

Marriage Life Skills Training

The following educational programs can help you obtain the practical marriage building skills you need to fulfill Step

3. Several options for this step are provided by the parish and/or Diocese of Phoenix.

PARISH COURSE—Some parishes offer their own Marriage Life Skills course, with mentor couples from the parish. This course, over several meetings, will give you and your fiancée sound practical guidance and opportunities in the practical areas of marriage. A great benefit of this program is the opportunity to get to know and bounce ideas off of other couples on the way to marriage with you as well as wise couples who are already married at different stages of their marriage.

LOVE FOR LIFE ENGAGED WEEKEND—This Diocesan Friday night/Saturday course is offered at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in downtown Phoenix. Similar in its topics, and with expert presenters, this weekend provides a comprehensive and focused opportunity to enter honest and intense dialogue with your fiancée. Registration available online at www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER—This full Saturday/Sunday overnight weekend provides another wonderful retreat-like opportunity to engage in dialogue and hear from wise married couples living their sacrament. Topics are similar to the other options.

For the full menu of courses available for Step 3, see www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org



NFP Natural Family Planning

Modern Natural Family Planning is 100% natural and up to 99% effective as a family planning method. You will also learn how NFP

benefits a couple's relationship, one indicator of which is the nearly non-existent divorce rate among NFP-practicing couples. The diocese has NFP instructors available in a variety of methods. This course is divided into 3 to 4 two-hour sessions over the course of three months, to allow for a practicum in the method that will complete step 5 in the marriage preparation process. Offered in many places around the diocese. For course descriptions, times and registration, go to

www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org



God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage offers a refreshing, liberating vision of marriage and sexuality—one

that will help you fully embrace God's glorious plan for you as a couple. This is Step 4 in the Marriage Preparation process.

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage Seminars are offered at various locations throughout the diocese, either on a full-Saturday timeframe or divided into two weeknights, as your planning allows. For locations, dates, and registration, go to www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org

GOD'S PLAN FOR
A JOY-FILLED
Marriage

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.OURCOVENANTOFLOVEPHX.ORG

Catholic Diocese
of Phoenix

7 steps
to a rewarding
Marriage
Experience



MARRIAGE PREPARATION
PROGRAM

MARRIAGE PREPARATION IN THE DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

A Message from
Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted

Congratulations on being called to the Sacrament of Marriage! Marriage is the center of Catholic family life and the vocation through



which most people live out their baptismal commitment. Cultural influences today can work against personal development for healthy Christian marriage and a lifetime commitment. Society expects

marriages to fail, but the Catholic Church wants yours to succeed. The Canon Law of the Catholic Church calls every diocese to prepare couples as well as possible for entering and living out the sacrament of marriage. Among the key elements of effective and successful marriage preparation are an assessment of your strengths and weaknesses as individuals and as a couple, followed by a strong educational program. 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.

Yours In Christ,
Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix



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 or impediments exist that

need to be addressed. He will also provide you with the information you need to complete Steps 2-6 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

After meeting with your pastor, you will complete a marriage preparation inventory, which is a series of questions designed

to assess each of your habits, expectations, and values. Your answers are then scored 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 what issues need time and attention, affirmation, or problem solving.

Step 2 Marriage Preparation Inventory

Step 3

Married Life
Skills Training

WHEN: SEVEN TO EIGHT MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

In addition to a marriage prep inventory, you will complete an educational component designed to fine tune practical skills such as conflict resolution, decision-making, financial management, and communication. This will build on the knowledge you gained from your marriage inventory. There are various educational programs available in the diocese, with formats varying from a weekend retreat to multiple evening meetings. Your priest or deacon can help you select the program that best fits your needs.

Step 4

God's Plan for a
Joy-Filled Marriage

WHEN: SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage is a

program designed to get everyone on the same page spiritually. The program is based on John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" and it will teach you 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.

WHEN: FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

To ensure you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in

Step 5

Natural Family
Planning Instruction

accord with God's plan for marriage, you will have the opportunity to

learn about Natural Family Planning. The diocese has instructors available in a variety of methods.

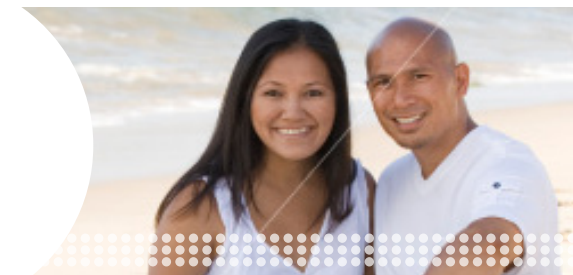


Step 6

Sacrament of
Reconciliation

WHEN: BEFORE THE WEDDING, AS NECESSARY

The Church invites all Catholics to prepare themselves spiritually prior to their marriage through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Obviously, this step is not required but is encouraged.



Step 7

Final Meeting
with Your Pastor

WHEN: FOUR TO SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Those working with you in your parish will help you prepare the liturgy for your wedding day, which will start you on the road to a lifetime of marriage. Have your questions ready!

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.OURCOVENANTOFLOVEPHX.ORG