

A Prayer for Engaged Couples

Father of life and love,
you created us in your image - woman and man.
We rejoice and thank you for the gift of each other.
Sustain us in our love
and lead us to a deeper understanding of your love.

Jesus, we come before you,
seeking your guidance and direction in our relationship.
In marriage you call and challenge us
to a permanent, exclusive and sacred friendship.
Be our strength and support, therefore,
as we continue this journey together.

Holy Spirit, help us to strive towards a lasting,
honest commitment united to love.
Give us your strength to carry each other
in times of darkness,
your joy in times of happiness,
And your gift of awe in the uniqueness
and sacredness of each other.

May our love be a reflection and
a sign of your love in the world.

Amen

From « Marriage in the Catholic Church - FAQ » COLF

*It is highly recommended that couples
participate in a 2-hour class on
Natural Family Planning,
at least four months
prior to their wedding.*

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

NFP is a cooperative method of achieving or avoiding pregnancy through the observation and use of normally occurring signs in a woman's cycle. Unlike artificial methods, both partners share the responsibility of conception. Drugs, devices and surgery are not used. It fosters respect and acceptance of the total person by teaching couples the nature of fertility.

Couples are drawn to NFP because it is medically safe and effective. Those who are ecologically aware see NFP as a logical extension of their concern about their psychological and physical environment. NFP is morally acceptable to people of any religion. Marriages are enriched through a mutual understanding of the shared responsibility for family planning creating a deeper appreciation for the value of life.



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***Serena Manitoba Inc. offers monthly
courses in Natural Family Planning.
Contact the Serena office for course
dates and times:***

Serena Manitoba Inc.
99 Cornish Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A2
Telephone: 204-783-0091
Toll Free: 1-866-317-5362
Email: mbserena@gmail.com
Website: www.serenamb.wordpress.com

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church



Marriage and Family Services
Archdiocese of Saint Boniface
www.archsaintboniface.ca

*A wedding is a day,
A marriage is a lifetime.*



Congratulations! You are about to be married in the Catholic Church. We want to welcome you and your families and provide you with the best possible preparation for this important step in your lives.

It is important that you participate in a Marriage Preparation Program as soon as you can; ideally six to eight months before your wedding. If there is no Marriage Preparation Program in place at your parish, you may choose a program mentioned on the Archdiocesan Website (see address below). A wide selection of locations and dates are available for your convenience. Enrolment is limited, so register as soon as possible. See www.archsaintboniface.ca/english/marriage.

Marriage Preparation programs, given by a team of trained married couples and a priest or deacon, provide an opportunity for engaged couples to explore fundamental areas of love, marriage and family life essential to a lasting Christian marriage. Life experiences are presented for consideration to give couples a sense of the real process of understanding each other more deeply. Exercises complement the presentations and help to stimulate dialogue.

Topics include: communication, family of origin, personality, finance, sacramentality, spirituality, a sexuality component which includes a brief overview of Natural Family Planning and in some cases, a session about planning your wedding liturgy.

A Catholic Marriage Checklist

Based on "Planning your Catholic Wedding - a checklist" by Emilie Ann Lemmons. Denver Catholic Register, 2005

** Suggested timeline **

10 to 12 Months before your wedding:

- Meet with your priest/deacon to discuss your desire to marry. Do not set a firm date until after this initial meeting.
- Confirm where you will do your marriage preparation and send in your registration.

Note: Marriage preparation should be completed at least 2 months before the wedding.

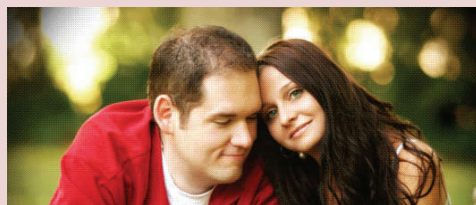
- Set a wedding date with the church.

6 to 10 Months before your wedding:

- Make an appointment with your parish priest to begin the Pre-nuptial paperwork.
- Start looking at Scripture readings with your fiancé to decide which ones are most fitting for your relationship. Proverbs, Wisdom, John, 1 John and 1 Corinthians are good places to start.

3 to 6 Months before your wedding:

- Get baptismal records from the parish of baptism for bride and/or groom.
- Meet with the priest/pastoral worker to discuss options for the wedding liturgy.
- Sit down as a couple and write the prayers of the faithful or intentions. It's helpful to use a standard format as your guide, but you can make them more personal.
- Review and select the Scriptures, prayers and music for the service.
- Look into classes on Natural Family Planning with Serena Manitoba. (*see the back of this brochure*)



2 Months or more before your wedding:

- Finalize the details of the wedding liturgy.
- Be sure all documentation is completed and sent to your parish.
- Ask persons with the necessary skills and training to be liturgical ministers: readers, communion ministers, etc.
- Arrange the time and date of the wedding rehearsal.

1 Month or more before your wedding:

- Get the worship guide/program (if you plan to have one) prepared, reviewed and printed.
- Discuss parish guidelines with photographers and videographers.
- Send the final payment for use of the church.

1 Week before your wedding:

- Remind the wedding party, family and ministers of the time of the rehearsal.
- Receive the sacraments of Reconciliation & Eucharist.

Bring to the rehearsal:

- The marriage license
- Offering envelopes for the presider and any other who will receive a gift or stipend

The Wedding Day:

- Take some time before all the action begins to be alone, relax and pray.
- Let go of all the planning details. Enjoy the gift of the Sacrament of Marriage with your spouse.



Marriage and Family Services
Archdiocese of Saint Boniface
Marie Cormier Brunet, Coordinator
Telephone: 237-9851, ext. 236
Email: mcbrunet@archsaintboniface.ca