

Promotion Suggestions

- Week 1 Pulpit announcement
- Week 2 Flyer in the bulletin
- Week 3 Invitation post cards
- Week 4 Registration weekend

The promotional process ideally begins at least 2 months before the retreat.

Follow Up

One of the keys to a healthy marriage is an environment that is conducive to growth. We strongly recommend a plan of action going into the retreat for on-going support for your couples after the retreat. This need not be complicated or time consuming. A simple lay-led small group gathering such as Christ Centered Couples (information enclosed) of 4-6 couples every other week guided by a trustworthy resource fills a void in a very effective manner. More information on this program complete with formats and resources is available.

**The Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis
Office for Family, Laity, Youth & Young Adults**



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Called to Love

Parish Marriage Retreat



"This is my commandment,

that you love one another

as I have loved you."

John 15:12



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Introduction

God gave his children a great gift in the vocation of marriage. From the beginning He designed it for the good of the spouses and for the procreation of children. “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body” (Gen 3:24). God has also given us His vision for marriage. It is our responsibility to help couples learn and live this vision. The assistance of the Church is essential to defend, promote, and support this gracious gift. One method of such support is a parish-based marriage enrichment retreat for all married couples.

Purpose and Goals

The general purpose of this retreat is to strengthen marriages by helping married couples refocus their vision on Christ, each other, and their marriage. The retreat is also intended to help build community within the parish which will reciprocally strengthen both marriages and the parish. The specific goal of the program is to teach the basics of God’s plan for marriage and to facilitate discussion among married couples about the issues that are most crucial to them.

Format

After consultation with many couples we have developed a simple and flexible format. This format will include teachings about God’s vision of marriage and sexuality as well as practical tips on topics like communication and prayer. After each teaching session, the couples will have time to reflect on the topic together and make decisions about how they can improve their relationship.

Schedule Options

Couples’ Top Choices

- Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday Noon – 8:00 p.m.

Topics

- **“In the Beginning”** God created man in His image and has a plan for him to love and to be loved.
- **“And they become one flesh”** The Sacrament of Marriage reflects the exclusive, permanent and life-giving relationship of God with His people. Sexual intercourse expresses this complete gift of self and makes the invisible visible.
- **“A time to build up ... and a time to heal”** A marriage requires exclusive time and attention on a regular basis to flourish. It also requires the ability to repent and to forgive.
- **“Husbands Love Your Wives / Wives Love Your Husbands”** God calls spouses to continually choose the good for each other and to deny themselves – by taking out the trash and speaking kindly to each other.
- **“Devote Yourselves to Prayer” “Be Constant in Prayer”** Prayer unites God with His children and His children with each other. Prayer on several levels – personal through communal – is essential for a healthy life in God.

Options for longer retreats (more than 8 hours)

- Holiness in Marriage – The Life of Service
- Holiness in Marriage – The Life of Virtue
- Stewardship
- Natural Family Planning

Archdiocesan and Parish Responsibilities

The Archdiocese Office for Family, Laity, Youth & Young Adults will provide:

- all the speakers and materials for the retreat.

The parish is expected to:

- manage advertising, promotion and registration
- provide a meeting space and quality sound system
- provide any snacks or meals
- pay speakers (less than \$400 total)
- provide babysitting (optional, but highly recommended)