

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

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This is a brief overview of the mandatory six month marriage preparation process in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salina. These are the minimal expectations. Other Catholic diocese may have additional requirements. The purpose of the marriage preparation provided to you by the church is to assist you in entering into a faithful, loving, permanent union with your prospective spouse. This period of preparation assists a couple in their communication as well as in their understanding of marriage itself. This is also a time of discernment, to decide whether you are called to marriage at this time.

STEP I – THE INITIAL MEETING WITH THE PRIEST: The priest will introduce you to the marriage preparation process and answer some of your initial concerns or questions. At this first meeting the priest will also be requesting from you some general biographical information. The priest will ask a few basic questions to assure there is nothing preventing you from getting married in the Catholic Church, such as a previous unresolved marriage, etc.

STEP II – THE PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY: This requires a minimum of two sessions with the priest. The first session is administering this inventory which takes approximately one hour. The follow-up session involves reviewing the results of the inventory. The inventory, which each of the parties takes separately, asks questions about 12 essential areas of marital life (goals, spiritual life, fears, expectations, problem-solving, communication, finances, etc.). The two completed answer sheets are then compared and contrasted to obtain an overall level of agreement or disagreement in each area. This pre-marital inventory is a professional, objective way to show a couple their level of communication and to assist them in improving it for the future.

STEP III: A couple must participate in *one* of the following two options:

- † **ENGAGED ENCOUNTER:** This is a weekend retreat experience with other engaged couples. It is led by trained married couples and one priest. These weekends are sponsored by the Catholic Church and in our area they are conducted in Wichita, Victoria and Kansas City, Kansas. The weekend begins on a Friday evening and concludes on a Sunday afternoon. The goal of this weekend is to build a foundation of communication for your future marital relationship. Many couples have found this weekend educational, inspiring and insightful. The weekend consists of large group presentations with time for couples to privately discuss certain important issues with their future mate. You will be given a brochure explaining how to register for a weekend and the cost.
- † **MYERS-BRIGGS PERSONALITY INDICATOR:** The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is a personality inventory based on the theories of Carl Jung. This inventory allows people to gain an understanding of their personality including decision-making patterns, information processing, coping mechanisms, and lifestyle/work patterns. Over 50 years of research and development have demonstrated the reliability and validity of the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator. The parish has contracted with Sr. Betty Suther at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia to assist couples so they understand their personality types and what it means for them as they enter into marriage. The Myers-Briggs Indicator will be administered in the parish office and Sr. Betty will review the results with couples in two separate sessions. A couple is responsible for

contacting Sr. Betty and arranging a time for these two sessions. Sr. Betty may be contacted at Manna House of Prayer (243-4428).

STEP IV: MARRIAGE AS SACRAMENT: This meeting with sponsor couple, Tony and Lindy Meyer, explores the sacramental nature of marriage. When preparing for marriage it only makes sense to turn to God, the author of marriage, to rediscover His plan for a joy-filled, lasting marriage. Topics for discussion include an overview of biblical teaching on marriage and the importance of the commitments made in the exchange of vows. This session also includes information on the Theology of the Body and Sacramental Sexuality, discovering the beauty of God's plan for marriage and the foundation for the Catholic teaching on sexuality. To schedule this session, contact Tony or Lindy at 243-4359 or visit the parish website at www.concordiacatholicchurch.com/family.html for session dates.

STEP V: NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING: Natural Family Planning (NFP) is dedicated to teaching couples the way to achieve or postpone pregnancy in the manner in which God intended. NFP is the natural, safe, and moral way of regulating pregnancy; no drugs or devices or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy. The NFP method is based on the naturally occurring signs of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle. In the marriage preparation process, the couple is responsible for making an appointment for one free Introductory Session. Please contact Lindy Meyer, FCP at 243-4359 or olphfamilylife@gmail.com to register for a session. You may also visit the parish website at www.concordiacatholicchurch.com/family.html for session dates.

STEP VI: THE PLANNING OF THE WEDDING CEREMONY: The planning of the actual liturgy or ceremony is the final step and usually requires two sessions with the priest who will be actually presiding at the wedding. A workbook will be given to you which allows you to select the scripture readings, prayers, blessings, etc. for the ceremony. A separate worksheet will also be completed which deals with the actual movements or actions associated with the ceremony. The planning stage is not done until the end of the marriage preparation process to assure there is less pressure during the time of discernment as a couple seriously contemplates the decision to enter into the sacrament of marriage. Some couples through this preparation process have decided to delay their marriage or at least wait until there is more certainty surrounding this important and significant decision.



Marriage is not just a feeling, but a decision. A decision to love unconditionally, to commit, to grow, to share; It is a decision always to do what is best for one's marriage partner. Christian marriage is not just a ceremony by which two people are legally bound together. As a sacrament, marriage is an act of worship, an expression of faith, a sign of the Church's unity with Christ, a mode of Christ's presence. Christians marry in the sight of God, not just before the State.

*Remember, the wedding is just one day,
but marriage is for a lifetime.*