

## How much does marriage preparation cost?

Marriage preparation is an investment in your future that offers valuable lessons that will last well beyond your wedding day. The cost of marriage prep is anywhere from \$125-\$185. If true financial hardship is an issue, please contact the Office of Family Life directly.

## How long does this process take?

Within the recommended time of one year, you are responsible for taking a minimum of two courses. Typically each course is six hours, plus any additional meetings with your priest or deacon.

## Why two courses?

It is impossible to teach couples everything about marriage in two courses but the Church desires to give every couple a strong foundational start to their life long commitments to one another. Without the foundation of God's Plan for marriage the day to day life skill components become more difficult to live out. Both courses answers the whats, whys and hows to living out a joy-filled marriage.

## My fiancé is in the military. What do we do then?

After discussing this with your priest or deacon, contact the Office of Family Life for programs geared towards this specific situation.

## How do I register for these classes?

Visit the St. Paul Inside the Walls website at: [www.insidethewalls.org/guide-to-marriage-preparation](http://www.insidethewalls.org/guide-to-marriage-preparation)

## What is Natural Family Planning?

NFP is the most effective, natural, healthy and inexpensive system integrating excellent women's health, and true family planning for married couples trying to achieve pregnancy, having fertility concerns, or planning to delay pregnancy.



[www.insidethewalls.org](http://www.insidethewalls.org)  
205 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940  
(973) 377-1004

## *A Couple's Guide to Marriage Preparation*



*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh*  
- Genesis 2:24

*Office of*  
**Family Life**



Diocese of Paterson

## Welcome...

Congratulations on your upcoming celebration of Holy Matrimony and sharing in this Sacrament! Your wedding is not only a very special day for the two of you but it is also a sacred event for the entire Church, and we want to be part of your celebration. Here is a step-by-step guide to marriage preparation:

### What is Marriage?...

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."

CCC 1601

### What is Pre-Cana?...

Pre-Cana is an umbrella term that describes the variety of marriage preparation classes hosted by marriage and family ministries.

### Steps to get started:

1. **Make** contact with your priest or deacon as soon as possible after the engagement, but not less than six months prior to the wedding date.
2. **Read** the Couples Guide at [www.insidethewalls.org/guide-to-marriage-preparation](http://www.insidethewalls.org/guide-to-marriage-preparation)
3. **Set** an appointment to take a premarital inventory with your priest or deacon.
4. **Register** for both courses. Both are required.

#### Course 1

God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage is a series of talks based on Theology of the Body that offers an understanding of God's Plan for marriage and human sexuality. Learn about the beauty of marriage as originally designed, and the gifts husbands and wives are meant to be for one another. This is typically done at the diocesan level.

#### Course 2

The marriage preparation life skills session(s) offers practical insights and assistance in building a successful marriage. Topics covered include: communication, conflict resolution, family of origin, finances and more. This is done at your parish or a neighboring one.

5. **Take** a Natural Family Planning class. A natural and effective way of postponing or achieving pregnancy. (Class recommended but not mandatory).

### Pope Francis' advice on Weddings:



*"Make [your wedding] a real celebration – because marriage is a celebration – a Christian celebration, not a worldly feast! ... What happened in Cana 2,000 years ago, happens today at every wedding celebration: that which makes your wedding full and profoundly true will be the presence of the Lord who reveals himself and gives his grace. It is his presence that offers the 'good wine,' he is the secret to full joy, that which truly warms the heart."*

### What couples are saying about marriage preparation

*"...God's Plan methodically reveals that God wants the same things that we, at our core, want for ourselves in a passionate, loving and joy-filled marriage. This is a MUST HAVE for any engaged or married couple!" - Karl S.*

*"...I had no idea what to expect from God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage, but one thing that amazed me was that it didn't matter if you were well catechized or had a nominal understanding of the faith or even marrying into the faith, marriage was presented in a way that was accessible to everyone without losing the beauty and richness of the sacrament." - Cecilia S.*