



ARCHDIOCESE  
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SAN ANTONIO

### **Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Prep**

These forms are for use by Parish Staff only. If you have any questions about these forms or need help with special cases, please do not hesitate to contact the Tribunal.

Note: Prenuptial packets for couples celebrating marriage outside of the US should be sent to the Tribunal at least 2 months prior to the wedding date and should be accompanied by \$100 to assist with mailing costs. This \$100 payment can be made by couples by following this link: <https://archsa.regfox.com/tribunal-mailing-fee>



**PASTORAL GUIDELINES  
FOR  
MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

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**MARRIAGE PREPARATION IS A VITAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE. SOME OF THE STRUCTURED FORMS SUCH AS SPONSOR COUPLES, ENGAGED ENCOUNTER, PRE-CANA AND OTHERS, ADDRESS THE MANY CONCERNS OF MARRIAGE. WHERE THESE ARE NOT AVAILABLE OR WHERE THERE IS A NEED TO AUGMENT A PARTICULAR PROGRAM, THE ONE WHO IS PREPARING A COUPLE FOR MARRIAGE MAY FIND THIS GUIDELINE AS AN AID IN THAT PREPARATION.**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
**GROOM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**BRIDE**

PHASE ONE

I. ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUPLE

The Church cares about you and wants your married life to be happy. Your decision is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. This is why there needs to be sufficient and unhurried time allowed to prepare well. I am happy to spend this time with you in preparing not just for your wedding but for your whole married life.

- 1. Tell me about yourselves. What are your families like?
2. How long have you been dating? When were you engaged? Where did you meet? What attracted you to each other?
3. How does your family feel about your intentions to marry?
4. Why do you wish to be married in or through the Catholic Church?
5. Are each of you close to your family emotionally? How difficult will it be to live a great distance from them? Are you independent now?
6. Are your parents ready for you to leave home?
7. Do you accept your relationships with each other's family?
8. What are your plans for the first year of marriage? Where will you live? What type of work will you do?
9. What would you like your marriage to be like 25 years from now? 50 years?
10. Do you have any questions?

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_
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II. REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED

If there are no impediments or obvious problems to warrant delaying the wedding far beyond the desired date, then explain what is required of the couple.

- 1. Another initial session with the priest.
2. Secure needed documents.
3. Primary Marriage Preparation (PMP) requirements/to be completed 2 to 3 months before wedding.
4. Two or Three final sessions to complete assessment and plan liturgy.

III. A PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY or assessment tool may be administered at this time to aid in the assessment or instructional phase of preparation.

IV. TENTATIVE or PROVISIONAL DATE OF WEDDING

Only at this point is the Church calendar checked for available date. It should be clear that a final commitment to this date CANNOT be made until the final phase with the couple.

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PHASE TWO

I. SHARE the RESULTS of the Pre-Marital Inventory or other instrument (if one has been administered in the first phase), and use it gently to point out areas of strength and areas of weakness.

II. AN INSTRUCTION, with dialogue, on the THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE: Treating with biblical background:

- Marriage as a covenant relationship,
Marriage as a sacrament,
The signs of the marriage covenant,
Covenant virtues: fidelity/faithfulness,
permanence/lasting love,
children/fruitfulness.

III. PRESENT RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

1. Tell me about your involvement in your church, synagogue, or mosque?
2. How does religion influence your present relationship?
3. Do you attend church regularly and receive the sacraments? How regularly?
4. What role will religious values have in your marriage relationship? Do you anticipate any difficulties in this regard? How can the Church help you? How will you as a couple be involved in the Church? or your Churches?
5. Have you made any decisions in regard to the religious upbringing of your children?

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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IV. The VARIOUS kinds of PRIMARY MARRIAGE PREPARATION available are explained, and the couple discusses how they can begin the instructional phase. (See Sec. IV of the Marriage Guidelines for Dioceses of the State of Texas—MGST.)  
 Name of Sponsor Couple: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Here the requirements as in II-2, 3, and 4 of Phase I above, may be repeated.)

PHASE THREE

(This phase is suggested if no other Marriage Preparation Course is used)

I. CONSIDERATIONS OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITY AND FINANCES

1. Are both of you working at the moment? How long have you been working at your present job(s)? What are your future plans? How do you feel about each other's job? Have you ever had problems with employment or holding a job?
2. Do you know how much each other earns? Are you aware of how much money the two of you have saved? Aware of each other's debts? Do you spend wisely?
3. Have you discussed your feelings about both of you working, about sharing chores in the home, about the relationship between your home life and work, about the possibility of taking on too much responsibility early in your marriage?
4. Is schooling in your plans for the beginning of your marriage? Who will be the support in the beginning of your marriage? Groom? Bride? Both? Parents?
5. Have you figured out how much it costs to get married? How much for living expenses? How will you plan your budget? For two people? For three people?
6. Do you often speak about your future home? Future recreational expenses? Who is going to run the house, organize things?

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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II. MUTUAL COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION

1. What are your feelings about the home in which you were raised? What kind of home life would you like to create for yourselves? Would you know a couple that has what you would consider a very good marriage?
2. How were differences of opinion or quarrels solved by your parents? How do you solve them?
3. What are some signs that your future spouse understands and accepts you as you are?
4. Are you aware of any cultural or ethnic differences between you? Do you see ways it could affect your marriage relationship? Are there any resentments?
5. Do you usually share what you think and feel? With ease or difficulty?
6. Are there times when it is difficult to communicate with each other? Explain.
7. How do you handle anger, jealousy, irritation, impatience with each other?
8. Would there ever be a time when you would place someone before your spouse? When? How do you think your spouse would respond?
9. How do you think you would feel if your spouse put someone else before you?
10. Do you have any feelings about attending a retreat for marriage enrichment periodically? In the event of a serious problem, how would you feel about going to a counselor?

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**III. SEXUALITY AND PARENTHOOD**

1. How do you feel about discussing sexual matters between the two of you? Were you comfortable discussing these matters during the Marriage Preparation sessions?
2. Are there any questions you would still like to discuss further with each other, with a priest, with a married couple, or a doctor?
3. What do you feel your sexual relationship will mean to your marriage?
4. What is your attitude about having children in the years to come? How many children would you like to have?
5. How do you understand the church's teaching on birth control? Are you aware of Natural Family Planning?
6. How do you plan to share the responsibilities of parenting?
7. If there are children from a previous marriage, have you frankly discussed your feelings toward them?...how they might affect your marriage in the years to come.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**FINAL PHASE**

I. FINAL ASSESSMENT: DATE OF WEDDING \_\_\_\_\_ TIME OF WEDDING \_\_\_\_\_

If, after these follow-up interviews, the Pastor, or delegated representative, is unable to reach a conclusive assessment regarding the readiness of the couple for marriage, he should seek immediate consultation with qualified resource personnel, including medical or psychological expertise, if such seems appropriate. —Marriage Guidelines of the State of Texas, Section III.

II. CHECK that all necessary documents and dispensations are secured: (See envelope)

**III. PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY**

1. Discuss the wedding liturgy and present the options available.
2. Arrange for the rehearsal and what will be expected of the couple and what will happen at that time.
3. Encourage them and the wedding party to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at some time before the rehearsal.
4. Discuss parish policies, reserving reception facilities, etc.
5. BE SURE ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION IS FILLED OUT ON THE ENVELOPE FOR PERMANENT RECORD.

FINAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE of Priest or Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE