, communication, conflict resolution and faith. Led by married couples who share their experiences of real life joys and struggles. Sessions are offered around the diocese with formats varying from Saturday sessions to a weekend retreat. Cost: \$40 per couple, register online.

### WHEN: FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

## Step 4

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage

*God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* is based on John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" and it will explain not only what the Church

teaches about marriage and sexuality, but *why* she teaches it. This will prepare you to live married life as God intends. Sessions are offered around the diocese, with formats varying from a Saturday session to a weekend retreat. Cost: \$60 per couple, register online.

### WHEN: TWO TO FOUR 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 about Natural Family

## Step 5

Natural Family Planning Instruction

Planning. The diocese has instructors available in a variety of methods.

This is optional but highly recommended. Cost: varies by method, register online.



## Step 6

Sacrament of Reconciliation

### WHEN: BEFORE THE WEDDING

The Church invites all Catholics to prepare themselves spiritually prior to their marriage through the sacrament of Reconciliation. This step is not required but strongly encouraged.



## Step 7

Meet to Discuss Wedding Liturgy

### WHEN: NO LATER THAN FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Those working with you in your parish will help you prepare the liturgy for your wedding day (e.g., readings, music, etc), which will start you on the road to a lifetime of marriage.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED FOR STEPS 3, 4, & 5.**  
Go To: [www.madisondiocese.org/mp](http://www.madisondiocese.org/mp)