Marriage Preparation

Information Brochure
2014 - 2015

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver

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www.rcav.org/m-prep
Welcome!

This course is intended to be one of the most meaningful learning experiences of your relationship. The presenters will share information, insights and stories relevant to many questions that only the two of you can answer. Why do you want to marry? Why this person? Why now? Why marry in the Church? What are your expectations for your life together? True love calls you to an openness that will strengthen your love and faith in both God and each other.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. We are planning to get married in the Catholic Church. What do we have to do?
A. Before doing anything else, call your parish office to request a meeting with the priest. He will give you an overview of what is required for you as a couple. At least one of you must be a Catholic. Most parishes recommend that you contact them at least 6 months prior to your desired wedding date and often prefer that you are (or may become) a registered parishioner.

Q. My fiancé(e) isn’t Catholic. Is that a problem?
A. Not necessarily. Many Catholics happily marry non-Catholics and a significant percentage of couples in the programme will be into a “mixed” or “disparity of cult” marriage. Having different faith traditions could be a source of difficulty in married life. Therefore it’s important to respectfully communicate, openly and honestly, with each other about your expectations. Your priest must discuss this issue and may help to obtain the necessary documentation (dispensation).

Q. What does ‘preparation’ consist of?
A. The time prior to your wedding is very enriching and special. It is easy to get caught up about the wedding day itself. However, it’s how you live life after the wedding day that will determine the success of your marriage. Much of this time before your wedding should be spent gaining a good understanding of each other; your values, beliefs, character traits, views on important issues, cultural and family traditions, etc.

Q. Do we need to do any ‘formal’ preparation?
A. The Catholic Church requires that couples marrying in the Church have a period of preparation. Your parish priest is responsible to determine that you have an adequate preparation. The Archdiocese has developed a programme to assist him in this. Alternatively, Catholic Engaged Encounter may better meet your specific needs. In addition, Church and government paperwork must be completed. You should discuss this with your priest as soon as possible.

Q. What is the advantage of attending a marriage preparation programme?
A. An advantage of all marriage preparation programmes is the focused time you spend together learning about and discussing topics related to your relationship. Regarding the Archdiocesan programme, many couples say they found it very beneficial and were glad they attended (even if they didn’t want to at first!)
Q. What’s the difference between the Archdiocesan evening and the Saturday course?
A. There is no substantial difference in content. For couple’s convenience, we have two formats available. However, due to limited space, the Saturday courses require advance reservations, evening courses do not. Please read the section called “Registration Information”. (All courses require that you meet with your priest first to receive a signed registration form) Actual registration and payment is done on site on first attendance. N.B. Saturday courses can fill up quickly so call early.

Q. What does the Archdiocesan programme consist of?
A. The programme consists of seven sessions during which presenters will share their knowledge and experience with you on a variety of topics in a large group format.

There will be an ‘Online Couple Relationship Inventory’ provided through Prepare-Enrich. This confidential and informative tool is for your benefit and helps you identify and focus on areas of strength and of potential growth. Most couples find the “couple’s report” and workbook helpful. You may check www.enrichcanada.ca and www.prepare-enrich.com for more information

Natural Family Planning is an important part of preparedness for the healthy and virtuous living out of the marriage covenant for most couples of child bearing years. Initial training or an introductory session (followed by a private consultation) provided by your choice of: WOOMB BC, Serena BC or a local Creighton Model Practitioner is part of the programme. See www.rcav.org/nfp for information and direct links to these groups’ websites.

Q. What should we do if we can’t attend a session?
   
   Evening Course: Flexibility is built into the programme. As long as you both attend all 7 sessions, you can take them in any order and anywhere. You don’t need to call, just show up for the missed session. Be sure to sign the “make up classes” sheet at the registration table to record your attendance.

   Saturday Course: It is best to complete at one location as the order of presentations may change between locations. Special arrangements might be possible if necessary. Evening and Saturday courses are not normally interchangeable.

Q. My fiancé(e) lives in another city or country. What do we do?
A. Be sure to talk this over with your priest. It’s up to him to determine what steps you should take. He may ask that you attend the Archdiocesan programme on your own and that your fiancé(e) do the same where he/she is living. Or perhaps you and your fiancé(e) can attend an Engaged Encounter and/or receive another form of instruction. Your priest will let you know what is needed.

Q. How does our priest know that we’ve completed the programme?
A. Attendance is kept during the programme by both bride and groom on the sheets provided. When you both have completed all sessions, a certificate of completion is sent to your priest. If a session appears missed, we hold the certificate until done or are asked otherwise. Catholic Engaged Encounter has its own documentation.

Q. What is the Catholic Engaged Encounter?
A. Catholic Engaged Encounter is a programme built on an encounter model with an international history. Normally a Saturday and Sunday, it is a time of couples and a priest sharing life experience and teaching, and covering an equivalent content to the Archdiocesan programme.
Q. Is the Catholic Engaged Encounter run by this office?
A. Catholic Engaged Encounter is approved by the Archdiocese but is actually organized by the local chapter of that organization. For a schedule or other information regarding C.E.E. please call (604) 451-3300 or visit their website at: www.ceewest.com.

Q. Can we do more than one programme?
A. Yes, you can do both if you wish. Also, after a few years of marriage you might consider a Marriage Encounter. For information visit www.wwmecanada.org or find other opportunities for enrichment of your marriage and life together.

For further information or updated schedule, go to: www.rcav.org/m-prep

May God bless you as you prepare for life together.