

Dear Bride and Groom,

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! Holy Spirit is pleased that you have chosen to celebrate this Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at our church. **Father Amar Nagothu** and I are deeply committed to assist you in the preparation of your marriage.

You will find attached several documents that will assist you in your preparation. The following list provides information regarding the attached documents and their purpose. All required documents need to be completed **no later than one month** prior to the wedding.

1. [The Sacrament of Marriage at Holy Spirit](#) is a booklet to assist you in the preparation of your marriage in the Catholic Church with specific information about weddings at Holy Spirit.
2. [Marriage Preparation Requirements Checklist](#). A checklist of the documents you need to submit prior to your ceremony.
3. [Marriage Preparation Guidelines](#). A guideline of dates and deadlines for completing your marriage preparation through our parish.
4. [Baptismal Certificates](#). A recent (dated within the past 6 months) baptismal certificate for both parties is required. See attached documentation.
5. [Confirmation Certificates](#). For Catholics, a certificate of Confirmation is required. See attached documentation.
6. [Your Autobiography](#) is the suggested format for the autobiography and is to be completed by both the Bride and the Groom regarding their life.
7. [Marriage Preparation Programs](#). You must complete two programs through the Diocese of St. Augustine: a Marriage Preparation program and Natural Family Planning (NFP) sessions. It is recommended that the marriage preparation program be completed prior to the NFP sessions to help you understand more fully the reasoning behind the Church's teaching on NFP. See attached documentation.
8. [Freedom to Marry Affidavit](#). The sworn, notarized statements to be completed by your parents (other older relatives, if parents are deceased) that you have never been married before and have no impediments to your marriage.
9. [Wedding Information Forms](#). These forms provide information about your rehearsal and ceremony to assist Father Amar and myself.
10. [Love, Dating and Marriage \(or\) Together for Life Booklet Selection Form](#) are the prayers, blessings and readings that you will select for your ceremony. Father Amar will provide you with this booklet upon your initial meeting with him.
11. [Civil Marriage License Information](#) provides information on how to obtain a marriage license in the State of Florida.

Please feel free to contact me at [904-645-9142](tel:904-645-9142) or email me at clbergman@comcast.net should you have any questions or comments.

God Bless,

Cheryl Bergman
clbergman@comcast.net
Wedding Coordinator
Holy Spirit Catholic Church

MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

8 Months Prior to Your Wedding

1. Couple to initially meet with **Father Amar Nagothu**, to set wedding date and complete pre-nuptial questionnaire.
2. Couple contact Diocesan Center for Family Life (308-7474) or go online at www.dcf.org and sign up for either Engaged Encounter Weekend or Pre-Cana.

YOU MUST REGISTER FOR THIS MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE WITHIN A MONTH OF MEETING WITH FATHER BONELA and MUST COMPLETE THE COURSE WITHIN FIVE (5) MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING DATE.

You are required to take the FOCCUS test at Engaged Encounter/Pre-Cana program. Please indicate when you take your FOCCUS test that your results are to be sent to Holy Spirit. See attached documentation for more information on the test.

5 Months Prior to Your Wedding

1. Contact parishes where you completed your Sacrament of Baptism and Sacrament of Confirmation and request a certificate to be reissued. See attached documentation for more information of this process.
2. Sign up for NFP sessions upon completion of the Engaged Encounter/Pre-Cana program. The NFP process takes approximately three (3) months to complete. You can go online to the Diocese Center for Family Life at www.dcf.org and choose a session. Under the NFP link, you will find certified NFP couples. You contact a couple directly and work with them to complete your sessions based on your schedule. The couple will provide you with a certification at the end of the sessions.
3. Once your FOCCUS results have been received by Father Amar, you will be contacted and assigned to a couple for mentoring or will meet with Father who will discuss your results with you along with the importance of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and what makes for a healthy and holy marriage. You will meet for approximately three sessions with your assigned couple or with Father Amar.

3 Months Prior to Your Wedding

1. Meet with Cheryl to go over ceremony details

2 Months Prior to Your Wedding

1. Autobiographies of both bride and groom are to be completed.
2. Freedom to Marry Affidavits are to be completed; sworn and notarized.

1 Month Prior to Your Wedding

1. Meet with Cheryl to finalize ceremony and collect required documentation along with the church and celebrant offerings.

YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Writing one's autobiography can be difficult and takes a great deal of effort. This exercise is to help you to discover your real self and to begin the discovery of your loved one. It will give you a glimpse through the doors to your future. Below is a suggested outline.

YOUR PARENTS: Describe the personalities of your parents; how they got along with each other as you grew up; how they treated you; showed affection; emotions; encouragement; allowed you to mature; exercised discipline. Describe your feelings toward each parent in childhood and now; your reaction to your schooling, education and upbringing.

YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Older, younger? Describe how you influenced one another and interacted with your parents, both growing up and now.

YOUR TEACHERS, EMPLOYERS, AND OTHER AUTHORITY FIGURES: Describe how they influenced you, helped or possibly even hindered in your formation and your reaction to their advice or criticism.

YOUR PEERS, FRIENDS, AND CO-WORKERS: Describe your long lasting relationships; how you got along with others; your involvement in organizations or causes; your prejudices; your sensitivities; your ability to communicate; to express your feelings; your ability to trust.

YOURSELF: Describe your self-image (strengths, weaknesses); self-assertiveness; self-control; major interests; goals in life; health history; sense of responsibility; dependability; dependency; punctuality; neatness; use of money; use of your free time; manner of handling anger; rejection; failure; depression; fears; need for affection; emotional breakdowns; problems with alcohol; drug use; gambling; sex; legal problems. Describe your schooling, religious education, and work record.

YOUR RELIGION: Briefly describe your beliefs, thoughts, feelings about God, Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Matrimony, prayer, your involvement with your Church.

YOUR FIANCE: Please try to describe your fiancé in terms of the six categories listed above.

YOUR COURTSHIP: Describe how you met; what attracted you to the other; when and how the subject of marriage came up; any pressures to marry; what you look for in marriage; the reaction of your parents and friends to your marriage. Any doubts; any separations or breakups; any signs of breakdown in communication? What you feel you have in common. How you compliment one another.

YOUR FUTURE LIFE TOGETHER: Describe your awareness of and acceptance of each other's shortcomings relative to your marital obligations. How do you intend to resolve your differences? Describe each other's intentions concerning children. Do you plan to work, have a large family, etc? Describe your intentions concerning your family's religious and secular education. Do either of you plan to pursue a career? Describe your awareness of any problems which might arise concerning your work and your relationship to your spouse and intended family. Any in-law problems? Briefly describe what you expect from marriage.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

There are several programs that the Diocesan Center for Family Life offers for Marriage Preparation. The following information lists these programs. You may register for any of the programs by contacting the Diocesan Center by phone, mail, or their web-site.

Diocesan Center for Family Life
2557 Park Street
Jacksonville, FL 32204
(904) 551-2619
www.dcf.org

Pre-Cana

Pre-Cana is a marriage preparation program offered by the diocese of St. Augustine. It is designed for engaged couples who believe they are ready for marriage in the church because they have a growing, positive relationship.

The goal is to provide an opportunity in which participants can continue to discover practical ways to enhance their communication with one another and with God.

Featured presentations provided by professionals and married couples include:

- * Communication
- * Long-Term Commitment
- * Interfaith Marriage
- * Finances
- * Natural Family Planning
- * Sacrament of Marriage
- * Christian Family Values
- * Domestic Violence
- * Catholic Perspective on Sexuality
- * Stewardship

The cost for Pre-Cana is \$79.00 per couple and must be paid at the time of registration. This is a non-refundable fee but it is transferable to another date if at least seven days of notice is given. The cost covers lunch and all materials. Confirmation of your registration and reservations for the date requested will be sent by letter.

For upcoming programs and dates to include location visit
<http://dcfl.org/marriage-family-life/marriage-preparation/pre-cana/pre-cana-registration/>

Engaged Encounter

Engaged Encounter is a marriage preparation program sponsored by the Engaged Encounter Community and the Diocesan Center for Family Life, Diocese of St. Augustine. **For more details, visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/engagedencounterstaugustinefl/home>**

The Encounter is a weekend experience that allows couples time to reflect upon their relationship in an atmosphere free of the pressures and distractions of everyday life. It is designed to give the couple planning marriage an opportunity to talk honestly and intensely about their prospective life together... their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals; their attitudes about money, sex, children, family; their roles in the church and society.

Who is it for?

Although Catholic in origin, Engaged Encounter is open to any couple of any faith who desires a rich, full life together. Formal engagement is not necessary; a couple needs only to be seriously considering marriage.

What happens on the weekend?

Through a series of presentations by married couples and a priest, the engaged couple is stimulated to discuss privately with each other all aspects of married life – always from the viewpoint of their own relationship. The emphasis is not on lectures or group discussions. This is a private experience in a quiet and informal setting. Personal reflection and couple dialogue are the main focus of the weekend. Please visit the national website for Catholic Engaged Encounter www.engagedencounter.org/stacee.asp for more details and for further information about the experience.

When?

The Engaged Encounter begins Friday at 7:00 PM and concludes Sunday afternoon at 3:00 PM. Because Engaged Encounter is a weekend experience, a complete weekend stay is necessary.

Where?

Weekends are held at Marywood Retreat Center, 235 Marywood Drive, St. Johns, FL. Lodging will be in a semi-private room with an individual of the same gender. Rooms include full bath, and central heat and air conditioning.

What is the cost?

The cost for the weekend is \$280 per couple and must be paid at the time of registration. Your \$280 fee is fully refundable, or transferable to another Engaged Encounter weekend, if you call us at least ten days before your scheduled weekend. If you must cancel within ten days of your weekend, some portion of your \$280 fee might be refundable, at our discretion, depending upon the circumstances. However in no case will a refund be given if a couple fails to show up for their designated weekend without providing any prior notice.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact the Engaged Encounter coordinators

Jamie and Dawn Oehmann / Denver and Camille Anderson

904-580-4599

Engaged Encounter Local Co-Coordinators

cee.st.augustinefl@gmail.com

FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study)

FOCCUS is a self-diagnostic instrument designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It is not a test nor meant as a predictor of success or failure in marriage. It is a tool to help couples name and work through issues before marriage.

FOCCUS provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. The results of the inventory point to issues or areas that may need to be addressed.

FOCCUS is designed to be used at three levels. The first level occurs when the individuals read and respond to the FOCCUS statements and when the couple subsequently discusses what they think and feel about the topics. The first level of discussion is done before they receive the report of results. Preliminary thinking and sorting occurs during this time. Couples need a minimum of several days for this kind of personal discussion before they work with the report of their FOCCUS results. Time spent at this first level prepares the couple for the more problematic areas to be discussed at the second level; it often cuts down the processing time needed later with the facilitator.

The second level of FOCCUS occurs with the help of a facilitator. Using the couple report, the facilitator works with the couple to look for patterns in their responses, discuss issues, and problem-solve.

The third level of FOCCUS use is not needed by every couple. It involves the use of the report and subsequent discussion with the couple to make a referral for specialized assistance. If the couple is resistant or the need is not immediate, the facilitator may recommend the use of special help in the future.

The content for discussion in FOCCUS reflects the current body of knowledge about the elements necessary for a successful marriage. There is also content on key contemporary and specialized needs of couples: couples who cohabit before marriage, dual career marriages, interchurch and second marriages.

FOCCUS was developed to reflect the values and ideals of marriage as sacred. The marriage covenant questions in FOCCUS deal with permanency, fidelity, unconditional love, openness to children and shared faith in God. The same items appear in modified wording appear in three editions: Catholic, Christian Non-Denominational and Non-Denominational.

FOCCUS is user-friendly for both engaged couples and those helping to prepare them for marriage. FOCCUS is an inventory that does not require a highly trained professional to administer and it has minimal risk for being misused.

Please sign up on the Pre-Cana or the Engaged Encounter form or call the office at (904) 551-2619 or contact the website at <http://dcfl.org/marriage-family-life/marriage-preparation/foccus/>. The cost for the FOCCUS inventory is \$25 per couple.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP)

NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of the child. By respecting the love-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.

The Diocese of St. Augustine requires every couple getting married in the diocese, of child-bearing age, to complete a full course of NFP instruction.

A full-course of instruction includes an introductory session as well as several follow-up sessions. Classes are not offered by the diocese directly but through independent instructors. You will need to contact the instructors for more information about schedules or cost.

Instruction offered at Pre Cana and Engaged Encounter serves as an introductory session and does not satisfy the requirement on its own.

The Diocese of St. Augustine offers five different methods of NFP. It is suggested you visit each page and learn the basics of each method. After this is done, if you have more specific questions about any of the methods, you can contact the instructor(s) listed under that method or you may **contact the Diocesan Center at (904) 551-2619**. Once you have chosen a method, then it is as simple as contacting any of the instructors listed under that method to sign up for your classes. <http://dcfl.org/fertility-awareness/fertility-awareness-overview/>

ONLINE CATHOLIC WEDDING PREPARATION

You may also consider an approved online Catholic marriage prep course. The cost is \$195 per couple, you can start anytime, the course takes about 8 hours to complete and includes videos, exercises, discussion guides, and a Certificate of Completion.

<https://staugustine.advancedministries.com>"

This marriage preparation course is offered through “The Marriage Group” and they are excited to be another resource that can be utilized by Holy Spirit Church. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Grant Moore with any questions, or concerns you may have. Here is a link to their webpage to learn more. <https://themarriagegroup.com/learn/>

CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION

Below is information on where and how to obtain a marriage license in Jacksonville and surrounding areas.

When you apply for a marriage license both parties will need to come in person to the Clerk's Office with a driver's license and a Social Security card. If either applicant has been previously married, the exact date of divorce, death or annulment must be presented.

New laws require a three-day waiting period between application and the effective date of a marriage license unless the couple has completed a pre-marital class. Any of the diocesan marriage preparations programs such as Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter are acceptable. There is no waiting period for out-of-state residents.

Florida marriage licenses are valid for 60 days from the effective date of the license. The marriage license form must be returned to the Clerk's Office for recording within 10 days after the marriage is performed.

The fee for a marriage license is \$86.00. The exception is if both parties are Florida residents and have provided proof of a premarital class with a provider certified by the Clerk. The fee is then \$61.00. **Fees are paid in cash only.**

You can go to any county clerk office in Florida. Licenses are issued without appointments during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday). Other locations are listed below. Please call and confirm operating hours if you are planning to obtain your license other than the Duval County Courthouse location.

For more information you can log onto <http://www.duvalclerk.com/ccWebsite/> (Duval County) or <http://www.sjccoc.us/recording/marrlice.html> (St. Johns County).

Duval County Courthouse - Downtown
501 West Adams Street, Room 2396
Jacksonville, FL 32202
(904) 255-2000
Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm

BAPTISMAL AND CONFIRMATION CERTIFICATES

For Catholics:

Within *six months* of your wedding date, please do the following:

- 1) Contact the parishes where you received your Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
- 2) Notify the secretary that you are planning on getting married.
- 3) Request that the parish re-issue you an ORIGINAL baptismal and/or confirmation certificate(s). We cannot accept a copy of your certificate(s). The certificate must be dated within six months from the date of your ceremony.
- 4) Submit these original documents as part of your required documentation for the diocese.

For Non-Catholics:

Please submit a copy of your baptismal certificate.

**WEDDING INFORMATION FORM
CEREMONY**

Bride's Name
During
Ceremony:

Groom's Name
During
Ceremony:

Address Residing
After
Marriage:

Maid/Matron of
Honor Full
Name:

Best Man's
Full
Name:

OPEN CHURCH FOR REHEARSAL BY: _____
OPEN CHURCH FOR WEDDING BY: _____

Program: YES NO If Yes, please provide two copies on or before the rehearsal.

Full Mass: YES NO # Taking Communion: _____

Offertory Family: YES NO Gift Bearers (2):

Church

Musician: YES NO

Soloist: YES NO

Special
Intentions:

Flowers to Mary: YES NO

Flowers to Mothers: YES NO

Special
Requests:

Name at
Introduction:

**WEDDING INFORMATION FORM
REHEARSAL**

Bride & Groom: _____

Grandmother: _____

Usher: _____

Grandmother: _____

Usher: _____

Grandmother: _____

Usher: _____

Grandmother: _____

Usher: _____

Stepmother: _____

Usher: _____

Groom's Mother: _____

Usher: _____

Bride's Mother: _____

Usher: _____

Please list the wedding party in the order they will walk down the aisle:

Bridesmaid: _____

Groomsman: _____

Maid of Honor: _____

Best Man: _____

Aisle Runner: Yes: _____ No: _____

Attendants: _____

Flower Girl: _____

Ring Bearer: _____

Flower Girl: _____

Ring Bearer: _____

Father/Escort: _____

FREEDOM TO MARRY FORM

Freedom to Marry

I, _____ am related to _____
Name of Witness Bride/Groom

by reason of _____.

I hereby attest to Almighty God that above bride or groom to the best of my knowledge has never been married before in a civil or religious ceremony. I also attest that to the best of my knowledge the above bride or groom intends to enter a marriage that is for life, lasting until death; that there are no conditions of any kind being attached to this marriage by either of the parties; that there is nothing on the part of the bride or groom that would render this marriage unlawful or invalid in the eyes of the Church; that there is no person or circumstance forcing the parties to marry against their will.

Sworn this _____ day of _____ 20 _____.

Signature of Witness

Signature of Priest or Notary

Seal