

*Marriage Ministry / Office of Family Ministries Response Card*

Listed below are the various areas of marriage preparation ministry supported by the Office of Family Ministries in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. If you would like to learn more about participating or helping in facilitation or support of these ministries, please check the appropriate line below.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pre-Cana Presenter Couple**

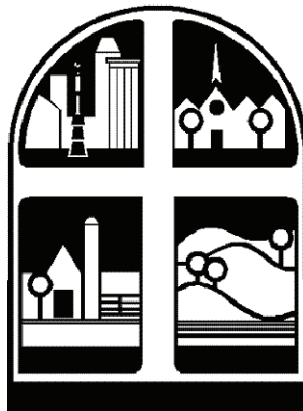
**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sponsor Couple (contact your parish)**

**PARISH / CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Tobit Retreat Facilitators**

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Marriage Enrichment (ministries to strengthen marriages)**

Completed Response Cards can be detached and returned to:

**Office of Family Ministries**  
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Member of the

**National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers [NACFLM]**

# Marriage Ministry Opportunities

Involvement ... Opportunities ... Resources



*Office of Family Ministries*

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

## Ministries Supported by the Office of Family Ministries

### Parish Sponsor Couples

- Learn to administer and follow-up pre-marriage inventories with engaged couples
- Typical inventories include FOCCUS and PREPARE/ ENRICH programs vary by parish
- Sponsor couples share their experience of marriage and companion engaged couples through the marriage preparation process generally meeting with the engaged couple 3-6 times.
- Additional / Ongoing training available from relationship skills, theology of marriage, Natural Family Planning
- **Consult your pastor / PLC on how you can get involved in your parish**

### Pre-Cana Presenter Couples

- Pre-Cana Conferences scheduled monthly at Fatima Retreat Center
- Most presenter couples are scheduled 2-3 times per year (We will work with your scheduling needs)
- Topics: Communications, Sacramentality of Marriage and Sex/Sexuality
- Presenter Couples share with engaged couples some practical advice, based on their personal experience of marriage
- Presentations last about 15-20 minutes with time for the couples to complete worksheets and discuss with each other; Communications is a two-part workshop.

### Tobit Presenter Couples

- Tobit is a week-end marriage preparation retreat held at Fatima Retreat Center
- Tobit was developed in Indianapolis
- Enables couples to enter into a deeper relationship with Christ and to his/her fiancé/e
- **For more information on Tobit, call (317) 545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima/](http://www.archindy.org/fatima/)**

The Office of Family Ministries also provides resources regarding **NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING ...** Contact us for more information on becoming a teaching or promoter couple.

## Getting Marriage Preparation Right

### Some Conclusions

- The vast majority of individuals who have participated in marriage preparation programs view the experience as valuable early in their marriage
- The mandatory nature of marriage preparation in the Catholic Church does not appear to get in the way of participants finding value in it.
- Marriage preparation is perceived as most valuable when a team administers it.
- The intensity of a marriage preparation program contributes importantly to its perceived value.
- The topics addressed in marriage preparation that were perceived as most helpful were the 5 C's (see below)
- Religious education in high school and ongoing religious education in adulthood is the best long-range formal education for marriage the Church can offer
- Individuals who were more active in Church life and/or who had a greater sense of belonging to the Church perceived greater value in marriage preparation
- Inter-church couples are most at risk for drift from church belonging and practice
- It is clear that those who come to marriage preparation with high expectations derive more benefit from it than those who come with low expectations.

*(Source: Report of a 1995 Study on the Value of Marriage Preparation by the Center for Marriage and Family, Creighton University)*

### The 5 C's

1. Communication
2. Commitment
3. Conflict resolution
4. Children
5. Church



## Ministry Description of Sponsor Couples

Sponsor couples help engaged couples prepare for married life, exploring their relationship strengths and work areas.

All sponsor couples use their own marital experiences, their Christian respect and concern for others, relationship assessment tools, listening skills, and basic facilitation skills. They create trusting confidential relationships through which they minister to their peers—one couple to another. Sponsor couples respect the abilities of others to understand and find solutions for their own problems—they do not take responsibility for the problems of others.

In general, sponsor couples meet approximately 3-6 times with each engaged couple (depending on the program used by each parish), administer a relationship assessment tool (an "inventory") and provide feedback to the couples from the inventory and from their interaction with the couple. They encourage the engaged couple to communicate about and make changes in important relationship issues.

### Who should be sponsor couples?

Couples who ...

- Are caring, empathetic, non-judgmental
- Are mature / married several years
- Can listen well and keep confidences
- Are committed to ongoing personal and marital growth
- Are living a Christian marriage
- Love and believe in sharing their faith
- Are aware of their gifts as well as their limits

