

## Marriage Preparation Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement! Your marriage is one of the most important moments you will experience in your life. The Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic Family 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. Additionally, during that meeting, you may be asked to fill out **The Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire**.

If there are no impediments for your marriage, we invite you to reserve your wedding date/time on the parish calendar. In order to do so, you need to provide a **non-refundable deposit of \$200** (*check payable to: St. Katharine Drexel Parish*). Once the date/time is confirmed by the priest/deacon, you can start preparing for your wedding.

- 2. Premarital Inventory-** After the meeting with a priest/deacon you'll be asked to take separately a premarital inventory ([www.getfullyengaged.com](http://www.getfullyengaged.com)). Upon completion of this on-line questionnaire, a priest or deacon will meet with you in order to discuss results. (*This inventory is meant to help 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.*)

Furthermore, during that meeting you'll be given a booklet "*Together for Life*", with a selection of approved readings/prayers/blessings for your wedding ceremony.

- 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 8am-4pm, and the cost for each one is \$75. A calendar for upcoming workshops and instructions for registering can be found at:

<https://dioceseofvenice.org/sacraments/marriage/marriageprep/>

- **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 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.
- To Trust Again Workshop: Option to replace Life Skills Workshop for widowed or previously annulled marriages.

*\*Important: The couple will receive a certificate after each workshop they attend. Both certificates need to be given to the priest/deacon preparing you for marriage. The priest/deacon will then provide for you a Certificate of Completion, which can be presented to the County Clerk’s Office at the time of obtaining Marriage License.*

- 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](mailto:nfp@dioceseofvenice.org). Someone will contact you to register you for a class convenient to you.
- 5. Music.** If you wish to have music during your ceremony, please contact Mr. James Haefele at (239) 673-9078.
- 6. 4-6 weeks** before 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;
  - Selection of readings/prayers from “Together for Life” booklet;
  - Pay a remaining balance of the suggested donation for the usage of the church;
- 7. 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.
- 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. God bless you!