

*Saint Philip Neri Church  
Lafayette Hill, PA*

Marriage Preparation



*“...the two of them become one body.”  
Genesis 2:24*

Saint Philip Neri Church  
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Lafayette Hill, PA 19444  
610-834-1975

## *Marriage Preparation Prayer*

Lord God,  
Source of all love,  
your providence has brought us together.  
As we prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage  
we pray for your grace,  
that, strengthened by your blessing,  
we may grow in respect for one another  
and cherish each other with a sincere love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

May the God of love and peace  
abide in us, guide our steps,  
and confirm our hearts in His love,  
now and forever.  
Amen.



## What is Marriage Preparation?

Before a man and a woman enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Church asks that they be properly prepared before they give themselves to each other in marriage. While a man and a woman have been preparing for marriage in the sense that they have been dating each other, discovering who they are, and meeting the family from which their fiancé came, there still needs to be a discovery of what marriage is in itself, specifically, of God's design and vision of marriage. Marriage Preparation exists in order to help couples garner a deeper awareness of the awesome gift and mystery of marriage. It helps couples to see marriage through God's eyes by encountering the Biblical foundations of marriage and the Teaching of the Catholic Church. It also provides couples with the opportunity to encounter the "lived reality" of a faith-filled marriage through the personal witness of married couples. In short, Marriage Preparation is not "just a hoop to jump through" but rather a time of *formation*, a time to grow in understanding and appreciation of God's gift of the vocation of marriage and, most importantly, to allow God to form couples into faithful and loving married persons.

## Why Marriage Preparation?

When someone is about to begin a journey, he or she has to make the necessary preparations in order to effectively carry out the journey and reach its destination.

So it is with Marriage. Marriage is a journey. It is a journey traveled by a man and a woman whom God brings together in love. It is a journey which lasts a lifetime. It is a journey in which the ultimate destination is Heaven – Life with God for all eternity.

Thus, entering into marriage is not to be taken lightly! Marriage Preparation is necessary because it equips couples with the knowledge to live out God's Plan for a joy-filled marriage.

## How to Approach Marriage Preparation

The fruitfulness of Marriage Preparation depends greatly on how much a couple is willing to put into it. If a couple thinks that Marriage Preparation is simply another item to "check off" on the "To Do" list of getting ready for the Wedding Day, then they will gain little from the experience. However, if a couple comes to Marriage Preparation with an open heart and mind, is attentive to the different presenters, and actively participates, then they will reap many benefits from the experience which will help them now and in the future as a married couple.

Also, since Marriage Preparation is designed to help couples see God's wonderful vision and plan for marriage, pray to the Holy Spirit that He may guide and form you and your fiancé throughout the course of the day. The Holy Spirit is really the One guiding the Marriage Preparation Day. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Love; ultimately, all marriages are rooted in this Love. Thus, ask the Holy Spirit to delve deeper in His Love and, in doing so, you will fall deeper in love with your future spouse. A simple prayer such as "*Come, Holy Spirit*" will help open your hearts and minds to the many blessings God wishes to lavish on you and your fiancé during the day.

## Structure of Day

### Time:

**9 AM – 6 PM**

### Locations:

**Welcoming and Lunch:** SPN School Cafeteria/Auditorium

**Sessions:** SPN School Cafeteria/Auditorium

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (SPN Church); 2:15 PM – 3:15 PM (School Library)

### Schedule:

**9:00 AM – 9:30 AM:** Welcome, Continental Breakfast, Introductions, Icebreakers

**9:30 AM – 10:30 AM:** Session I: *Christian Marriage and Sign of God's Love.*

**10:45 AM – 11:45 AM:** Session II: *Called to Communion: Communicating Truth in Love.*

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM:** Lunch (Opportunity for Sacrament of Reconciliation [SPN Church])

**1:00 PM – 2:00 PM:** Session III: *Christian Marriage: A Vocation to Fruitfulness.*

**2:15 PM – 3:15 PM:** Letter Activity (Opportunity for Sacrament of Reconciliation [SPN School Library])

**3:30 PM – 4:30 PM:** Session IV: *Mission of Marriage: To Become A Church of the Home (Domestic Church).*

**4:30 PM – 4:45 PM:** Summary of Day, Witness from Couples, Evaluations.

**5:00 PM – 6:00 PM:** Vigil Mass at Saint Philip Neri Church (*after the Homily, each couple will receive their certificates of completion from the priest celebrant of the Mass.*)

**If you and your fiancé are interested in participating in Saint Philip Neri Marriage Preparation, please contact the Church Office at 610-834-1975 for a registration form.**

## Overview of Session Topics

### **Session I: *Christian Marriage and Sign of God's Love***

This session will focus on the theological and Biblical foundations of the Sacrament of Marriage. It will show, through Old Testament and New Testament witness, as well as through the constant Teaching of the Catholic Church, how marriage is an important part of God's plan of salvation. Related to this point, this session will demonstrate the holiness and beauty of marriage, since it is rooted in and called to image the ultimate Marriage, the Marriage between Christ and the Church. The session also includes a discussion on the importance of Marriage as a Sacrament (a channel of God's grace) and how this reality directly relates to the vocation of marriage. Finally, the session will show how marriage is ordered to the family and children, the supreme gift of married love.

### **Session II: *Called to Communion: Communicating Truth in Love.***

Establishing a healthy relationship is crucial for all marriages. This session will focus on the interpersonal aspects of married life. The presenters will provide helpful advice on how to effectively communicate as a married couple. Through examples drawn from personal experience as a married couple, the presenters will address some practical aspects of marriage which preparing couples may not have been aware of. Thus, the presenters will assist the couple preparing for marriage to deepen their relationship through fostering good and healthy communication skills amidst the blessings and challenges of married life.

### **Session III: *Christian Marriage: A Vocation to Fruitfulness.***

This session will focus on intimacy within marriage and the Church's Teaching on sexuality and married love. There will be a focus on the deeper meaning of intimacy and a discussion on how it is lived out in a healthy marriage. Also, this session will provide concrete and practical steps for how couples can live out intimacy in a way to reduce and overcome tensions/conflicts in marriage. Also, there will be a discussion on Pope Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and how it relates to married couples. Based on faith and science, this session will point out the harmful effects (both spiritual and physical) of contraception and how the practice of Natural Family Planning (NFP) is a morally good and healthy way of regulating birth. Related to this point, there will be a general overview of the practice of charting within the use of Natural Family Planning. The presenters will also point out the places where couples can go for NFP training.

### **Session IV: *Mission of Marriage: To Become A Church of the Home (Domestic Church).***

This session will discuss the importance of faith and family through the lens of Church Teaching and personal witness. It will show the relationship between a life of faith and raising children. There will also be a focus on the "practicalities" and concrete realities of raising a family. The presenters will provide helpful advice on balancing the responsibilities of marriage, giving equal time to Faith, family and work, and keeping priorities in mind when making decisions as a family.