

### **(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.

### **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.



### **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.

#### **Family Life Office**

**816.714.2373**

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

**[www.kcsjfamily.org/marriage-preparation](http://www.kcsjfamily.org/marriage-preparation)**

*Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph*

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





# Marriage Preparation:

# 7 Steps

*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)

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 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 your time of engagement.

## Steps 3,4,5: THRIVE! Marriage Preparation

This online program has a dual focus on human and spiritual development, founded upon 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 program is fully online, and self-paced. Couples will have up to 4 months to complete the coursework and will receive feedback from mentor couples for each chapter.

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

**Visit [www.kcsjfamily.org/thrive](http://www.kcsjfamily.org/thrive) for program details and registration.**

**(proceed to step 6)**

## (or) God's Plan for a Thriving Step 3: Marriage

This seminar covers teachings on the sacramental character of marriage and the sacredness of human sexuality. It is designed to offer a sincere proposal of the truth and beauty of Catholic teaching. Based on the vision of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, the purpose of the program is to meditate on God's plan for married life and to begin to shape our thinking and acting in accordance with it.

**You may register online at:  
[www.kcsjfamily.org/Godsplan](http://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 ...

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