

## By two to three months before the wedding...

Work with your pastoral minister to plan a meaningful ceremony that reflects the sacredness of your marriage and the uniqueness of your relationship.

- If you are both Catholic, a nuptial mass is recommended. If you're an interfaith couple, a nuptial ceremony may be a better option. Your parish may have a wedding planner to assist you in planning your wedding liturgy.
- Catholic persons should plan to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding to fully prepare you for the graces of sacramental marriage.
- It is highly recommended that all aspects of marriage preparation at the parish be completed by six weeks before the wedding, allowing you to focus on personal reflection and last minute details.

## After the wedding...

Once you've settled into daily married life, be sure to set aside Sunday as a day of rest and renewal, and make Mass a priority in your lives. The graces and blessings you'll receive as a couple are an immeasurable source of strength to meet the challenges of daily married life.

- Plan to get involved in your parish community together as a couple. Your marriage is a vocation and a call to loving service. Always remember that your marriage is a sign of Jesus' unending love for his people. May your marriage always be blessed by his presence.



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# Diocese of Trenton



## Marriage Preparation

### Check List

*For engaged couples*



[www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana](http://www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana)

# Congratulations on your engagement!

## At least one year before your wedding...

As soon your engagement is official, but *before you set a date* you should call your parish and schedule your first meeting with your pastoral minister (priest, deacon or lay minister), who may also serve as the celebrant for your wedding.



## What should happen at your first meeting(s) at your parish:

- If you are newly registered in your parish or have been away from the area for some time, this is a getting-to-know-you session. It's also a time to discuss your hopes and dreams about marriage.
- Catholic persons should be prepared to present a recent certificate of Baptism with notations of all other sacraments (communion, confirmation and any prior marriages in the Church).
- Marriage preparation in the Church requires a pre-nuptial investigation (PNI), which is all about your marital readiness. When Part I of your PNI is complete, you should register for a marriage preparation program ([www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana](http://www.dioceseoftrenton.org/precana)) and schedule your wedding date. Program options include:
  - \***Parish Pre-Cana** Conferences (based on the *Before "I Do"* marriage preparation program, Ave Maria Press)
  - \***Diocesan Pre-Cana** Conferences
  - \***Catholic Engaged Encounter** weekends
  - \***To Trust Again** Remarriage Workshop (for all couples in which one or both parties have a prior marriage)

## By nine months before the wedding...

- It is recommended that all couples take a pre-marital inventory such as FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study), and discuss the results with your pastoral minister (**PM**) ([www.FOCCUSinc.com](http://www.FOCCUSinc.com))
- Once your pastoral minister receives your FOCCUS results, you'll want to schedule a few sessions to discuss your responses. If FOCCUS isn't offered, you'll have sessions with your PM to discuss the important elements of Catholic marriage as they apply to your relationship.

## By six months before the wedding...

- Attend your (Pre-Cana) marriage preparation program (it is suggested that you complete your marriage preparation program after the FOCCUS pre-marital inventory, ideally between 3 and 8 months before your wedding).
- Take a class in Natural Family Planning
  - \*[learnnfonline.com](http://learnnfonline.com)
  - \*[www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com) (Couple to Couple League)
- Once you've completed your marriage preparation program and all paperwork, you'll meet with your pastoral minister to affirm your readiness for marriage and begin planning your wedding liturgy.
- If your meetings with your PM begin to uncover some serious concerns in your relationship, you may wish to schedule additional sessions, consult with your pastor, or ask for a referral for a professional evaluation. The Church's primary concern is a fulfilling, lifelong marital relationship for both of you.

