

Contents

Marriage Preparation in the Archdiocese of Baltimore	3
Procedures	4
Curriculum Guidelines	5
Approved Archdiocesan Programs	6
Resources for Programs	7
Program Leader Directions	8
Invite Leader Couples	8
Qualities for Married Couples in the “Like-To-Like” Pre-Cana Ministry	8
Train Your Team	8
Basic Training Course for Marriage Preparation Ministry	9
A. Becoming a Marriage Preparation Team Member	11
Goal in Marriage Preparation	11
Goals for Engaged Couples	11
Team Couple’s Role.....	11
Partnership with Clergy	12
Discussion Inventories	12
About FACET - Foundations Applied Communications & Education Tool	13
About FOCCUS - Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study	13
Basic Catechesis for Marriage	14
Definition of Christian Marriage	14
Essential Elements of Christian Marriage	14
Sacred Signs	14

B. Talk with an Experienced Couple	15
C. Team Couple Training Practice:	15
Sacramental Marriage	15
Communication - 1	15
Communication – 2	15
Conflict Resolution	16
Family Life	16
Intimacy	16
Children	16
Married Spirituality	17
Financial Partnership	17
Catholic Weddings	17
Training Completion	18
Program Logistics	19
Engaged Couple Packet Contents	19
Program Overview	20
Session 1 – Christian Marriage / Communication	21
Session 2 – Expectations and Challenges of Married Life	26
Session 3 – Marital Intimacy and Spirituality	29
Program Wrap-up	33
Appendix I– Sponsor Couple Model	34
Sponsor Couple Training Overview.....	34
Sponsor Couple Format	35
Sample Sponsor Couple Program Outline	36

Marriage Preparation in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

Marriage Preparation for the Twenty-first Century

Couples approaching the Church for the Sacrament of Matrimony face challenges that their parents may not have encountered. In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and in the United States in general, fewer have received an adequate catechesis about marriage and family life, fewer are practicing their faith actively, and fewer couples are getting married. More couples are sexually active and living together before marriage, more enter marriage with children, and more are struggling with issues such as pornography and wounds from previous relationships.

This revision and update of the catechetical and personal formation program for marriage preparation takes into account these new challenges and aims to assist parish leaders in addressing the real needs of couples with love and fidelity to the Church's pastoral teaching.

Included in the 2014 Edition of *Marriage in the Lord*, the following updates can be found:

- NEW focus on Evangelization, calling couples and team members to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ
- New Curriculum Guidelines referenced to the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- NEW spiritual formation for both participants and team couples to live the Christian life.
- NEW attention to prayer and Catholic teaching for marriage and family life, including the domestic church, Theology of the Body, and personal preparation to live the Vocation of Christian Marriage.
- NEW Discussion Inventories, FOCCUS and FACET, addressing new challenges of couples today

Marriage Preparation is the Work of the Whole Community

The term "marriage preparation" is commonly used to mean the classes or sessions couples attend before marriage. However, preparation for marriage includes the whole process of sacramental preparation, which begins in the home (remote preparation), continues through adolescence and young adulthood (proximate preparation), and concludes with formal interviews with clergy and one of the personal formation programs described on pp. 6-7 (immediate preparation).

In addition to the personal interviews, instruction and counseling from the parish minister, a variety of marriage preparation programs are available to meet the individual needs of engaged couples. The parish minister shall recommend the appropriate marriage preparation program in which the couple is to participate.

Procedures

1. Parishes should maintain at least one type of program for catechetical and personal formation of couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. Parishes may also collaborate with neighboring parishes to provide this part of marriage preparation for couples who request it.
2. Priests, deacons, pastoral associates, and pastoral life directors are to share the responsibility for preparing couples for marriage with parishioners who have received suitable catechesis and training and who can appropriately minister to engaged couples.
3. It is strongly urged that there be six meetings devoted to marriage preparation:
 - a. Meeting I: Initial meeting with parish minister, including the Pre-nuptial Investigation.
 - b. Three meetings of catechesis and personal formation for marriage
 - i. Meetings II, III, and IV may be satisfied by three sessions with a pastoral minister or by attending a marriage preparation program, in accord with the Archdiocesan Sacramental Regulations and Guidelines for marriage.
 - ii. Topics for the catechetical sessions should include catechesis on the sacrament and vocation of marriage, communication skills, decision making, finances, spirituality, sexuality, and family planning. See Curriculum Guidelines, p. 5.
 - c. Meeting V: Follow-up session with parish minister, to discuss the catechetical and personal formation sessions.
 - d. Meeting VI: Follow-up session with parish minister, to complete planning for the wedding liturgy.
4. Marriage and Family Life, in the Division of Catechetical and Pastoral Formation, offers training for parish team members and materials for programs. 410-547-5420.
5. Parishes may manage their own programs, or they may partner with the Archdiocese to schedule and register participants for catechetical and personal formation sessions hosted by the parish. This partnership between the Archdiocese and the parish can extend formation programs to couples who cannot otherwise access one.
6. Parishes who manage their own programs should send information about their catechetical and personal formation programs to Marriage and Family Life, so that couples may be directed to register for the proper program.
7. Expectations for marriage preparation (including the meetings with clergy, parish staff, and catechetical programs) are to appear in the parish bulletin and in parish sacramental handbooks.

Marriage Preparation Curriculum Guidelines 2013

Program Topic	Catechism
1.0 Sacramental Marriage	1601-1617
1.1 Christian discipleship and Vocation	897-913
1.2 Unity and Indissolubility of Marriage	1644-1645
1.3 Domestic Church	1655-1658
2.0 Communication	1639-1651
2.1 Finances	1655-1658
2.2 Careers and Work	1644, 2834
2.3 Social Media	1809, 2496
2.4 Healthy Relationships	2302, 2334-36
2.5 Substance Abuse	2290-91
3.0 Conflict Resolution	1606-1608
3.1 Moral Decision Making	1786-1794
3.2 Expectations and Adjustments	1812-1832
3.3 Forgiveness and Reconciliation	2842-43, 1446-60
4.0 Family Life	1655-1657, 2201-2213
4.1 Family Planning	1653-54, 2366-75
4.2 Family of Origin	2201-03, 2215-18
4.3 Christian Parenting	1652, 2221-30, 2249
5.0 Intimacy	2360-2391
5.1 Sexual Relationship	2350, 2360-2363
5.2 Theology of the Body	1643, 2364-68
5.3 Mutuality of the Spouses	2331-36
5.4 Threat from Pornography	2350, 2517, 2530
6.0 Married Spirituality	2558-2565, 2685
6.1 Prayer	2285, 2297, 2777-78
6.2 Religious Practice	2168-83
6.3 Mixed Religion Families	1633-36
7.0 Catholic Weddings	1621-1637

Approved Marriage Preparation Programs 2013

Archdiocesan Pre-Cana Programs

Follows the Archdiocesan Curriculum for marriage preparation. These 2-4 session programs are normally limited to 15 couples. Some parishes open their programs to any couple (priority given to parish members). The Archdiocese handles registration, collects fees, provides materials (\$55), reimburses parish for expenses. \$85/couple.

Registration for Archdiocesan Pre-Cana Programs: For Archdiocesan Pre-Cana, couples download the registration form and pay the program fee to the archdiocesan office at the Catholic Center.

Parish-Based Pre-Cana Programs

Many parishes offer a Group marriage preparation programs for their parishioners. Archdiocese recommends materials and offers team training and formation. Classes are held at the parish. Parish handles registration and sets fees and formats, with Archdiocesan guidelines. Archdiocese will direct couples to call parish for information on availability and other details. Parishes are asked to list program dates with Family Life office, 410-547-5420.

Sponsor Couple Program

Same curriculum as Archdiocesan Pre-Cana programs, presented couple-to-couple in the leaders' home. Many parishes offer this opportunity to meet with an experienced married couple in their home to explore, improve open communication and understanding. Sponsor Couple schedules visits (5 recommended) in their home, approx. 9-12 hours, the same as most other programs. \$55/couple packet. Recommended fee: \$85.

Remarriage Sponsor Program

Some parishes offer this special program for couples where one or both have been previously married (widowed or divorced). Based on the standard Archdiocesan curriculum, this program helps couples take an objective look at issues that can arise in this new relationship and prepares them to avoid some of the pitfalls. \$65/ couple packet. The Archdiocese also registers couples for small group preparation, although the number of groups is currently limited. Recommended fee: \$80.

Engaged Encounter

This weekend experience utilizes a dynamic process based on listening, writing and dialogue. Weekends are held at Holy Trinity Retreat Center, Pikesville, MD
Registration 410-439-4217, www.mdcee.org \$325/couple.

Self-Directed Preparation

For couples unable to attend any of the above, such as, military, out-of-town partners, etc. Workbook or audiotape models (first marriage or remarriage). With or without FOCCUS inventory. Available from Family Life office for first-time and second marriages. Only by arrangement and with permission of officiating clergyman. \$80.

On-Line Marriage Preparation Programs

Archdiocese of Chicago – www.catholicmarriageprepclass.com

Diocese of Colorado Springs – www.catholicmarriageprep.com

Require permission of officiating clergyman - \$190

*NFP Online Instruction also available from both sources.

Resources for Marriage Preparation Presentations

Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010.

On the Family (Familiaris Consortio), Pope John Paul II, 1984

Follow the Way of Love. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994

More resources at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/marriage-preparation/index.cfm>

Program Leader Directions

Organizing Marriage Preparation Ministry

Invite Leader Couples. Recruit married couples with the qualities necessary for partnership with clergy. Select couples from varying age groups and lengths of marriages. Interfaith couples that are active in parish life also may be good choices.

QUALITIES FOR MARRIED COUPLES IN THE "LIKE-TO-LIKE" PRE-CANA MINISTRY

- An ATTITUDE OF OPENNESS that intends to "identify with the engaged couple; to grasp what are [their] joys, hopes, anxieties, and/or fears; and to echo them in their own hearts."
- A WARM AND CARING ATTITUDE OF HOSPITALITY, which is positive and joyful and foreshadows a sense of Christian community.
- MUTUAL KINDNESS AND RESPECT in their behavior to one another.
- CONTINUED GROWTH IN THE MARRIED COUPLES' FAITH LIFE that seeks to help engaged couples identify and deepen their own faith.
- LIVING A SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGE, meaning that their marriage is recognized by the Church and they practice their Christian faith, including mixed-church couples and couples in second unions.
- ABILITY TO ASSIST the engaged couple "in practical ways and also serve as inspirational models by their faith, example, good qualities, and friendship."
- COMMITMENT TO CLEARLY SHARING CATHOLIC TEACHING about marriage, family and children and to cooperating with clergy in the instruction of couples in married life.
- WILLINGNESS TO DEVELOP & LEARN about the key topic areas that enable engaged couples to assess their own relationship and hopes for the future by offering ways for the engaged couple "to facilitate their communication, enhance their understanding, deepen their love, reflect on the sacrament, nurture their faith, strengthen their commitment, and consider their marriage as a real apostolate within and for the Church."
 - o From USCCB, *Faithful to Each Other Forever*, 58-62.

Train Your Team. Register couples for training by the Archdiocese. Besides training, leaders' guides, couples' workbooks, tapes, and other resources are available. Parishes are not limited to a particular book or series, and are encouraged to tailor their program to their local needs. Choose a coordinator couple to manage the program. Provide on-going formation. Please contact Marriage and Family Life for information about training.

Basic Pre-Cana Training Course for Marriage Preparation Ministry

This training course is composed of the following elements:

1. Basic skills and catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage
2. Familiarity with program materials. Learn and review Catholic teaching on marriage. Learn to use the Basic Materials for the Archdiocese of Baltimore Marriage Preparation Programs.
3. Reflection on your own marriage journey. The course includes activities to enrich your own marriage.

The host parishes recruit married couples to join their Pre-Cana team. To prepare to offer the Archdiocese of Baltimore Pre-Cana program, you will review Catholic teaching on marriage, practice communication skills, and become familiar with materials in the Archdiocesan Marriage Prep Packets.

To complete your training, you must meet with your parish Pre-Cana team and learn the details of how your particular parish program is organized.

1. Familiarize yourselves with the Training Materials

Use the textbooks in your Basic Training package in this course. Items with a * are also included in each engaged couple packet:

- *Perspectives on Marriage Couple Workbook** (ACTA Publications)
- *Perspectives Leader Guide*
- Natural Family Planning DVD/video (Diocese of Rockville Centre)
- Natural Family Planning booklet* (Mary Lee Baron, RN, Liguori Publications)
- *When the Cake is Gone: How to Get Married* audio CD* (Dr. James Healy, Rooted in Love)
- *Together for Life Wedding Planning book** (Ave Maria Press)

2. Visit www.foryourmarriage.org For any topic in this training you can get more information from the official Catholic marriage resource of the United States Catholic Bishops' Conference. Enter the topic in the Search or just explore the site.

3. **Ask questions.** At any time, please contact your "coach," the Coordinator for Marriage and Family Life, Dr. Lauri Przybysz, 410-547-5420, lprzybysz@archbalt.org

Training Course Overview

1. Look over the tables of contents and product descriptions of each of the print and audio materials in the training packet provided to you. Examine your resources, listed on page 9.
2. Work through the course. Estimated time to complete this home study course is about 8 hours. Work at your own pace.
 - a. Read and discuss: "Getting Started in Marriage Prep," pp. 12-15.
 - b. Talk with an experienced sponsor couple or team member from your parish, p. 16.
 - c. Practice with the resources, pp. 16-18.
3. Training Completion. Inform Marriage and Family Life Office, lprzybysz@archbalt.org that you have completed the training course. A program evaluation will be sent to you. After you complete the program evaluation form, send it to Marriage and Family Life. A confirmation will be sent to you and to your parish coordinator.
4. Contact your parish leader for further instructions and assignments.

A. Becoming a Marriage Preparation Team Member – 1 hour (pp. 1-5)

Thank you for sharing your time and wisdom with engaged couples! As a couple, work through this basic training program, step by step. For each topic, stop and read and/or work on the couple assignments yourselves and discuss.

Goal of Marriage Preparation

"So that the 'I do' of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance"(CCC, 1632).

Before Catholics celebrate any of the sacraments, personal preparation, including education, reflection and prayer, is provided. Engaged couples are invited to experience the meaning of Christian community through the witness and example of the sponsor and Pre-Cana team couples.

Goals for Engaged Couples

- Get to know each other even better
- Pray and reflect on God's love for them and the place of God in their lives
- Learn some skills of communication
- Reflect on where they have come from and where they hope to go
- Understand the teaching of the Church about marriage and family life

Pre-Cana Team Couples' Role

Leader couples develop individual presentations, plan activities that allow the partners to discuss and learn together, and take part in the critique and evaluation during team meetings. You are also part of the hosting process, arriving early and greeting the participants. The presenting couples also act as discussion leaders for small group discussion, when this is part of the program. They administer the Discussion Inventory, but the results are sent to the couple's priest, deacon, or a sponsor couple for discussion.

Your role is three-fold: Witness, Teacher and Facilitator. As Witnesses, by word and deed, you demonstrate your faith in Jesus Christ. You share what the Church teaches and instruct them in useful relationship skills. At other times, you act as Facilitators. You help couples listen to each other, share thoughts and feelings, and work toward solutions. Plan time and activities after your presentation for couples to discuss an issue thoroughly and look for their own solutions.

Sharing from Your Experience: Marriage preparation ministry is a like-to-like ministry to engaged couples. Sponsor/Group Program couples are not expected to be marriage

counselors, psychologists or theologians. They are experts, however, on the subject of their own marriages and what it takes to make them work. Each Pre-Cana team couple teaches indirectly by sharing their personal experiences with the engaged. Where appropriate, the leader couple transmits the teaching of the Church with clarity and sensitivity.

Partnership with Clergy

Encourage couple to seek guidance from their priest or deacon. The priest/deacon has decided that this couple may marry. He is responsible for their pastoral care.

Respecting Differences: Be sensitive to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the participants. Each person has his or her own individual and unique frame of reference - some positive and some negative. Indeed, all of us bring to our ministries the riches of our own cultural heritage, personal experiences, and gifts of faith, hope and love.

Confidentiality: Trust is essential in the sponsor relationship. Anything the couple discusses with the leaders is confidential. If the leader has a concern about the couple's intentions or situation, urge them to speak with their priest or deacon about it. You are not expected to make reports about the couple to another EXCEPT in case of imminent danger. You will issue a Certificate of Completion to them at the conclusion of their program.

On Making Referrals: As catechists and facilitators, Marriage Preparation leaders are not therapists. Offer referrals for the future: "If this issue becomes a problem, how will you handle it?" "Here's where you could seek help." Encourage the couple to speak with their priest or deacon, but do not "report" on them to him.

Discussion Inventories

In this Basic Training, you will learn only **how to make arrangements for and administer** two different Inventories, FACET and FOCCUS. Your parish has chosen to use one of two good discussion tools to aid in communication and self-discovery.

Pre-Cana teams do not facilitate discussion of the Inventory with couples. The Archdiocese Family Life office sends the results to the couple's priest or deacon to discuss with them.

Discussion Tools are NOT tests, labeling or predictive devices, or to be used to determine permission for a couple to marry. Printouts of the couple's results should be destroyed at the end of the marriage preparation process, since their validity is finished.

About FACET...FOUNDATIONS Applied Communication & Education Tool

- 175 basic questions on marriage
- The source of a PROFILE of unique couple issues, challenges, strengths, realities
- An OUTLINE for FACILITATING appropriate and on-target discussion and educational support to couples by marriage preparation providers
- FACET includes a take-home "Narrative Section" that each person completes at home before discussing with the facilitator and for further discussion by the couple. Two copies, pp. 101-115 in *Yellow Perspectives Workbook*.
- FACET report includes a comparison of responses and a Summary Sheet with items for discussion
- Included in the Special version of Perspectives Couple Workbook
- Features an extended Catholic section
- Explores 13 topics with statements in categories: "I know," "I believe," and "I will."
- Couples take FACET during the marriage preparation session on paper answer sheets, pp. 90 & 92 of *Gold Perspectives Workbook*.
- Send answer sheets to Archdiocese for scoring along with the "cover sheet." Cover Sheet is last page of *Gold Perspectives Workbook*.
- A Report comparing the responses is emailed to the priest/deacon who is working with the couple. They have a private conversation with him about their inventory.

About FOCCUS...Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study

- 156 basic questions on marriage and of 33 additional specialized questions on interfaith, remarriage, cohabitation
- The source of a PROFILE of unique couple issues, challenges, strengths, realities
- An OUTLINE for FACILITATING appropriate and on-target, discussion and educational support to couples by marriage preparation providers
- FOCCUS report includes a goal-setting tool, FOCCUS for the Future, which helps couples to integrate what has been learned in the FOCCUS process and to make a personal plan of action.

- FOCCUS Application Form for On-line Administration is included in marriage prep packets
- Fill out and send the application form to the Archdiocese and a web session will be set up for them
- Couple takes FOCCUS after the first marriage prep session on their own computers
- Passwords and instructions are sent by email to each person.
- A Report comparing the responses is emailed to the priest/deacon who is working with the couple. They have a private conversation with him about their inventory.

Basic Catechesis for Marriage

Helping Couples Prepare to Live the Vocation of Christian Marriage

“God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation and thus the capacity and responsibility of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.” -- John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, No. 11.

Review of Catechesis for Christian Marriage

Marriage could be viewed as a verb – a day-after-day commitment to a person, a process that goes on throughout life. Today’s Church describes marriage as a Covenant, not a contract.

Every marriage is a legal contract. Christian marriage is that and more. It is a covenant — a sacred promise — for life-long, exclusive, fruitful love between a man and a woman.

Essential Elements of Christian Marriage

- Permanence
- Faithfulness
- Openness to Life

Sacred Signs in the Wedding Liturgy

- The Marriage Vows are a public sign of an interior change. In the dioceses of the United States, the following form of the statement of consent may be used (others are available):
 - “I N., take you N., to be my husband (wife). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”
- The Wedding Rings symbolize the deeper implications of this commitment.
- The Husband and Wife become a sign of the giving-receiving relationship with God. God gives, they accept; God loves, they respond.

- The Witnesses represent the community, to whom the new couple are a sign of God's faithful love for humanity.
- Additionally, other traditional signs, such as the lasso in Spanish culture, are also important symbols.

B. Talk with an Experienced Couple -- 1 hour

Contact your parish marriage preparation coordinator and ask for the name and phone number of an experienced sponsor couple or Pre-Cana couple already working in the parish. Call the sponsor couple and ask them to share some of their experiences with you. If no sponsor couples are in your parish, contact Dr. Lauri Przybysz and she will put you in touch with an experienced Pre-Cana leader from another parish. lprzybysz@archbalt.org 410-547-5420.

C. PRACTICE: Complete the following assignments together.

Each exercise will take 30-45 minutes. Total time: about 7 hours.

- See the Table of Contents for a selection of activities for each topic in the curriculum.
- Use the Search feature on www.foryourmarriage.org to find resources on the topics, as assigned.

Sacramental Marriage (CCC 1601-1617)

1. Read *Perspectives Leader Guide* p. 42-43
2. Complete one exercise in this category.
4. Visit www.foryourmarriage.org about the Sacrament of Marriage.

Communication 1 (CCC 1639-1651)

1. Recall and discuss an instance of good communication from your marriage
2. Read *Perspectives Leader Guide*, pp. 27-28.
3. Select one WB exercise in this group to complete and discuss.

Communication 2 (CCC 1639-1651)

1. Listen to the Audio CD, "When the Cake Is Gone." Reflect on communication in your Marriage.

2. Identify one idea from the presentation that had special meaning for you. Share with your spouse.

Conflict Resolution (CCC 1606-1608)

1. Choose one scenario and discuss from *Perspectives Workbook* p. 33. "Play Solomon" situations can help you address sensitive issues.
2. Read *Perspectives Leader Guide*, p. 30-31.
3. Complete and discuss one exercise in this category.
4. Read a couple's story at www.foryourmarriage.org

Family Life (CCC 1655-1657, 2201-2213)

1. Read *Perspectives Leader Guide*, p. 32-33.
2. Choose and complete one exercise about family.
3. Read "Living Together" in *Perspectives Leader Guide*, p. 40.
4. Discuss expectations you brought into your marriage from your families of origin.

Intimacy (CCC 2360-2391)

1. Read *Perspectives Leader's Guide*, pp. 35-36.
2. Talk about a time in your marriage when you grew in intimacy.
3. A short presentation about the Theology of the Body at www.foryourmarriage.org and also at http://www.nfpoutreach.org/hogan_theology_%20body1.htm
4. Mutual Respect between Spouses. The Catholic Church teaches that husbands and wives have equal dignity in marriage. www.foryourmarriage.org

Children (CCC 2366-2375)

1. View family planning video, *Plan Your Family Naturally* (22 minutes)
2. Read the NFP booklet from your training package.

3. Discuss with your spouse your experience of having children and becoming family.
4. Visit the Parenting section of www.foryourmarriage.org

Married Spirituality (CCC 2558-2565, 2685)

1. Complete and discuss: "Sharing the Faith Vision": *Perspectives Workbook* pp. 37/39.
2. Read "Two Faiths, One Love", *Perspectives Workbook* 39.
3. Write a short story (about 300 words) of what your faith means to your marriage and what your marriage has meant to your faith. Share the story with your spouse. Talk about it.
4. READ an item about Interchurch and Interfaith Unions at www.foryourmarriage.org

Finances and Stewardship (CCC 1648, 1655-1658)

1. Read: *Perspectives Leader Guide*, p. 47-49
2. Give examples of ways you handle money in your marriage.
3. What advice about money do you wish someone had given you when you were starting out? Discuss with your spouse.
3. Play NUDEL, *Perspectives Workbook* p. 59 & 62
4. See www.foryourmarriage.org on this topic.

Catholic Weddings (CCC 1621-1637)

1. Choose and discuss one Scripture reading from *Together for Life*.
2. Share a memory of your own wedding that had spiritual meaning for you.
3. Review the Catholic Wedding planning sections of *Perspectives Workbook* and *Together for Life*.
4. Discuss with your spouse the Wedding Vows and wedding symbols. Look for these topics at www.foryourmarriage.org

Training Completion

Congratulations! One more step...Evaluation of Training

1. Report to Marriage and Family Life that you are finished. Request the program assessment and evaluation form by phone, email, or mail.
2. Please complete the program assessment and evaluation form for this training.
3. Return it by mail or Email lprzybysz@archbalt.org
4. Your parish coordinator will be notified that you have completed the training and are ready to serve.
5. Contact your parish coordinator for Marriage Preparation for further directions on participating in your Pre-Cana team.
6. Congratulations! You have completed the Overview for Marriage Preparation Leaders!

Continue your Ministry Formation by enrolling in the other training opportunities provided by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Contact lprzybysz@archbalt.org for schedule.

Thank you for your generous service to marriage!

Program Logistics

Set calendar dates for your program.

- 10 hours of instruction are expected, usually in 3 sessions of about 3-3 ½ hours each, depending on the host parish's needs and team members' availability.

Communicate with team members

Share the Program Overview,

Receive Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Materials packets from Marriage and Family Life, 410-547-5406. cmahaley@archbalt.org, Secretary.

ENGAGED COUPLE PACKET CONTENTS:

- *Perspectives on Marriage* Couple Workbook
 - Purple for programs administering the FOCCUS Discussion Inventory
 - Yellow for programs administering the FACET Discussion Inventory
- *Natural Family Planning* booklet and local instructor contact flyer
- *When the Cake is Gone: How to Get Married* audio CD
- *Together for Life* Wedding Planning book
- Pamphlets and Handouts:
 - *Foundations Newsletter* subscription form (one-year included in fee)
 - *Love One Another* (about domestic violence)
 - *Are You in a Healthy Relationship?* (His and Her pages-not collected)
 - Program Evaluation Forms

Prepare Content Presentations

- Read pp. 5-10 in the *Perspectives on Marriage Leader Guide*.
- Pre-Cana Outlines for Key Talks: See *Perspectives Leader Guide*, pp. 51-60.
- Pre-Cana Couples also receive presentation ideas with their training packet.
- Resources and talking points from the FOCCUS and FACET facilitator manuals.

Plan discussion/reflection activities

- Choose from worksheets in *Perspectives on Marriage* workbook
- Additional activities are available from Marriage and Family Life office, 410-547-5420.
- Plan learning activities of your own design, based on the curriculum content.

Program Overview

Program Timeline

Ten hours of instruction are expected, usually in 3 sessions of about 3-3 ½ hours each, depending on the host parish's needs and team members' availability.

Each program should include all the topics outlined in the Curriculum Guidelines, found on p. 6 of this Archdiocesan Manual for Marriage Preparation.

Prayer in the Program

Program leaders should craft prayer experiences during the sessions to call the couples to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, invite repentance and a sense of mission of the Christian family that they are beginning. Models for opening, closing prayers and other prayer experiences are available from Marriage and Family Life, 410-547-5420.

Typical Order of Sessions

Presentations and discussion activities will be offered in each session. Arrangement of topics may be adjusted to meet the requirements of the team.

Session 1 - Christian Marriage / Communication

Sacrament of Marriage, Commitment, Discipleship, Vocation and Communication

- Couples take a discussion inventory, FOCCUS or FACET during or after Session 1.

Session 2 - Expectations and Challenges of Married Life

Family of Origin, Decision Making, Finances, Conflict Resolution, Reconciliation, Partnership, Expectations, In-Laws, Healthy Relationships, Substance Abuse, Careers and Work, and Technology and Social Media

Session 3 - Marital Intimacy and Spirituality

Marital Intimacy, Theology of the Body, Sexual Relationship, Danger from Pornography, Family Planning, Marital Spirituality, Personal Relationship with God, Evangelization, Religious Practice, Catholic Weddings, Interfaith Marriage, Parenting, and Sacrament of Reconciliation

Session 1

Christian Marriage / Communication

Overview

Presentations and discussion activities on the Sacrament of Marriage, Commitment, Discipleship, Vocation, and Communication. Couples take a discussion inventory.

Lesson Plan Session 1

3 hours

Opening Exercises

1. Team couples, introduce yourselves.
 - a. Put the engaged couples at ease
 - b. Use first names

2. Open all sessions with prayer. Draw the couples into active participation.

3. Welcome & affirmation
 - a. Interested in their marriage as their vocation for Christian discipleship
 - b. Explain you are helping them prepare for marriage, in your three-fold role: Witness, Teacher, and Facilitator
 - c. Make the couples feel comfortable
 - d. Goal to inspire them with a vision of marriage for others, not only themselves
 - e. "Help you prepare." (not "We will prepare you.")
 - f. Ask about their expectations

4. Leaders, share your story
 - a. How long you have been married
 - b. How you met
 - c. Number of children
 - d. Why you are a Pre-Cana Team Couple
 - e. What your faith means to your marriage
 - f. What your marriage means to your faith
 - g. What you still love about your spouse

5. Icebreaker
 - a. Ask the couples to introduce themselves to the group.
 - a. When and where their wedding will be

- b. One admirable quality of one's partner
- b. Other icebreaker of your choice

Presentation: Christian Marriage

1. Define & discuss "Love" – 1 Cor 13:4-7.
 - Ask the couple what they think love is
 - Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
 - Re-read it with "I" in place of the word "love"
 - Love is a decision not an emotion
 - Christian principles for a marital relationship: love, respect, mercy, trust
 - Marriage as a symbol of Christ's redemptive love for the Church
 - Three kinds of love – all are holy and blessed by God.
 - Philos – brotherly or friendship love
 - Agape – altruistic – willing to give life
 - Eros – sexual love
 - Mutuality of husband and wife ("Seek to outdo the other in kindness." Philippians 2)
2. Christian Marriage Essential elements
 - Life-long
 - Faithful/exclusive
 - Open to children
3. Purpose of marriage preparation
 - Help the couple in their life long committed relationship with God and one another
 - An opportunity for prayerful reflection
 - Time to discuss important issues and learn more about each other
4. Sacrament: Outward sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace
 - The marriage 'grace' is what assures us of our love when we might not like him/her
 - Marriage between two baptized persons is a real symbol of the union of Christ and the church, which is not a temporary or "trial" union, but one which is eternally faithful. – Pope John Paul II
5. For additional talking points, See *Perspectives Leader Guide*, pp. 52

After each presentation, have the couples do a writing/discussion activity.

Activity: Introduce the *Perspectives Workbook*, found in the couples' packet. Have the couples work on "Discovering Each Other", p. 29/31. Couples work separately and then share their responses with each other.

Before taking a break:

- Assign Homework: Read Find ways for “Living the Sacrament” – *Perspectives Workbook* 79.
- Collect subscription cards for the FOUNDATIONS newsletter subscriptions (included in Archdiocesan Pre-Cana fee). Have couples fill out address cards to receive this quarterly follow-up publication after their wedding. Send to Marriage and Family Life for processing.

BREAK

NOTE: If the couples will take the FACET inventory during the First Session, the following presentations/activities may be compressed --or time can be added to this session. The FACET takes about 30 minutes to complete.

Short Presentation: Communication, Part 1

- a. Respect differences. Different doesn't mean wrong- it only means different.
- b. For talking points, see *Perspectives* leader guide, p. 53

Activity: “How Do You See Me?” *Perspectives*, 5/7 or “Clue Each Other In,” pp. 6/8.

Keys to communication:

- a. Give focused attention.
- b. Use reflective listening.
- c. Identify content.
- d. Respond with empathy.

Teach the Technique for active listening (see Appendix for more detailed directions)

- One person talks – one person listens.
- Listener repeats issues, ideas, and feelings.
- Reverse the process.

Allow the couples to practice the technique.

Activity: Introduce the Audio CD, “When the Cake is Gone: How to Get Married and Stay Engaged.” Play the first few minutes of Track 1 for the group. The speaker tells why communication is not sufficient. It is the content and the love we communicate.

Assign for Homework: Tell the couples to listen to the rest of the CD for homework.

(20 – 40 minutes): Introduce **the Pre-Marriage Discussion Inventory** --The program is using either FOCCUS or FACET inventory.

- a. Excellent tool to help stimulate discussion
- b. It is not a test but an “tool for learning.”
- c. Both require the aid of a facilitator for discussing the compared responses.

(20 minutes) FOCCUS: Use the numbered application form in the packet to apply for a FOCCUS session to be set up for this couple. Each session is pre-paid (with packet) and unique to the couple.

- a. FOCCUS: Instruct couple to mark the application form with the name and contact information of the priest/deacon who is meeting with them.
- b. For couples getting married out of the diocese, instruct them to have the FOCCUS results sent to the priest/deacon who is “doing their paperwork”, the person who will meet with them to talk before their wedding.
- c. FOCCUS is taken by the couple at home after the first session. Inform couples to allow a few days for the FOCCUS session to be set up and log-in information sent to the designated person(s).

(40 minutes) FACET:

- a. Remove answer sheets from yellow *Perspectives Workbook*, pp. 90 and 92. Each person responds to the FACET statements provided on pp. 93-100.
- b. Extra copy of the FACET Statements is provided with the team materials so that couples can work separately.
- c. Instruct couples to fill out the FACET Cover Sheet (last page of their yellow workbook).
- d. For couples getting married out of the diocese, instruct them to have the FACET results sent to the priest/deacon who is “doing their paperwork”, the person who will meet with them to talk before their wedding.
- e. FACET also has two copies of a “Narrative Section” pp. 101-115, which couples complete and discuss later. The Narrative Section is not collected, but the questions could be used in a group setting.
- f. **FACET: Allow 30 minutes** for the couples to take the FACET. Collect the Answer Sheets, extra copies of the Statement booklet, and the Cover Sheets for each couple.
- g. Direct the couple to complete and discuss the Narrative Section of FACET at home.

Mail or fax the FOCCUS applications OR Two Completed FACET Answer Sheets with FACET Cover sheet to Marriage and Family Life 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21146, phone: 410-547-5406, Fax: 410-347-7896, cmahaleyW@archbalt.org

Reiterate that it is important that the couples complete their FOCCUS promptly.

After the couple completes the inventory, FOCCUS or FACET, the designated facilitator will receive the results comparing their responses.

Wrap UP:

- a. Upcoming sessions. Review the schedule.
- b. Remind of Homework (not to be collected)
 - a. "Living the Sacrament.", Perspectives, p. 79. Read and discuss.
 - b. Listen to "When the Cake is Gone" CD.
 - c. Complete and discuss the FACET Narrative section, if they took FACET.
- c. Closing Prayer: A Scripture reading and short blessing/thanksgiving prayer is appropriate. See Appendix III.

After Session One

Send FOCCUS Applications OR FACET answer sheets with FACET cover sheets (this is the last page of *Perspectives Workbook*) for each couple and FOUNDATIONS Subscription cards to: Marriage and Family Life, 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21146. Phone: 410-547-5406, Fax: 410-347-7896, cmahaley@archabalt.org

Session 2

Expectations and Challenges of Married Life

Overview

Presentations and discussion activities on Family of Origin, Decision Making, Finances, Conflict Resolution, Reconciliation, Partnership, Expectations, In-Laws, Healthy Relationships, Substance Abuse, Careers and Work, and Technology and Social Media

Lesson Plan Session 2

3 Hours

Opening Prayer: Scripture reading or short prayer

Short Presentation - Family of Origin – *Perspectives Leaders' Guide*, p. 32

- a. Important to have sensitivity to situations of "absent" parent(s)
- b. Major influence on my learning to be a spouse and what I expect in a spouse
- c. I may be more like my same sex parent than I might like to believe.
- d. Expectations brought into marriage
 - Economic background
 - Family traditions
 - Upbringing
 - Ethnic background
 - Sexual differences
 - Personal strengths and weakness

Activity: "Where We Come From," Perspectives 17/19 or "My Family/Your Family", pp 18/20

Short Presentation on Communication and Reconciling

Levels of Communication

- Personal sharing – sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings
- Discussion – sharing ideas
- Arguing – healthiest method of dealing with differences

Positive & negative communication: Complaint, Criticism, Contempt, Withdrawal

- Listen, clarify, and respond
- Share your feelings by first owning them.

- KISS – keep it short and simple.
- For additional talking points, See *Perspectives Leader Guide*, p. 53
- See “Please Listen to Me,” *Perspectives Workbook*, p. 40.

Short Presentation: Decision-Making (See *Perspectives leader Guide for Talking Points*, p. 55)

- Present the Christian decision making process:
 - Consult Catholic teaching
 - Consult reliable people
 - Pray
 - Discern
 - Decide
 - Assess

Activity: Play NUDEL in *Perspectives Workbook*, pp. 59 & 62.

Notes:

- Important not to confuse wants (nice to have) with needs (must have)
- Decisions are no longer "me" but rather "we"
- Both must input their ideas as to acceptability of options
- This is not only a right, but is a responsibility to the well-being of the marriage
- What is best for us as a couple/family?"

For group discussion: PLAY SOLOMON # 9 and/or # 11

Decisions about Finances

- Exercise - THE DOLLAR ALMIGHTY. *Perspectives*, p. 53
- Exercise - YOUR FINANCIAL HOUSE, *Perspectives*, p. 54

BREAK

More Exercises about Decision Making

1. Career opportunities/issues
 - Set parameters regarding acceptable conditions for me to consider whether to give up my career or relocate to further yours.
 - Career and children - “Day care” vs. “Home care”? - Which parent stays home?
2. Cautions about Social Media and Technology
3. Partnership and Expectations
 - Who expects who to accomplish which tasks of the daily routine

- Exercise - TAKE THIS JOB, *Perspectives*, p. 45-47
- Share the tasks; don't divide (assign) them.
- Adjustments when children arrive

4. Relations with in-laws

- Exercise-- MY FAMILY, YOUR FAMILY, OUR FAMILY, *Perspectives*, pp. 18-20

5. Healthy Relationships/domestic abuse: Instruct couples to complete the *Perspectives* exercise privately.

- Introduce the “Healthy Relationships Brochure,” found in the packet. Discuss the qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships that are illustrated inside the brochure.
- Notes:
 - o Physical and emotional abuse is wrong and against the teaching of the church
 - o Abuse may be psychological, emotional, and physical.
 - o Calling names can hurt as much as a slap.
 - o Avoid negative humor – it is a form of aggression.
- For more information refer to *Perspectives*, p. 78

6. Cautions about Substance Abuse

Assign Homework (homework is not collected):

- FIGHTING FAIR – *Perspectives*, p. 9
- FIGHTING WITHOUT FIGHTING – *Perspectives*, p. 10
- ON OUR WORST BEHAVIOR – *Perspectives*, p. 11-13
- TRY, TRY AGAIN – *Perspectives*, p. 12-14
- His and Hers pages: “Are You in a Healthy Relationship?” Yellow and Green sheets included in the couple packet. For private reflection.
- Alcohol and Drugs – *Perspectives*, pp. 49-51

Q & A's

Closing Prayer. See Appendix III

Session 3

Marital Intimacy and Spirituality

Overview

Presentations and discussion activities on Marital Intimacy, Theology of the Body, Sexual Relationship, Danger from Pornography, Family Planning, Marital Spirituality, Personal Relationship with God, Evangelization, Religious Practice, Catholic Weddings, Interfaith Marriage, Parenting, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Lesson Plan Session 3

3 Hours

Opening Prayer: Scripture reading or short prayer

Short Presentation: Intimacy

- Define intimacy
- Build intimacy on many levels
- See Perspectives leader guide, p. 54 for talking points.
- Theology of the Body
 - o Married partners give the gift of themselves in sexual relations.
 - o Love and responsibility
 - o Children are a gift to the couple, not a right
 - o Marital intercourse is also a spiritual communion.
- Pornography as a threat to intimacy and marital success

Activity: Exercise on INTIMACY CHECK UP, Perspectives, p. 26-28 and/or Exercise on TOWARD INTIMACY, Perspectives, p.25-27

Short Presentation: Sexual Relationship

- Sexuality is that part of my personality.
- Need to develop a comfortable way to communicate sexual needs to one another
- Importance of sharing our sexual expectations of marriage

Group Discussion: Play SOLOMON # 12, Perspectives, p. 34. "Why is it so hard to talk about sex sometimes?"

Activity: "Sex and Sexuality" exercise from *Perspectives*, p. 65-67- This is for private discussion; not to be discussed with the group.

Discuss in the group: SOLOMON #3 - Past experiences

- Certain issues must be shared between the partners:
 - o Children from past relationships
 - o STD history
 - o Negative experiences that might cause future problems

Family Planning

- Show the video presentation or team members may give a live witness talk about NFP
- Present what the Church teachings are on welcoming children into your family
- The Church approves of and also encourages NFP
- Provide the NFP resources in the couple packet with teacher contact information
- Infertile couples are called be open to life in other ways: adoption, working with children, foster parenting, etc.

BREAK

Marital Spirituality - Witness Presentation:

- Share with the group: What your marriage means to your faith in Christ; you're your faith in Christ means to your marriage.
- How do you practice your faith?
- "Braid" analogy (man-woman-God: "A three-ply cord is not easily broken" Eccl. 4:12)
- Learn to pray together regularly
- Develop a joy of sharing and being with one another
- Forgive one another
- Take time to rest and reflect alone and renew your spirit
- Importance of strong spiritual life to a marriage
- The family that prays together stays together.
- Psalm 127:1: "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."

Why you are getting married in the Church.

- Discuss in the group: Play SOLOMON # 1, *Perspectives*, p. 33. Dilemma for the non-practicing Catholic couple.

Short Presentation on the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Encourage the couple to go to Confession before the wedding.
- Their priest or deacon may already have invited them to do this.
- Offer a handout with instructions about how to go to confession.

Short Presentation: Faith Life of your future family

- God's help for your marriage.
- Connected to a faith community. Joining a parish.
- Invite the couple to worship at your parish. Supply a parish bulletin/mass times.
- Provide contact information for connections to parish life.
- Share information for joining a parish elsewhere.

The Domestic Church – your home is a true expression of church

- Building traditions through the seasons and holidays
- Your family inspires others to love and service

Wedding Lessons: Look over the parts of the wedding liturgy, *Perspectives*, pp. 80-86.

- Introduce the Wedding Planning booklet, *I Do and Beyond*
- Our prayers and actions at the wedding foreshadow our life together afterward.
- Read aloud to the couples the Nuptial Blessing, p. 84 *Perspectives*.
- Discuss: What blessings did the Lord offering the couple?
- Explain planning the wedding liturgy.
- Talk about the wedding symbols: rings, clothing, flowers, etc.
- Importance of marriage vows.
- Do you both have the same understanding as to what the words mean?

Interfaith Weddings/Families

- Half of all marriages in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are interfaith
- Even two Catholics probably approach faith and religious practice differently.
- Discuss and decide how you will raise your children
- Build spiritual common ground while respecting differences
- ACTIVITY: TWO FAITHS, ONE LOVE, *Perspectives*, p. 39

Parenting

- Scripture makes it clear that our first responsibility as parents love our children. Discipline a part of love.

- We are charged that they are brought up to love God, with an understanding of God expects from his people.
- See Colossians 3:20-21—“You children, obey your parents in everything as this is the acceptable way in the Lord; and fathers, do not nag your children lest they lose heart.”
- Basic parental guidelines:
 - o Who is in charge?
 - o Children interpret the existence of boundaries as "love".
 - o However, they are always testing the boundaries.
 - o Parents decide when the boundaries are moved (rules are changed).
 - o With older children, it may be appropriate to include them in the discussion -- but the decision belongs to the parents.
 - o Parents are accountable to God for modeling moral life.
 - o Children will follow example not words.

Q & A's

Couples complete PROGRAM EVALUATION.

Closing Ceremony and Prayer. See Appendix III.

Award CERTIFICATES

Program Wrap-Up –

Instructions for ARCHDIOCESAN-ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS

Marriage and Family Life sends the program leader one envelope to RETURN the PROGRAM LEADER POCKET FOLDER, including the following instructions:

Return the POCKET FOLDER with the following items enclosed:

- ATTENDANCE SHEET -- return immediately upon completion of group program
 - Necessary for attendance verification
 - Contact with engaged couples who did not attend or complete the group program
- *Walk-ins: NOTE for couples not listed on attendance sheet:
 - Must complete a registration form (provided in your leader folder)
This ensures that there is a record of the couple's attendance.
 - Include any payments (if not already sent)
- FOUNDATIONS Newsletter Subscription forms (program includes a one-year subscription). Complete and collect this form at same time as FOCCUS Applications or FACET answer sheets.
 - FOUNDATIONS forms (Engaged couple pays for this subscription in registration fee)
- Any FOCCUS applications or FACET answer sheets not already sent.
- FINAL EVALUATION FORMS
- SELF-EVALUATION
- FINANCIAL REPORT - Reimbursements will be made payable to the parish
(See note on report form)

Return unused materials to Marriage and Family Life.

Appendix I

Sponsor Couple Model

Sponsor Couple Training Course Overview

Sponsor couples complete a **two-part training**. They begin by taking the basic training described in the Pre-Cana Leader Guide. This includes:

- Basic skills and catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage
- Learn Catholic teaching on marriage
- Familiarity with program materials for the Archdiocese Marriage Preparation Programs
- Reflection on your own marriage journey

Facilitator Training Required

In addition, Sponsor Couples attend a gathered session that teaches them how to facilitate the conversation with couples on the discussion inventories, FOCCUS and FACET.

Sponsor Couples' Role

Engaged couples meet with you in your home. Your role is three-fold: Witnesses, Facilitators and Teachers. You are witnesses to your faith in Jesus Christ as the foundation of your marriage. As Facilitators, you help couples interpret the results of their Discussion Inventory, encouraging communication between them. Your task is to help the couple listen to each other, share thoughts and feelings, and work toward solutions. At other times, you act as Teachers. You share what the Church teaches and instruct in useful relationship skills. You should not move into the teaching mode too early, however. Become the teacher only after helping the couple to discuss an issue thoroughly and look for their own solutions. This will be the appropriate time to teach the couple about the Church's teaching on an issue.

Sponsor Couple Format

Sponsor couples typically meet five times with the engaged couple. A sample outline of the program is provided on the following page.

Receive Assignment

Your parish marriage preparation coordinator will invite you to work with an engaged couple and provide you with their contact information. The parish will order from the Family Life office and supply you with a **packet of the materials** you need for the engaged couple.

Call the couples and invite them to your home for the first session.

Preparing Your Home The reason for having the couple into your home is so they can see marriage as you really live it. Try not to stress about cleaning and preparing the house. You may serve light refreshments if you prefer. Please do not serve nor offer alcoholic beverages. You may wish to set up a prayer table in the room where you meet with the engaged couple. Place on it a Bible, a candle (perhaps your wedding candle) and something that has a special importance to you as a couple. Share its significance with the engaged couple.

Choose a comfortable setting, either at the dining room table or in the living room with chairs for all to face one another. The couple will need a surface to write on and pens/pencils.

Preparing Your Children

It will surely be valuable for the engaged couple to see how much children have enriched your marriage. Be aware, however, that children could be a distraction to them. Be sure that your sessions will have the quiet and privacy needed for answering questions and couple dialogue. If your children are old enough, explain the program to them. Encourage them to suggest how they can help assure the success of the sessions in your home.

Managing Time

Please begin on time and finish on time. It is important to keep the session on track and this will not occur if you begin late. One and a half to two hours should be sufficient time for a session. Decide which spouse will serve as the timekeeper: It is helpful to decide between you who will keep an eye on the clock. Allow for a short stretch break at the end of an hour.

Sponsor Couple Session Plan - 2014

Adapt order of topics to meet the couple's situation

Session 1: Getting Acquainted / Setting Goals for Marriage Prep – 2 hr.

1. Introduce Yourself
2. Welcome & affirmation. Couple complete and discuss, “Clue Each Other In”, Workbook pp. 6/8.
3. Opening Prayer
4. Share your story of how you met. Engaged couple tells their story.
5. Define & discuss “Love” – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, making connection to the love of God for families.
6. Define and discuss Christian marriage.
7. Discuss what it means to be a “sign of God’s love in the world” (sacramental marriage).
8. Discussion talking points: *Leader Guide*, p. 52.
9. Apply for FOCCUS or take the FACET discussion inventory (included in *Perspectives* workbook) – Parish chooses which inventory to use.
 - Explain what the discussion inventory is—and is not.
10. FOCCUS application may be done before the first session after a phone conversation with the couple.
11. Next meeting dates
12. Closing Prayer
13. Send FOCCUS application to Marriage and Family Enrichment OR fax FACET for processing as directed on fax cover sheet.

Homework:

- Complete the FOCCUS (if using this discussion inventory)
- Or--Discuss FACET Narrative Pages
- *Please Listen to Me*, p. 40
- *Worksheets*: Assign one from *Perspectives*: pp. 5/7, 21/23, 29/31.
- Listen to *When the Cake is Gone: How to Get Married and Stay Engaged*, Track One

Session 2: Communicating Effectively – 2 hrs.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Review Homework. Discuss.
3. Discuss FOCCUS or FACET results. *Loan couple the inventory booklets to refer to as you address categories and areas for discussion.*
4. For talking points, see *Leader Guide*, p. 53.
5. Family of Origin. *Leader Guide*, p. 32. Choose one worksheet from this group and discuss together.
6. Assign Homework (below).
7. Closing Prayer

Homework:

- Read and discuss: FIGHTING FAIR – *Workbook*, p. 9 and FIGHTING WITHOUT FIGHTING – *Workbook*, p. 10
- Choose one or more *Workbook* exercises: 11/13, 12/14
- Read and discuss privately: LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP, *Perspectives* p. 63
- Listen to *When the Cake is Gone*, Track 2

Session 3: Decision Making & Problem Solving – 2hrs

1. Opening Prayer
2. Review Homework. Discuss.
3. Discussion on “Potential Problems”, see *Leader Guide*, p. 55
4. Financial matters, expectations, adjustments, *Workbook* p. 45-47
5. In-laws/out-laws, *Workbook* pp. 18-20
6. Domestic violence and addictions. Provide resources flyer from packet.
7. Assign homework
8. Closing Prayer

Homework (as appropriate to the couple’s life stage):

- *Perspectives* Worksheets, as appropriate
- Worksheets: “Are You in a Healthy Relationship”, for private discussion
- Discuss “Living Together”, *Workbook* p. 77, if appropriate.
- Listen to *When the Cake is Gone*, Track 3

Session 4: Marital Intimacy – 2 hrs.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Review Homework
3. Discussion: “Becoming Intimate”, Leader Guide, p. 54
4. Discuss the meaning of giving yourself as a gift to your spouse, “Theology of the Body.”
5. Workbook Exercise -- Choose one or more: 26/28, 65/67
6. Introduce Natural Family Planning written resources and video.
7. Assign Homework (below)
8. Closing Prayer

Homework:

- Complete and discuss worksheets: 41/43 and/or 42/44
- Discuss family planning. Contact a NFP instructor from the list in the brochure provided, to arrange instruction.
- Listen to *When the Cake is Gone*, Track 4

Session 5: Spirituality and Family Life

1. Opening Prayer
2. Discussion: Leader Guide, “Becoming Family”
 - Workbook exercises: Choose from 17, 18, 73, 74
3. Discussion: Leader Guide, “Trusting God” p. 57
 - Workbook exercises: 35/37
4. Discuss the importance of praying alone and together.
5. Wedding liturgy – see Workbook p. 80 and *Together for Life*
6. Encourage the couple to go to confession before the wedding.
7. Help couple develop their FOCCUS of the Future Plan, if using.
8. Pass out Evaluations & Certificates.
9. Assign homework.
10. Closing Prayer

Homework:

- Read and discuss either Workbook p. 39 or 79, as appropriate.
- Review FOCCUS for the FUTURE—or—FACET Narrative pages
- Plan Wedding Liturgy with parish minister.

