

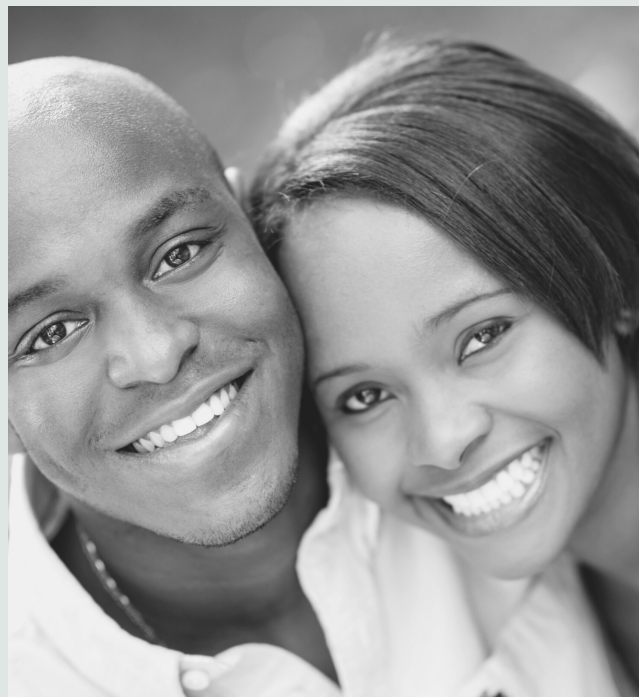
FOR PARISHES

Best

PRACTICES

MARRIAGE FORMATION FOR:

- SINGLE ADULTS
- ENGAGED COUPLES
- NEWLYWED COUPLES
- MARRIED COUPLES



Single Adults

G O A L

Accompany and challenge singles in their spiritual growth, vocation discernment, and commitment to a parish community.

C O N N E C T

- When meeting an new single individual at your parish, make sure to greet them warmly and collect contact information so that you can stay in touch.
- Make sure the process of registering at your parish is easy to find, attractive, and requires few steps. It should be easily accessible online.
- Treat everyone as parishioners, even if they are not registered.

F O R M

- It is critical to offer community to singles; do this by introducing singles to other singles and families.
- Designate at least one individual in the parish who is available to help with accompaniment or spiritual direction for those discerning their vocation or mission.

S E N D

- Invite singles to help with marriage enrichment events, religious education, youth ministry, and other opportunities to interact with couples and families. These interactions can form an important opportunity for vocational discernment.
- Don't be afraid to ask singles to give of themselves and invest their gifts in the parish community.

Engaged Couples

G O A L

Evangelize, prepare couples to enter into a valid marriage, and support them in growing in virtue together.

C O N N E C T

- Investigate the entry points to marriage prep (such as the website, any handbook or materials, the phone line, and the front office.) Make these easy to access, welcoming, and helpful to couples.
- Get to know the couples by asking questions.
- Invite them to share their story. Invite couples to a specific Mass to introduce them to the parish. This is a great opportunity to ask parishioners for their prayers and congratulations. Another option is to ask couples for an engagement photo to put up with their names in the foyer.
- Assign a parish staff member to personally invite couples to parish events and groups.
- Show the couple that they are remembered in prayer; whether on a card in the breviary, in the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass, or at staff meetings.
- If charging the couple for the wedding, choose a reasonable amount.

F O R M

- Use a psychologically sound pre-marital inventory in a strengths-based fashion to encourage the couples to grow together and equip them with the tools they need to work on growth areas.
- Make couple-to-couple formation available. Witness to Love is a great way to incorporate this couple-to-couple formation.

S E N D

- Before they are married, invite couples to take an active role in welcoming engaged or newly married couples to the parish community.

Newlywed Couples

G O A L

Help newlywed couples feel that they belong in the parish community, and encourage the rest of the community in practicing proactive hospitality to these couples.

C O N N E C T

- Demonstrate that you care by continuing to reach out to them via the phone, mail, or email. Even if couples choose not to respond or infrequently, come to Mass, persevere in providing a warm and inviting atmosphere. They notice!
- Invite parishioners to volunteer to drop off a gift basket for a newlywed couple, including items celebrating their marriage and helping them start their domestic church.
- Connect couples together by hosting a social evening for newly married couples (even if married elsewhere.) There are many ways this can be done, such as a breakfast after Mass or a happy hour at a restaurant.
- Put an automatic reminder on the parish calendar a week from the couple's first year anniversary to send a card or e-card congratulating them.

F O R M

- Invite couples to enthrone their home to the Sacred Heart.
- Send a card with an offer to bless their home.

S E N D

- Invite couples to serve the parish or others in their community by asking them to pray and discuss their gifts as a couple, as well as where they are being called to invest them.
- Encourage them to help the parish with marriage prep.

Married Couples

G O A L

Connect couples together for support, help them understand and live their vocation more deeply, and encourage them to make their home a domestic church, an extension of the parish.

C O N N E C T

- Use the Couple Checkup for Churches to get a sense of the needs couples have. This inventory will generate results showing parish trends, which could then be addressed by an initiative or date night event.

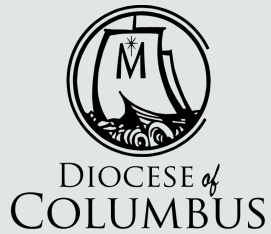
F O R M

- Offer a date night or date night series for married couples. There are many great resources out there to make this as simple to pull off as possible!
- Hold a parish holy hour for the intention of holy marriages.
- Administer Prepare-Enrich as a group program for parish couples. This inventory provides a report for each couple and follow-up exercises which can be offered at follow-up live or virtual events.
- Make a book or resources from Formed.org on marriage topics available. Invite couples in the parish to sign up for discussion groups.
- Have a list of a resources for couples in need of support so you can provide recommendations quickly.

S E N D

- Intentionally ask the Holy Spirit to bring forward couples to lead marriage ministry and build community.
- Use a spiritual gifts inventory or strengthsfinder to help couples discern how they can best serve the Kingdom in their parish or community.
- Encourage couples to help the parish with marriage prep.
- Form a few couples to take the lead in discipling other couples. The Marriage and Family Life Office is happy to assist you with this formation.

The Marriage and Family Life Office



Reach out for resources or assistance:
familylife@columbuscatholic.org