

(Step 4, cont.)

...in decision-making about living your faith as a family, prayer, and more. This will build on the knowledge you gained from your marriage inventory. There are various educational programs available in the diocese:

Option 1: Lead Couple Parish Courses

Some parishes in the diocese offer their own marriage life skills courses presented by mentor couples from the parish. These courses are intended to give you and your fiancé(e) practical guidance and opportunities in the “life skills” areas of married life. They are typically offered over 5 sessions.

(cost: contact your parish)

Option 2: Catholic Engaged Encounter

This is a weekend retreat away with other engaged couples with plenty of time alone together to plan for a sacramental marriage. It is designed to give couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialog honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together-- their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, their attitudes about money, sex, children, family, and their role in the church and society-- in a face to face way.

(cost: \$ 225 per couple)

Step 5: Natural Family Planning Instruction

To ensure you have the tools to plan your family effectively and in accord with God’s plan for marriage, you will have the opportunity to learn about Natural Family Planning (NFP). The diocese has instructors available in a variety of NFP methods.

(costs range from \$40 to \$140+)



Step 6: Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Church invites all Catholics to prepare themselves spiritually prior to their marriage by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Step 7: Final Meeting with Your Pastor

Those working with you at your parish will help you prepare the liturgy of your wedding day.

For special circumstances:

To Trust Again! is a “remarriage” preparation seminar for those marrying after an annulment.

(some parishes charge a small fee for this course)

Agape Catholic Marriage Preparation is an online marriage program for engaged couples with special circumstances (usually involving location/distance).

Couples must have the approval of their pastor to use this online preparation program.

(\$175 per couple)

Family Life Office

816.714.2373

Visit us online to see dates and locations for the programs described above:

www.kcsjfamily.org/marriage-preparation

Catholic Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph

7 Steps to a rewarding **Marriage Preparation Experience**



7 Steps to a Rewarding Marriage Preparation Experience

The Catholic Church wants to help your marriage flourish and to last for a lifetime. It is our responsibility to help prepare you—utilizing the best practices available today—to enter and live out the Sacrament of Marriage.

Before you set a date . . .

Step 1: Contact Your Parish

After you become engaged, you should contact your parish right away to set up a meeting. During this initial meeting, your pastor will determine if you and your fiancé(e) are free to marry. He will also provide you with the information you need to complete Steps 2-6 of the marriage preparation process. **It is strongly advised that you schedule your marriage preparation components within one week of this meeting.**

Step 2: Couple Pre-Marital Inventory (FOCCUS or Prepare/Enrich)

Shortly 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. It will provide you with a personalized profile of your relationship's strengths and weaknesses. This inventory is an important starting point for couple discussion and a map of the areas that may need your attention during the time of your engagement.

Steps 3,4,5: THRIVE! Marriage Preparation

This weekend seminar is a new option for engaged couples to prepare for marriage in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph. The dual focus on human and spiritual development makes this program different from others now available as it presents scientifically proven, research-based relationship development.

Couples will learn about: cutting-edge brain science, positive psychology, women's health, the theological vision of marriage, insights from Theology of the Body, and practical guidance for managing finances, developing a life of prayer and virtue, and making intentional decisions about how they can form their new home as a domestic church in which everyone THRIVES!

This unique program completes steps 3, 4, & 5 of the marriage preparation process.

Visit www.kcsjfamily.org/thrive for program details and registration.

(cost: \$200 per couple)

(proceed to step 6)

(or) Step 3: God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage 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 also why she teaches it. This seminar will help you discuss these issues with your fiancé(e). This program 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. (cost: \$50 per couple)

**You may register online at:
www.kcsjfamily.org/Godsplan**

Step 4: Married Life Skills Training

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. You will also be given advice on ways you can be intentional ...