



Marriage Preparation Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement!

Your marriage is one of the most important moments you will experience in your life. Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic Community is happy that you have chosen to receive the Sacrament of Marriage in our Parish. God will bless and strengthen your love and commitment to one another.

To help you prepare for your wedding day and your life together, we invite you to follow the guidelines for marriage preparation in the Catholic Church:

- 1. Initial meeting with the priest/deacon** – After you are engaged, you should contact your parish as soon as possible, at least six months before your expected wedding day. You will meet with a priest or a deacon who will determine if you and your fiancé are free to marry in the Catholic Church. In addition, the priest/deacon will explain to you the entire process of getting married in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, during that meeting, you'll be asked to fill out **The Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire**.

After that meeting, if there are no impediments, you are encouraged to reserve a date on parish's calendar for your Ceremony. To be placed on the calendar, you're invited to donate a **non-refundable deposit of \$200**

- 2. Premarital Inventory-** After meeting with a priest or deacon at your parish, you will set up a time to take a premarital inventory and discuss the results. This inventory will allow you and your fiancé to learn more about each other, both your strengths and weaknesses. This is an important time to identify any possible challenges that you as a married couple might face.
- 3. Diocesan Marriage Preparation Workshops** - In the Diocese of Venice, each engaged couple must attend two workshops to help prepare them for the Sacrament of Matrimony. It does not matter the order in which these workshops are taken, just that the couple attends both. All workshops are held on Saturdays, usually from 9am-4pm, and the cost for each one is \$75. A calendar for upcoming workshops and instructions for registering can be found at:

<http://dioceseofvenice.org/offices/evangelization/marriage-preparation/>

- Life Skills Workshop: At the Life Skills workshop, couples will learn about the skills that are essential for a successful marriage – communications, finances, conflict resolution, etc. Also, couples will be given the opportunity to dialogue honestly and

openly about their future lives together. If either person in the couple has previously been married, The Life Skills Workshop can be replaced with a “*To Trust Again*” workshop, which deals more specifically with these situations.

- Sacramentality Workshop: Getting married in the Catholic Church means that the couple fully embraces the Catholic understanding of this Sacrament, which means having a commitment to a love that is free, total, faithful, and open to children. At the Sacramentality Workshop, couples will learn more in-depth the Church’s teachings on marriage and human sexuality and how to apply these teachings in their own marriage.

**Important: The couple will receive a certificate after each workshop they attend. The certificates need to be given to the priest preparing you for marriage. The priest will then give you a Certificate of Completion (this is different from the workshop certificates) that can be given to the County Clerks Office.*

4. **Attend Natural Family Planning Instruction:** Engaged couples are invited to attend a class on Natural Family Planning; a beautiful, safe and natural way to both postpone and achieve pregnancy. To sign up for a class, e-mail: nfp@dioceseofvenice.org with your name, phone number, and parish, and someone will contact you to register you for a class convenient to you.
5. **Three months** prior to your wedding, you’re asked to make another appointment with a consulting priest/deacon and provide:
 - Certificates from both workshops;
 - Baptismal certificates (issued within the last 6 months);
 - Four Affidavits Concerning Freedom to Marry (two for each party);
 - Other documents requested by a priest/deacon.
 - Pay a remaining amount of the suggested donation for the usage of the church;
6. **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Marriage is a beautiful sacrament, but it is also a great responsibility. The couple is committing to a lifetime of self-giving love to one another. This is only possible through the grace of God. Before entering into marriage, couples should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation shortly before the Wedding Day. Contact your parish to determine times available for this Sacrament.
7. **Liturgy Planning:** There is a book to help you to plan the wedding ceremony. At this meeting the priest/deacon will help you finalize your plans for the ceremony.
8. **Rehearsal:** The rehearsal is for the entire wedding party and it is usually held one or two days before the wedding.

Again, congratulations, and may God bless your upcoming marriage! If you have any questions about Marriage Preparation at St. Katharine Drexel Parish, please contact the parish office at (239) 283-9501 and ask to speak with a priest/deacon. May God bless you!