
Letter to the Engaged



**DIOCESE OF
SAN DIEGO** | OFFICE FOR
FAMILY LIFE &
SPIRITUALITY

On behalf of our local Catholic community, we congratulate both of you on this most joyous occasion of your engagement to marriage. It is with great pleasure that we accompany you on this “Journey of Your Love” and assist in this important process of marriage preparation. May God bless you as you prepare to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony, a sacred matrimonial covenant.

Summary of Preparation

The marriage preparation process is a multi-phased and collaborative effort under the direction of your local parish community, the diocesan Office for Family Life & Spirituality and Catholic Engaged Encounter. Diocesan guidelines recommend that marriage preparation usually will include the *Celebrating Your Love Diocesan Day (Pre-Cana)* for engaged couples and for civilly married couples. Engaged couples are also encouraged to attend the **Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend**.

Step One: Meet with your marriage preparation minister. He/she, under the direction of the pastor, will be the primary guide and director of your marriage preparation process.

Step Two: Choose a mentor couple. Parishes are encouraged to adopt *Witness to Love* as a way of structuring the engaged couple-to-mentor couple relationship.

Step Three: Sign up and attend the **Diocesan Celebrating Your Love Day** for engaged and civilly married couples. **Note:** The *Diocesan Marriage Preparation Registration* must be signed by your marriage preparation minister. Selection of the appropriate program(s) must be made and the application returned with payment. (Online registration is coming soon!)

Couples entering their second marriage after an annulment or death of former spouse may attend *A New Beginning* as an alternative to the Diocesan Day. See page 2 for more information.

Step Four: After the **Diocesan Day**, couples will be emailed instructions to access the *FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory* online. Upon completion, the Office for Family Life and Spirituality will transfer the results to the appropriate marriage preparation minister.

**If they are equipped to do so, parishes may facilitate FOCCUS on their own and begin reviewing inventory results with couples early in the preparation process.*

Step Five: Couples are encouraged to attend a **Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend**.

Description of Programs

Witness to Love: *Witness to Love* is a virtue and growth-based model of marriage renewal and preparation that integrates modern principles of psychology and the virtues to help couples facilitate an authentic dialogue about their relationship. *Witness to Love* is unique in that engaged couples are encouraged to choose their own mentor couple. This is a couple they both admire and see as a source for faith formation.

For more information, visit witnessstolove.org and call the Office for Family Life and Spirituality (858-490-8256.)

Celebrating Your Love Diocesan Day: *Celebrating Your Love* (Pre-Cana) is a Saturday retreat (9:00 AM to 4:00 PM) for engaged couples from around the diocese to learn more about what makes Catholic marriage unique and how to renew one's vows daily after the wedding ceremony. Held at various locations 2-3 times per month.

Cost: \$100 per couple

For retreat dates and locations, contact the Office for Family Life and Spirituality (858-490-8296)

<https://www.sdcatholic.org/en-us/diocese/pastoraloffices/al/familylifeandspirituality/marriagepreparation/pre-canamarriagepreparationprogram.aspx>

(New URL coming soon: sdcatholic.org/JOYL)

FOCCUS: Facilitates Open, Caring Communication, Understanding, and Study, encouraging couples to discuss a broad range of topics that can help them learn communication and conflict resolution skills. FOCCUS also provides catechetical materials that can be integrated into a parish's marriage catechumenate.

For more information, visit focusinc.org and/or call the Office for Family Life and Spirituality (858-490-8256) for support and assistance in registering as a parish or facilitator.

Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend (CEE): A weekend experience starting on Friday evening and concluding late Sunday afternoon with the celebration of Mass. A priest and two trained team couples will present a selected number of presentations and personal sharing related to their vocation and experiences. **Civilly married couples are welcome.**

For further information regarding dates, location and cost visit <http://www.engagedencountersd.org> or email to sandiegoee@gmail.com

Celebrating Your Love: A New Beginning: A one-day conference held on Saturdays (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM). As an alternative to the *Diocesan Day*, this program is for couples entering a second marriage after the divorce or the death of a former spouse (only one party needs to have been previously married). Topics of discussion are geared towards blended families, children of a previous marriage (step-parenting) and grieving loss. Younger couples who were previously married for only a short period of time and/or have no children may be better served by attending the *Diocesan Day*.