

Preparing for the New Rite of Marriage

The Sacrament of Marriage at the Newman Catholic Student Center

With great joy we congratulate you on your intention to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Marriage in the Roman Catholic Church. It is our intention here at the Newman Center to assist you in every possible way to make your marriage preparation a memorable one and even more to aid in making your vocation of marriage a lasting celebration of Christ's love.

Our program is designed to give you the best preparation for your marriage. Therefore, we present to you the marriage preparation program and church requirements. After you complete the preliminary information and the preparation program decided by you in collaboration with the Newman Center, it is reasonable to presume the preparation will be completed by the date chosen for your marriage.

May the Lord bless you and us as we begin together.

Marriage Preparation Pre-Cana info and dates to remember 2017

Mandatory Marriage Orientation Meetings 2017

At the beginning of each semester, the Newman Center offers a marriage orientation meeting for all engaged couples. *Any couples wishing to go through the marriage process at the Newman Center must attend one of these sessions.*

Spring 2017: Sunday, January 22, 10 a.m.

Fall 2017: Sunday, September 10, 10 a.m.

Marriage Preparation and Pre-Cana opportunities

Each couple is required to attend a marriage preparation experience.

The Davenport Diocese, and all other dioceses, offer classes in marriage preparation. Contact <http://davenportdiocese.org> to find out about these activities or **Barbara Butterworth at (563) 324-1912 ext. 265**. You may also reach her at butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org

There are also several online preparation opportunities for couples - catholicmarriageprep.com is one of several online choices.

Another option is an Engaged Encounter Retreat, these are held at the American Martyrs Retreat House in Cedar Falls, Iowa. It is the responsibility of the couple to register for these retreats and make their own arrangements regarding participation, transportation, and fees. To register for a retreat, please use the following information:

American Martyrs Retreat House
2209 North Union Road
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3543

or Family Life Office
Archdiocese of Dubuque
Dubuque, IA 52001
(563) 556-2580

Welcome to Marriage Preparation at the Newman Catholic Student Center

After you have read all the information in this handout and have decided to complete your marriage preparation at the Newman Center, please click on the Couple Information Sheet link on the website. It will be sent to our Marriage Preparation Coordinator, Jacque Green.

If applicable, we will contact the Church/Priest where your marriage is to be celebrated with the Sample Letter included in this packet.

After you have read all the information in this packet and sent in a completed Couple Information Sheet, you should attend the Marriage Preparation Orientation Meeting (held two times a year, usually at the beginning of fall and spring semesters). Additionally, you may contact the Marriage Preparation Coordinator to begin your preparation.

Jacque Green is the Marriage Preparation Coordinator at the Newman Catholic Student Center, and she will be assisting you through the stages of your preparation.

Office: (319) 337-3106

Cell: (319) 354-9437

E-mail: jacque@newman-ic.org

FEES

A donation of \$50 to the Newman Catholic Student Center is requested if you do your entire marriage preparation program here. If you plan to marry in one of the Catholic Churches in Iowa City, then you should obtain any applicable rental fees from that particular Church.

Guidelines and Requirements for all couples as You Begin Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage

TIME:

Make contact with us no later than six months before the proposed date of the marriage.

JURISDICTION:

We presume that at least one of the parties to the marriage is Catholic. If both parties are Catholic, then one of them must be university related (i.e. student, faculty or staff).

In the case of inter-faith marriages, we are responsible to prepare those couples in which the Catholic party is University related. If the Catholic is not University related, this individual should be registered at a local parish and be prepared there.

PRACTICE OF THE FAITH:

If both are Catholic, it is presumed that a regular practice of the faith is present and that they intend to seriously enter into a marriage preparation program. If the couple happens to be an inter-faith couple, it is presumed that the Catholic party is regularly practicing his/her faith and intends to seriously enter into a marriage preparation program.

For those not regularly practicing their faith, we would ask them to take some time to assess and determine the place of faith in their life. Depending upon the possibilities, they would be asked to meet with a Newman staff member to inquire into the faith today, attend Inquiry Sessions or meet with a sponsor couple. After taking the time to assess the place of faith in their present life and how it will play a role in their marriage relationship, the couple would then start the more formal marriage preparation program.

If a couple does not make a serious attempt to evaluate a more regular practice of the faith, it is questionable whether further preparation for marriage in the Church should occur.

DIOCESAN REQUIREMENTS:

- *Premarital Inventory*
Taking, processing and reviewing of Premarital Inventory. This is an instrument that identifies areas in which more conversation is needed (i.e., areas surface not yet addressed or areas in which mutual understanding hasn't yet been achieved).
- *Marriage Preparation Experience*
Participation in an Engaged Encounter Weekend, a retreat weekend offered by the diocese or an online program is required. This experience is necessary to help the couple become aware of all the issues of marriage and to provide a forum to begin addressing them.
- *Prenuptial Investigation*
During a meeting with the Marriage Preparation Coordinator, you will fill out the forms which establish your intention to enter into a Sacramental marriage. Baptismal

certificates and Freedom to Marry forms are sent in with these papers. They are usually filled out toward the end of the preparation period.

- *Baptismal Record*

You must obtain a **current** record of baptism, **with notations** of other sacraments received. Request this record from your church of baptism no sooner than six months prior to your wedding date. We also need to know the date and place of your first Communion and Confirmation; this requirement is only for Catholic parties.

- *Freedom to Marry Forms*

These are to be filled out by those who know the parties, indicating from personal knowledge that you are free to marry; two forms per person. A parent usually fills it out.

- *Sharing Faith with Children*

In an inter-faith marriage, the Catholic party must indicate they will continue to celebrate their faith and do all they can to share their Catholic faith with children. The text of this statement is in this packet.

Sample Prenuptial Investigation Questions

Following are the questions each of you will be asked in the Prenuptial Investigation. These establish your freedom to marry and your intention to enter into Sacramental Marriage.

1. Are you related to your fiancé by blood, marriage, or legal adoption?
2. Are you bound by any of the following canonical impediments: age, impotence, sacred orders, vow of chastity, crime, or public propriety? (See canons 1083-1094)
3. Have you ever been married, whether civilly, in church, or by common law? (If 'yes', proceed immediately to Form 1085, even for a validation.)
4. Do you regularly participate in the practice of your religion?
5. Do you agree to commit yourself willingly, and without any reservation, condition, or restriction, to the essential obligations of matrimony, namely:
 - to enter a permanent marriage that lasts until death?
 - to accept the right of your spouse to engage in procreative intercourse with you?
 - to accept the obligation of being faithful to your spouse?
6. Have you seriously reflected on the obligations of a marital commitment and judged yourself capable of fulfilling them?
7. To the best of your knowledge, is your fiancé making this same commitment to the essential obligations listed above?
8. Is your consent to this marriage fully free and without force or pressure of any kind?
9. Is there any indication of physical illness, dependence on drugs or alcohol, or other condition which would affect your marriage?
10. Have you had any emotional or mental disorder requiring psychiatric or other professional treatment?
11. Is there any other major fact about you--either in the present or in the past-- which you have not made known to your fiancé and which might affect his willingness to marry you?
12. Do your parents or his have any objections to this marriage?

Sample Promise to be made by the Catholic party in an interfaith marriage

I, _____, a Catholic wishing to marry _____,
(Catholic party) (non-Catholic party)

reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ, and with God's help, intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church. I promise to do all that I can to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholic.

(Date)

(Signature of Catholic party--optional)

Sample Letter to be Sent to Your Church

Date

Dear *[name of priest]*

The Newman Catholic Student Center has been contacted by *[bride]* and *[groom]* concerning marriage preparation. They indicate that they have scheduled their wedding for *[date]* at *[name of church]* with *[name of priest]* as celebrant.

We have quite a few requests every year for marriage preparation. We routinely provide the following:

- a group session with other engaged couples about sacramentality and marriage regulations;
- encourage them to attend our Inquiry sessions about the Catholic faith;
- administering the FOCCUS or Premarital Inventory, and interpreting it with the couple; and
- schedule the couple for an Engaged Encounter weekend or participation in our Group Sponsor couple program.

Included in this preparation is the filling out of the Prenuptial Investigation forms and applying for any needed Dispensation.

I would ask that you confirm the above wedding plans of the named couple. Please inform me of any other assistance you need to ask of the Newman Center to prepare this couple for marriage. As a Newman Center, we want to be of ministry to the students, faculty, and staff of The University of Iowa. We are pleased to be of help to this couple preparing for marriage in your church.

Sincerely,

Jacque Green
Marriage Preparation Coordinator
104 E. Jefferson
Iowa City, Iowa 52245
(319) 337-3106 ext# 112

Checklist for Marriage Preparation

Bride		Groom
<input type="checkbox"/>	Couple Information Sheet Returned	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended Orientation Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set/Confirmed Date With Church And Priest	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed FOCCUS Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended Three Inquiry Sessions <i>(Required For Interfaith Couples)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended Pre-Cana Classes	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paid Fee For Pre-Cana Classes <i>(One Fee Per Couple)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended NFP Classes (If Required)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provided Current Baptismal Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provided Completed Witness Affidavit	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed FOCCUS/Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please note: *This list is provided as a courtesy to help you—the couple—keep track of your responsibilities for completing marriage preparation. It may not include everything needed to be done for special circumstances.*