

# WELCOME to JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE



To assist you with your marriage preparation ministry, we have created a five-step process for planning and conducting the *Joy-filled Marriage* program.





## STEP ONE

# Dedication to Prayer



1. Prayer is foundational to the success of the *Joy-Filled Marriage* program for your diocese/parish. We suggest calling a convent or monastery in the area and requesting prayers for God's will to be done as you courageously share the meaning of marriage and witness marriage to engaged couples in your diocese/parish.
2. As you build your marriage preparation team, share the importance of praying for the couples before each marriage preparation event and of praying for each other. Give your team members practical ideas on how to do this (i.e., Mass, Rosary, Adoration).
3. You might consider sharing the following prayer with your team:

*Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for the great gift of the sacrament of matrimony.*

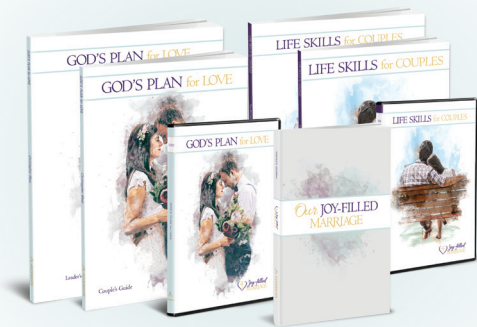
*Increase your love in us, that your grace may form us as living witnesses to the Faith.  
You know our worries and weaknesses, yet in your loving mercy you have called us to  
courageously share the meaning of married life as teachers of Theology of the Body and  
how to build a virtuous marriage. Bless your people with hearts receptive to your word.*

*We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

## STEP TWO

# Select and Order Materials for Your Engaged Couples

The *Joy-Filled Marriage* program consists of two components—*Life Skills for Couples* and *God's Plan for Love*. These are complemented by a beautiful Couple's Journal. This program offers a comprehensive approach to marriage preparation that covers not only the sacramentality and theology of marriage but the practical life skills necessary to live out the rich Catholic vision of marriage.



**JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE *Starter Pack***  
(complete set)

This **Starter Pack** includes all the components needed for a leader to review the *Joy-Filled Marriage* program, including two DVD Sets, two Leader's Guides, two Couple's Guides, and the Journal—a total of seven pieces.



**JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE *Leader's Set***  
(complete set)

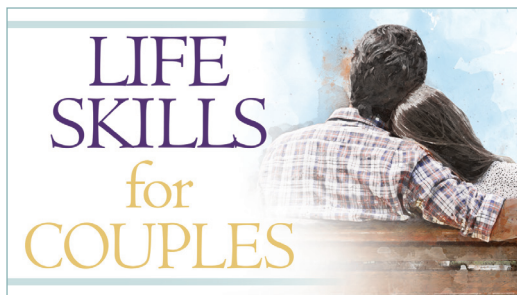
Each **Leader's Set** contains a Leader's Guide for each component and a copy of the Couple's Journal—a total of three pieces.



**JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE *Couple's Sets***  
(complete set)

Each **Couple's Set** contains two Couple's Guides for each component (one for him, one for her) and a copy of the Couple's Journal—a total of five pieces.





### LIFE SKILLS FOR COUPLES

*Life Skills for Couples* is the virtue-based life-skills component of the *Joy-Filled Marriage* program. *Life Skills* is designed to help the engaged couple set patterns of thought and behavior that will ensure a lifelong, joy-filled marriage.



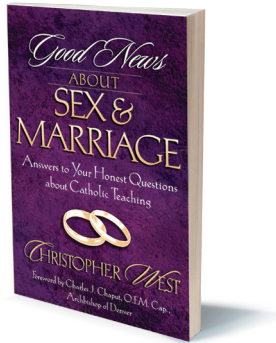
### GOD'S PLAN FOR LOVE

*God's Plan for Love* provides couples with a rich understanding of the teachings of the Church and offers them the tools to live them out in married life. *God's Plan for Love* is a key element of marriage preparation—catechesis in the theology of marriage and the gift of human sexuality.

It will also be important to determine the model you plan to employ for your marriage preparation as well as the time you will take to go through the program. *Joy-Filled Marriage* was created to be flexible in order to fit time frames as limited as a single weekend or as expansive as multiple weekly meetings—or anything in between.

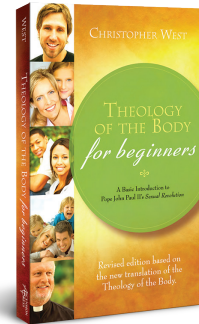
Determine whether you would prefer to use the videos via DVD or through the online streaming model. No matter what model or what video format you choose, we recommend using our online registration. Through [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com), you can easily manage your marriage prep participants, message the group, and provide the engaged couples with access to the videos even after their marriage prep is complete. The couples will also receive a welcome email upon registration and follow-up after the program to encourage them in building a lifelong, joy-filled marriage.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE ENGAGED



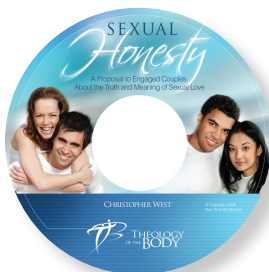
### *Good News About Sex & Marriage*

In this easy-to-read, question-and-answer book, well-known theologian Christopher West offers a fresh, relevant, and convincing presentation of the Church's teachings on human sexuality and marriage rooted in St. John Paul II's revolutionary Theology of the Body.



### *Theology of the Body for Beginners*

Based on the words of Scripture, St. John Paul II's famous reflections on the body and sex take us to the root of the modern crisis and chart a path to an authentic sexual liberation. This book takes the rich (and dense) teachings of the late Holy Father and makes them accessible to the average person.



### *Sexual Honesty*

This CD explores the "whys" of the Church's teaching on human sexuality, focusing on the true nature of human love as a reflection of God's love. "Sexual Honesty" explains the critical difference between contraception and Natural Family Planning and presents a positive proposal for how couples can live sexual honesty in their married lives.



### *Pamphlets*

These concise and thought-provoking pamphlets address some of the most pressing issues in our culture today in a well-organized and compact format.

### *Bulk Orders*

If you are purchasing for a large group of couples or wish to purchase additional resources in bulk for your engaged couples, bulk pricing is available. Call 1-800-375-0520 or email us at [customerservice@ascensionpress.com](mailto:customerservice@ascensionpress.com) for more information.

## STEP THREE

# Marriage Preparation Checklist

### ACTION ITEM

### TIMELINE

_____ Determine marriage preparation date(s)	4 months before
_____ Secure a location (if using a group model)	4 months before
_____ Determine final cost, including facility use	4 months before
_____ Determine if you will host an Information Night for couples	4 months before
_____ Provide team with schedule and logistics (if using group model)	4 months before
_____ Determine marketing plan	4 months before
_____ Promotional flyers	
_____ Bulletin announcements	
_____ Email promotion	
_____ Place announcement on parish or family life office website	
_____ Discuss Information Night needs (if scheduled)	3 months before
_____ Implement Information Night (if scheduled)	3 months before
_____ Watch leader training videos and share with presenters/facilitators	1 month before
_____ Confirm audiovisual equipment needs	1 month before
_____ Order necessary materials	3 weeks before
_____ Determine final count of participants before the marriage prep	1 week before
_____ Contact Ascension Press for additional materials or resources	As needed

### PRINTING

- \_\_\_\_\_ For each participant, please print the following prior to the event:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Name tags
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downloaded resources from [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com) for any activities you have selected to do
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Life Skills for Couples* certificate (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ *God's Plan for Love* certificate (optional)

### AFTER YOUR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| _____ Follow up with facilitator/presenter team about assessment of the event | 2 weeks after |
|---|---------------|

## STEP FOUR

# Identify and Assess Your Potential Presenters and Facilitators

*Use this form to build a preliminary contact list. Make copies of this page, if necessary, to accommodate all potential teachers.*

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## DETERMINE THE STRENGTHS AND INTEREST LEVEL OF YOUR POTENTIAL PRESENTERS AND FACILITATORS

The following survey and worksheet are designed to help you reflect on the qualities needed in effective *Joy-Filled Marriage* leaders and facilitators for your circumstances. Keep in mind that the qualities needed may be different depending on whether you are using a mentor model, small-group model, or large-group model.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Does the person (or couple) communicate well?
- Would they work best with engaged couples in a one-on-one setting or in a group setting?
- Are they more suited to expanding from the video presentations or presenting sessions independently?
- Can they “think on their feet” and answer difficult questions with clarity and prudence (keeping in mind that they will improve with experience)?

### KNOWLEDGE OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY AND ABILITY TO SHARE PERSONAL INSIGHTS

- How well does the person (or couple) understand the content of the *Joy-Filled Marriage* program?
- How well do they understand Catholic theology as a whole, especially the Church’s teachings on human sexuality and marriage? (This is particularly important when presenting *God’s Plan for Love*.)
- Are they open to sharing personal thoughts and insights regarding marriage?

### PASTORAL PRUDENCE

- Do you sense that this person (or couple) would be pastorally prudent in dealing with engaged couples?
- Do they understand and have sensitivity to the issues engaged couples face?
- Would they work well with a wider team?

### LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL AND AVAILABILITY

- Do you see this person (or couple) taking a leadership role?
- What particular gifts do they bring to your program? Do you sense that they are committed to marriage preparation ministry?
- How much time can they give to the program?

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Will you offer each presenter (or couple) a stipend?
- Will you offer a stipend for travel expenses and babysitting?
- What are the specific needs of each presenter (or couple)?
- Would a stipend help to mitigate their concerns about participating in the program and/or bring stability and consistency to your program?

## DISCERNING THE PRESENTERS FOR EACH TALK

- Reflect on the content of each talk and identify which person or couple is best suited to present it, based on their knowledge, interest, and ability. (Remember: If you are using a team of presenters and facilitators, it is important to have all couples present as the sessions begin. If possible, match couples who work well together, i.e., those who will divide the workload equitably as they present the content of the program as a team.)

## SURVEY FOR POTENTIAL JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE PROGRAM PRESENTERS AND FACILITATORS

*Please take a few minutes to fill out this form.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate for each session of the *Joy-Filled Marriage* program whether you would prefer to present the content personally or by using the video.

### GOD'S PLAN for LOVE

Session One: God's Plan for Marriage "in the Beginning"

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Two: Christ Restores God's Plan for Marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Three: To What Are You Saying, "I Do"?

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Four: Where the Words of Your Vows Become Flesh

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Five: The Beauty of Openness to Life

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Six: Living God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

LIFE SKILLS for COUPLES

Session One: An Introduction to *Life Skills for Couples*

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Two: Discovering Your Marriage Mission and the Role of Virtue

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Three: Communicating Love – Learning and Respecting Love Styles

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Four: Resolving Conflict – The Art of Loving Amidst Challenges

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Five: Building Happiness – Managing Your Time, Money, and Energy

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

Session Six: Fostering Intimacy in Marriage – Sexuality and Prayer

\_\_\_\_\_ Present      \_\_\_\_\_ Use Video

How would you describe your general knowledge of the Theology of the Body?

\_\_\_\_ Very knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Somewhat knowledgeable  
\_\_\_\_ Not very knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Not knowledgeable

How would you describe your general knowledge of the theological and cardinal virtues?

\_\_\_\_ Very knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Somewhat knowledgeable  
\_\_\_\_ Not very knowledgeable      \_\_\_\_ Not knowledgeable

Do you have any reservations about teaching Catholic sexual ethics in a way that is consistent with Church teaching?

Yes                      Somewhat                      Not at all

Please explain any reservations you may have \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be comfortable addressing (from a theological and/or personal witness perspective) difficult moral questions with couples preparing for marriage, such as cohabitation, contraception, premarital sex, etc.?

Yes                      Somewhat                      Not at all

Please explain any reservations you may have \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would you require in terms of your schedule and stipend? (Please also consider addressing any specific needs such as babysitting, recurring commitments on Saturdays, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PRESENTER ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

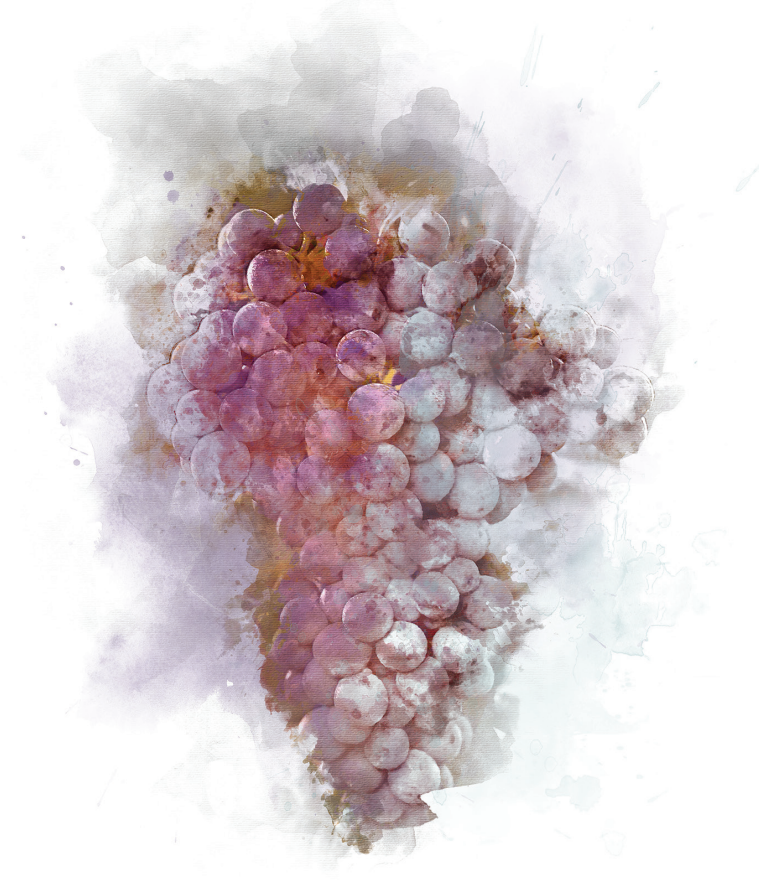
On a scale of 1 to 5, rank the couple or person for the following areas of competence (5 = the highest, 1 = the lowest level of competence).

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## STEP FIVE

# Prepare Your Budget – Group Model



### INCOME:

- Determine the basic cost for running a one- or two-day event for engaged couples.
- Do you plan to recoup costs for your leadership training by adding in an additional amount to the engaged couples' registration fees?

The average cost of a one-day session typically ranges from \$75 to \$150. These fees typically include the cost of lunch and materials. A two-day session or a weekend retreat generally ranges from \$125 to \$250 per couple (including lodging). The rate for engaged couples will need to be determined based on your particular situation.

**EXPENSES:** Here is a typical breakdown of costs for the *Joy-Filled Marriage* event using the large-group model.

- Stipend for presenters: Typically ranges from \$100 to \$500 per day. If you have several speakers presenting, compensation could range from \$50 to \$100 per talk.
- Meals and snacks: \$25 to \$40 per couple
- Materials: Varies depending on the number of couples
- Room Rental: \$0 to \$500+

## CREATE YOUR OWN BUDGET FOR A ONE-DAY PROGRAM

Income is \_\_\_\_\_ couples at \$\_\_\_\_\_ per session = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Other Income: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Meals \$\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Materials \$\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Stipend for presenting couples: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Room rental: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Other expenses: \$\_\_\_\_\_

= \$\_\_\_\_\_ expenses

## CREATE YOUR OWN BUDGET FOR A TWO-DAY PROGRAM

Income is \_\_\_\_\_ couples at \$\_\_\_\_\_ per session = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Other Income: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Meals \$\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Materials \$\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Stipend for presenting couples: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Room rental: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Other expenses: \$\_\_\_\_\_

= \$\_\_\_\_\_ expenses

