

Catholic Marriage Preparation 101

Our Three to Get Married Marriage Preparation program is only one step in your preparation process. Below is a guideline that explains some of the important steps in your preparation process.

1. **Contact a priest in your local parish.**

Even if you're planning to be married elsewhere or at another church, you must contact a priest from the Diocese in which you live. Destination weddings or weddings at a hometown parish still require contact with a local priest. **This should be done 6-12 months prior to the date of your wedding.**

2. **Completion of requirements to marry in the Catholic Church.**

In this initial meeting, the priest or deacon will go over the requirements of getting married in the Catholic Church and assist you in completing them. These requirements consider the universal law of the Church, the local laws and customs of the local diocese, and state law. **If you are marrying in another country, plan for the additional time required to prepare the paper work and have it sent from the preparing diocese to the diocese where the ceremony will take place.**

The requirements will include:

- a. Submission of official documents, such as baptismal certificates, marriage license, statement of freedom to marry, any dispensations needed, and letter of permission if marrying in a church outside your parish.
- b. Selection and completion of marriage preparation program.
- c. Scheduling date & place of your wedding.
- d. Clarifying which priest or deacon will be responsible for items listed below:
(Note: Your priest may assume all these roles or delegate some or all of them to another priest or deacon)
 - i. Overseeing your preparation
 - ii. Processing your documentation
 - iii. Reviewing your FOCCUS inventory with you



iv. Officiating your wedding ceremony. Note: Your priest may assume all these roles or delegate some or all of them to another priest or deacon.

3. Participate and receive a certificate of completion for an approved marriage preparation program, such as Three to Get Married.

4. Attend a Natural Family Planning Instruction Course.

5. Review your FOCCUS inventory with an approved facilitator.

6. Go to Confession

For Catholics, an indispensable part of the preparation for Marriage is the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance prior to the wedding. One should always approach the altar worthily, in a state of grace, open to all of the blessings the Lord has to bestow. You can do this at your local parish or set up an appointment here with one of the priests at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center.

7. Plan your wedding liturgy and love for a lifetime!

We hope this helps answer your questions about the process to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. Please contact us if you would like more information.