

From Both Sides

A note from Laura (Herauf) Ignatiuk:

For our marriage preparation our pastor suggested that we attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend. We went to the final one of the year in May, and we had a wonderful weekend getting to know one another better. This experience was invaluable for us. Not only did we get away from the craziness of the wedding planning, but we also got some much needed time alone discussing and learning about one another.

When I read the e-mail about a new Marriage Preparation course being offered in our Archdiocese I was immediately intrigued and excited. Not only does a sponsor couple meet with you during your time of marriage preparation, but they would also meet with you after the wedding day.

My husband I have been married for over a year now and I remember thinking several times throughout this first year of marriage how useful it would have been to sit down and chat with a married couple about some of the feelings and quirks of being engaged but also of being newly married. We thought of asking a couple we know to meet with us and pray with us, but it never happened. When I saw the e-mail about the program that the Archdiocese was planning to implement I thought, "Wow, this is exactly it!" Now, we may have 'missed the boat' with not having this approach as part of our marriage preparation, but by volunteering and getting involved in its implementation, I hope this program can help our marriage and the marriages of many other couples become stronger, Christ-centered and fully life-giving.

A note from Teresa Whalen-Lux, coordinator for Marriage Preparation for Holy Child Parish, Regina:

Our parish has had a well-established marriage preparation program for about 10 years. Engaged couples come for 6 evening sessions. There are five couple-presenters who give input on various topics like communication, family of origin, sexuality, finance and spirituality as well as a presentation by our pastor on the wedding liturgy.

While our program works very well, I am excited to become involved in the new "For Better and For Ever" sponsor program which is being implemented in the Diocese. I believe that many engaged couples could really benefit from a two-on-two preparation time with a sponsor couple. The more personal approach lends itself to a deeper sharing about the issues that face every married couple. Bonds can be made between the couples that will hopefully last long after the preparation time itself. And, instead of the engaged/newly married couple coming to the parish and perhaps knowing "no one", they would have a personal link with their sponsor couple. I believe that this new program will be a wonderful tool for building stronger marriages and stronger parish communities.