

Parish Marriage and Family Life Inventory: Ministry Formation Specialization Day - Exercise

Adapted from the parish inventory resource of the USCCB's Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. The full resource assists in assessing whether parishes are meeting the current needs of married couples and families through parish marriage and family ministries. The full resource is online on the diocesan webpage for Ministry Specialization Day 2026.

For your assigned section below:

- Choose one area of need for your assigned phase of marriage ministry.
- Identify an event, program, or initiative that would meet that need through one of the four pillars of prayer, formation, or accompaniment, (or advocacy).
- Write a one or two sentence description of the event/program/initiative.
- Identify the “why.” Why does your parish need this event/program/initiative? Why should folks attend or participate?
- List some logistics: target audience, how to promote, approximate costs, who will fund it, what supplies you will need, what sort of help will you need, etc.
- Identify objections you may have to answer. Costs too much! No one will come!

Phase of Parish Marriage Ministry: Immediate Marriage Preparation for Engaged Couples

| <u>Needs to be Met by Immediate Marriage Preparation*</u> (choose one): |
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| Outreach to engaged couples so they are connected with the local parish community, with the support of a mentor or sponsor couple, who are culturally competent |
| Opportunities for prayer for and with engaged couples (such as the blessing of the engaged, adoration, sacrament of penance, etc.) |
| How to pray together as a couple |
| Natural Family Planning as a tool for respecting and living God's design for married love while discerning God's will together |
| Moral teaching of the Church on reproductive technologies and ethical solutions to infertility |
| Sensitive issues such as pornography use and addiction, resolving abortion trauma, sexual and domestic abuse and violence, the experience of separation and divorce as a child, etc. |
| Practical skills such as communication, financial planning, etc. |
| Ongoing training and support for pastoral workers who assist with the preparation of couples for marriage (including clergy, seminarians, mentor couples, parish staff, and volunteers) |

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Phase of Parish Marriage Ministry: Mystagogy Phase (2-3 years after the Sacrament)

| <u>Needs to be Met by Post-Sacrament Ministry*</u> (choose one): |
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| Post-Cana programs with instruction on the vocation of marriage and the call to holiness as a married couple, and the gift of life, including guidance on ethical solutions to infertility, promotion of adoption and foster care options |
| Mentoring programs that pair the newly married with faithful and mature couples for support and direction |
| Programs where small groups of the newly married can gather for peer support and faith sharing |
| First anniversary celebration or retreat hosted for new couples |

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Phase of Parish Marriage Ministry: Marriage Enrichment Ministry

| <u>Needs to be Met by Marriage Enrichment Ministry*</u> (choose one): |
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| Communication and conflict resolution programs |
| Parenting programs |
| Finance handling and planning programs |
| Couples' retreats |
| Couples' small groups |
| Healing services and other opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation for Catholic married couples |
| Small group discussions, workshops, or professionally facilitated sessions on the threats to conjugal chastity, especially pornography |
| Collaboration with and support for services that assist difficult pregnancies such as pro-life pregnancy centers and adoption agencies |
| Family-supportive facilities and/or arrangements that assist the participation of parents with young children at Holy Mass |

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Phase of Parish Marriage Ministry: Marriage Crisis Ministry

| <u>Needs to be Met by Marriage Crisis Ministry*</u> (choose one): |
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| A network of mentor couples in the parish who can accompany married couples with prayer, friendship, and other forms of support |
| Trained marriage coaches at the parish who can provide professional help to struggling couples |
| Opportunities for renewal and retreats offered by apostolates or organizations dedicated to marriage ministry and renewal |
| Materials and resources that provide guidance and encouragement to couples in crisis |
| Ministries that provide pastoral care for those experiencing separation or divorce as well as for children and adult children affected by divorce and separation |
| Training sessions for clergy, pastoral workers, and parish staff on how to sensitively respond to the needs of blended families |
| Informational events on the applicable canonical processes |

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