

# Best Practices for Marriage Building Parishes from the Diocese of La Crosse, WI

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All married couples need support and encouragement. Here are some of the best practices found in the various parishes of the diocese.

## **Celebrate wedding anniversaries in your parish by;**

- Identifying one weekend each month (e.g. the fourth Sunday of each month) when the clergy will ask all married couples celebrating a wedding anniversary in that month to stand, be recognized by the congregation and receive a blessing from you. (See Book of Blessings – Anniversaries)
- Send a personal note of congratulations to any couples who are celebrating milestone anniversaries; 5, 10, 15, etc.
- Identifying 12 married couples, one married couple for each month of the year. Ask these couples to host an anniversary gathering for all couples in the parish who were married the same month that they were. The gathering could happen after a mass in the church hall, or at the host couple's home, or at a location that is suitable. The idea is to create monthly "anniversary" celebration groups.

## **Provide support for married couples who are struggling by;**

- Having contact information for Catholic counselors available at your parish. If you need assistance on this, please contact the Office of Marriage and Family Life for names and contact information.
- Identifying married couples who could be trained as marriage mentors in your parish. Contact the Office for Marriage and Family Life for more information about developing marriage mentors.
- Promote Retrouvaille and have the current contact information available at your parish. Have this information *easily* accessible in your parish.

## **Support married couples with marriage enrichment by;**

- Host a Date Night series in your parish or in collaboration with neighboring parishes once a year. Information on date nights is available through the Office of Marriage and Family Life.
- Develop a monthly book club or a movie club for married couples.
- Promote the diocesan marriage enrichment programs that are held regionally within the diocese.

## **Promote the Sacrament of Marriage in your parish by;**

- Highlighting the **For Your Marriage** website ([www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)) in your bulletin at least once a month. If possible, give this website a permanent presence in your bulletin.
- Highlight any article or tip from this website by including them as "weekly marriage tips" in your bulletin.
- Make sure that you pray for the vocation of Holy Matrimony each month in the Mass intentions.
- Include marriage as a vocation in any prayer for vocations.