

A close-up photograph of a hand pouring water from a clear glass pitcher into a glass. The water is captured in mid-pour, creating a dynamic splash and droplets. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light grey.

YOUR PARISH HERE!

# OVERFLOWING

A Pre-Cana Retreat for Engaged Couples



# Retreat Outline

## RETREAT SCHEDULE

- o 9:00 Welcome and Marriage Love Story
- o 9:40 Marriage Wishlist Activity
- o 10:00 God's Design for Marriage
- o 11:30 Adoration and Confession
- o 12:00 Lunch
- o 12:30 The Vows
- o 1:30 Group Activity and Break
- o 1:45 Life-Giving Love
- o 2:45 Marriage Mission Statement Activity
- o 3:15 Couple Prayer: "Be the Light!"
- o 3:30 Retreat Closes (4:00 PM Sunday Mass, optional)



# LOGISTICS

## SETTING UP AND TEARING DOWN THE RETREAT

- Materials will be provided by the Marriage Formation Coordinator, and the team will set up the space. The delivery and return of the materials is worked out with each parish team.
- When packing up the retreat, make sure everything on the packing list is there, including the roster, which will be with the packing list.
- The roster with recorded attendance is used to send out the certificates to the couples who attended. Be sure to note whether someone came late or left early, missing part of the program so the Marriage Formation Coordinator can follow up.

## MATERIALS AND PRESENTATIONS

- The Diocese is happy to partner with parishes to bring Pre-Cana Retreats to couples! We are grateful for the unique gifts that your team brings to this day and encourage supplemental presentations, videos, and other materials. At the same time, to ensure the integrity of the program, all materials must be submitted and approved by the Marriage Formation Coordinator prior using in your Pre-Cana retreat.
- We encourage you to build your team and invite others into marriage ministry. Any new volunteers who will be presenting talks must be connected and onboarded by the Marriage & Family Life Office.
- If you would like to suggest any edits or changes to these materials, please contact the Marriage Formation Coordinator to discuss.

A romantic photograph of a man and a woman embracing from behind at sunset. The man is wearing a striped shirt, and the woman is wearing a white top. The background is a warm, golden glow from the setting sun over a blurred landscape.

# MARRIAGE WISHLIST

*Reflect & Share*

1. How would you like to grow as a person in your marriage?

2. How would like to support your beloved in growing as a person?

3. How would you like to grow in your relationship as a couple?

4. Why are these specific dreams important to you?



# THE VOWS

## TALK OUTLINE

1. Define the word "sacrament" for the couples.
2. Christ communicates His grace through the consent of the baptized couple. This grace is available every day of the marriage.
3. The vows summarize the intention to live a covenant, and they create an unbreakable bond with the couple's free consent.
4. The bride and groom bestow this sacrament on each-other. The priest or deacon witnesses these vows in the name of the Church.
5. Read through the questions and the vows, explaining their significance. Highlight that all of the vows, including the promise of openness to life, applies to every act of intercourse. The practice of NFP respects the vows. We can't make exceptions to the vows in order to honor them.
6. Walk through the canonical impediments to marriage. Marriage can only take place if it truly can signify Christ and His Church, and the couple can freely take on this bond.
7. Ask the couples to reflect on their motives as they prepare to make these vows. Are there any pressures (even internal) involved in the decision to marry?
8. Refer the couples to the crucifix as an image of self-giving love. Christ gave Himself completely for the Church, and He invites couples to share in this love through their life together.
9. Reflect on your own experience of married couples in your personal life. How do they witness covenant love to you?
10. **Each person has a reflection guide on the vows. Ask couples to journal individually for 15 minutes, then share their reflections with each-other. If they finish early, there is an activity following based on 1 Corinthians 13.**



CELEBRANT:

[Name] and [Name], have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?

THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE EACH SAY:

I have.

THE CELEBRANT CONTINUES:

Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?

THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE EACH SAY:

I am.

CELEBRANT:

Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE EACH SAY:

I am.

**Option #1.** I (name) take you (name) to be my wife/husband. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

**Option #2.** I (name) take you (name) for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part.



# REFLECTION ON THE VOWS

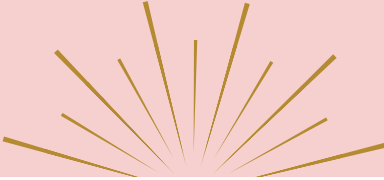
*Reflect & Share*

What dreams and motivations are behind your desire to marry? Are there any fears you have about marriage?

Is there anything you are holding back or tend to resist giving your spouse? What does it mean to give your whole self to your spouse?

What consistent habits of "being a gift" for your spouse can you work on? How do you continue to pursue your spouse regardless of the circumstances, or how you are feeling in a given season?

How is the promise to be open to life essential to marriage? Are you ready to promise this?



You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.

Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

**MATTHEW 5:13-16**



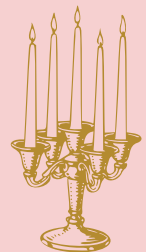


## "BE THE LIGHT" CLOSING PRAYER

- Bring the couples into the church, and have them spread out.
- Read Matthew 5: 13-16, then allow silence for reflection.
- Pass out one candle to each couple, and remind them that their marriage will be a light to the world, that they as a "domestic church" are called to proclaim the joy of Christ, present in their midst.
- Give the couple the opportunity to ask Jesus Christ to be at the center of their family life.
- The couples will then take the candle and place it in front of the crucifix together, as a sign of their trust in God's grace for their marriage.
- Send them off with the candle for their future home as a reminder to let the light of Christ shine in their family life.
- Thank them for choosing to make their relationship a gift to the Church and a sign of God's love!

"...The family has well deserved the beautiful name of 'domestic Church.' This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates."

POPE ST. PAUL VI, IN *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*, 71



May the Lord cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

**1 THESSALONIANS 3:12**



**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE OFFICE**  
[familylife@columbuscatholic.org](mailto:familylife@columbuscatholic.org)