



DIOCESE OF  
Jefferson City

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# GUIDELINES CONCERNING MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATORS

JANUARY 2021

To properly implement the diocesan Marriage Preparation Policy, which will be mandatory July 1, 2021, all clergy (priests and deacons) and the laity who will be collaborating with the clergy as Marriage Preparation Facilitators are required to participate in training.

The training will provide the information and resources needed to properly and effectively implement the formation for engaged couples, as described in the diocesan Marriage Preparation Policy. Training includes certification for priests, deacons and lay people to use the PREPARE/ENRICH assessment.

The training, which is approximately six hours, will be provided in English and Spanish for the lay marriage preparation facilitators and deacons. An abbreviated (approximately three hours) course for priests will be available in English only. The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide more details.

#### **WHO SELECTS A MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATOR?**

It is the responsibility of the parish priest(s) to select the Marriage Preparation Facilitators for his parish. It can be deacons, couples, and individuals. He should invite those who he considers suitable for this ministry. Prayer and discernment are necessary.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATES FOR THE ROLE OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATOR?**

It is highly recommended that married couples, especially those married for at least five years, be invited to be Marriage Preparation Facilitators, since their personal experience in marriage will be helpful as they walk with engaged couples in their marriage preparation journey. However, some individuals may be good Marriage Preparation Facilitators due to their education, experience, and/or gifts in working with couples.

All potential Marriage Preparation Facilitators should exhibit the following characteristics:

- ▶ Active Catholics and faithful to Catholic doctrine.
- ▶ Have good communication skills with their spouse (if married) and be open to sharing their marital experiences.
- ▶ Have effective interpersonal and social skills. The relationship formed with the engaged couple is a key element of the impact and success of the marriage preparation process.
- ▶ Be able to inspire trust and maintain confidentiality.
- ▶ Have knowledge, experience and/or gifts that will empower, help, or inspire engaged couples.
- ▶ Be open to work with and collaborate with the priest(s) and/or deacon(s) of their parish.
- ▶ Open to time commitment necessary for training and working with couples.
- ▶ Feel called to serve through this ministry.

#### **WHAT IS A MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATOR?**

A Marriage Preparation Facilitator is a selected couple (ideally) or individual who will collaborate with the parish's priest or deacon responsible for preparing engaged couples according to the diocesan policy on marriage preparation.

**WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATORS?**

1. To work closely with the parish clergy in the preparation of engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage in accordance with the Marriage Preparation Policy of the diocese.
2. To continue the discussion that the priest/deacon initiated with the engaged couple.
3. To guide the engaged couple in the selection of the best option(s) for the other components of their marriage preparation.
4. To inform the priest/deacon about the progress of the couple's preparation.

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**HOW MANY MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATORS PER PARISH?**

The number will depend on the need and size of the parish. Some parishes may need several, to accommodate engaged couples' schedules. Pastors of smaller, usually rural parishes may share Marriage Preparation Facilitators with neighboring parishes. Last year the diocese saw 320 marriages celebrated.

**HOW CAN OUR PARISH CLERGY AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATORS BE TRAINED?**

Trainings will be provided by the diocese. Please register online at [diojeffcity.org/marriage-preparation-training](http://diojeffcity.org/marriage-preparation-training). There is no cost for the diocesan trainings. There is a fee of \$70 per user/couple for the PREPARE/ENRICH facilitator kit. Parishes will be charged \$50 per lay person/couple who are being trained. All other costs, including the PREPARE/ENRICH facilitator kit for priests and deacons, will be covered by the diocese.