



National Marriage Week

Every Feb 7-14

Below are a few ideas for parishes to help couples celebrate National Marriage Week. For more information or inspiration, visit foryourmarriage.org or marriageuniqueforareason.org.

As a Parish

- On World Marriage Sunday (February 12), host an Anniversary Mass or have a special marriage blessing at all weekend Masses.
- Host a weekend one- or two-day retreat for married couples at the parish.
- Host a marriage webinar (via digital platform such as zoom).
- Request couples in the parish to send in their words of wisdom to younger couples and publish them in the bulletin.
- Create opportunities for couples to connect and talk with other couples: couples game night, Bingo with prizes that include coupons and gift card for restaurants and activities in the area for a future date night, wine or beer tasting, potluck desserts with coffee and tea provided, movie night on a projector with popcorn and chocolate, or a Valentine's Day dance
- Parish event helpful hints:
 - Have your pastor open the event with prayer or a special blessing for married couples.
 - Promote your event with bulletin announcements, social media posts, Catholic radio advertising, etc. Get creative! The more you talk about it the more excited and aware of it people will be!
 - Offer childcare. Couples with young children often do not get out much to go on dates because of the cost or difficulty in finding a trustworthy sitter.
 - Whether it is a whole meal or just coffee and dessert, have something for people to munch on.
 - Put a little effort into the atmosphere: a few candles and flower petals go a long way.
 - Include lighthearted fun, particularly if a talk will be a part of the evening.
 - Consider having a married deacon and his wife or a well-known and respected veteran married couple give the talk.
 - Use the NMW Homily Notes or Virtual Retreat as resources to pull talking points from to give your presentation.
 - Give couples a handout with some key points and discussion questions they can take home with them to extend their experience and talk through them together.

As a Couple

- Frame a copy of your wedding invitation or program if you still have it.
- Recall the friends and family who were a part of your wedding day. Who needs prayers? Who can you reach out to?
- Choose your favorite reading from your wedding. Pray *Lectio Divina* together, meditating on the Word of God which was proclaimed on your wedding day.
- Disconnect from your computers and phones to reconnect with each other for an evening.
- Prayerfully reread your wedding vows to each other. Take a moment to recommit yourself to the vows you made on your wedding day.
- Did you have a first dance at your wedding? Recreate that moment and dance together in your living room.
- Have a date night in. Get dressed up for dinner—look your best for your spouse! Order takeout from a place you would have gone for your Valentine’s Day date. Bonus: Get the kids involved by having them act as your waiters and waitresses for your date night.
- Create a memory box together and then go on a treasure hunt to find little things that represent your relationship: old love letters, ticket stubs from date nights, dried flowers, memorabilia from your wedding day—if you do not have physical items, write down a favorite memory and put it into the box. Keep it in a special place to add more items and revisit later.

As a Family

- Look through your wedding album. Or, if you have it, watch your wedding video. Share stories from your wedding day with your children.
- Make a family timeline beginning with when you met or your wedding day up to the present. Add pregnancies/birthdays, family moves, vacations, new jobs, pets, etc. Anything that has impacted the life of your family.
- Get your crafting supplies out and make Valentine’s Day cards for everyone in the family. Tell each person something you love about them. Hang up the cards for everyone to see!

Selected Resources from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

- On marriages in crisis – *ForYourMarriage.org* list of ministries that help married couples in difficulty or crisis
- USCCB: *Divorce and the Church’s Healing Ministry*, 2010.
- USCCB: *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, 2015 and *Clean Heart series of pamphlets*, 2016.
- USCCB: Pastoral Letter *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 2009.