

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!

While we outline the aspects of marriage preparation that are offered below, the best resource for you is your parish priest or deacon, who will accompany you on this journey.

1. MEET WITH YOUR PRIEST OR DEACON: This should be done as soon as possible, as the priest or deacon will accompany you throughout your engagement. The priest or deacon will determine your freedom to marry and explain the marriage preparation process. This meeting would ideally be nine months (or more) before the wedding date.

2. MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY: Soon after your initial meeting with your priest or deacon, the parish will ask you to complete a marriage preparation inventory. This inventory is a set of questions giving a couple a current snapshot of their relationship when it comes to assessing individual habits, expectations, and values (the *Fully Engaged* program is the inventory and mentor couple program used in the diocese). This inventory provides you a unique opportunity to discuss various topics and build a strong foundation for your life together. This inventory will be tied with the Sponsor Mentor Couple Program, (i.e. *Fully Engaged*).

3. PRE-CANA FORMATION DAY: This one-day event will give couples a theological foundation for the Sacrament of Matrimony. The day also offers time for couples to pray together and grow in their faith. There are Pre-Cana Formation Days offered throughout the Diocese of Columbus at various times during the year.

4. NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP): During your engagement preparation process, Couples will need to go through a full training of Natural Family Planning (NFP). Trainings consists of one on one meetings (either in-person or virtual) to be educated in NFP charting. There are four approved NFP methods to choose from: Billings, Creighton, Marquette, and Sympto-Pro/Couple to Couple. Cost and length of meetings will vary depending on the method chosen, and couples medical history. It is recommended a couple plan for 4-6 months consisting of 4-8 meetings. NFP respects the love giving and life-giving natures of marriage, and enriches the bond between husband and wife. Within marriage, the couple can utilize the knowledge gained through NFP to either achieve or postpone pregnancies without violating God's design or disrupting a woman's biology.

5. MEETINGS WITH MENTOR COUPLE: Your parish (or the priest/deacon) will assign you a Sponsor Couple to meet with throughout your engagement to go over the results of your premarital inventory, discuss other life-skills, and how the grace received from the Sacrament will impact your marriage. The pre-marital program, *Fully Engaged*, is the resource used for these meetings. The number of meetings an engaged couple will have with the mentor couple can vary depending on the results of the inventory, but couples can expect between 5-6 meetings with the mentor couple.

6. LAST STEPS: After completing the Pre-Cana Formation Day, NFP, and *Fully Engaged* Mentor Couple Sessions, it is important to return to your priest or deacon to finish any final preparations for your wedding. This can include (but is not limited to): final interviews, preparing the liturgy for your wedding day (i.e. readings, music selection, servers, giftbearers, etc.), and an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (we have provided a Confession Guide for Engaged Couples to help you).

*We hope this guide assists you in your journey as you pray, plan, and prepare for your upcoming nuptials.
Please be assured of our prayers for you both and your families.*

<https://columbuscatholic.org/marriage-and-family-life/>

