



CHECK LIST FOR COUPLES PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

God's blessings upon your engagement! Just as you have a checklist of items needed to plan for your wedding and reception, you will also need a checklist for the Sacrament of Marriage within the Catholic Church. Take the time to complete each of these steps in the order suggested. Doing so will ensure complete and meaningful formation.

- ___ Give gratitude to God for the love that He has given to you as a couple. Pray together for His mercy and grace throughout your engagement.

- ___ Make an appointment with your parish priest or deacon as soon as you are engaged but not less than **6 months** in advance of your tentative wedding date. At the initial meeting:
 - ___ Begin the pre-nuptial form and other necessary paper work.
 - ___ Set rehearsal date & time. Inform your wedding party to follow your parish's guidelines.
 - ___ If available, preview the marriage policy for the parish and diocese.

For optimal preparation, please use the below "complete by" guidelines:

- ___ *6 months before wedding - Complete Natural Family Planning education course.
(Required for all couples of childbearing years. Allow 6-8 weeks from start to finish.)*
- ___ *5 months before wedding - Complete online FOCCUS inventory or other pre-marriage inventory & meet with Facilitator (couple) for 2-3 follow-up sessions.*
- ___ *4 months before wedding - Attend Married Love: Two Becoming One retreat.*
- ___ *3 months before wedding - Plan your liturgy under the guidance of your pastor.*
- ___ *3 months before wedding - Contact parish musician to approve music.*
- ___ *3 months before wedding - Obtain copies of baptismal certificates.*
- ___ *2 months before wedding - Make final visit with pastor to finalize plans for rehearsal and wedding ceremony*

- ___ Ask about and make needed payments to the parish.

- ___ Schedule the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) within one month of your wedding.

- ___ CELEBRATE your marriage in the presence of your family and friends.

NOTE: In the Diocese of La Crosse, the Bishop requires all marriages to occur within a Church. You may ask for a dispensation; however these are rarely given.