



## Introduction: Marriage Isn't Just an "I Do"—It's a Journey of Preparation

In a world where fleeting relationships and divorce are increasingly common, the Catholic Church continues to proclaim the beauty and permanence of marriage as an **indissoluble sacrament**, a **sacred bond** that reflects Christ's love for His Church (Ephesians 5:25).

But how can couples ensure that this commitment isn't just a romantic dream, but a well-founded reality? The answer lies in **the deep, honest conversations that couples must have before getting married**.

This article isn't just a checklist of topics to discuss—it's a **spiritual and practical guide** to help engaged couples build a strong marriage, rooted in faith and reason.

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## 1. The Importance of Talking Before Marriage: A Biblical and Historical Perspective

### From the Beginning, God Wanted Man and Woman to Know Each Other

In Genesis, Adam and Eve were created for each other, but before they were united, **God gave them time to know one another** (though in their case, it was instantaneous). In our human reality, courtship is that time of discernment, where two people explore whether they are called to become **one flesh** (Genesis 2:24).

### Courtship in Catholic Tradition

In the Middle Ages and up until just over a century ago, marriages were often arranged for political or economic reasons. However, the Church always insisted on the **free consent** of the spouses. Today, even though we choose our partners, we must not fall into the error of thinking that romantic love is enough. **True love is built through dialogue, prayer, and shared purpose**.

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## 2. Key Topics Every Catholic Couple Must Discuss Before Marriage

### A. Faith and Beliefs: Are We on the Same Spiritual Page?

- **How do we live out our faith daily?** (Sunday Mass, prayer, sacraments).
- **What does sacramental marriage mean to each of us?**
- **How will we handle differences in religious practice?** (E.g., one is more traditional, the other more “modern”).
- **How will we integrate God into our home?** (Family Rosary, grace before meals, raising children in the faith).

*“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” (Psalm 127:1).*

### B. Extended Family: In-Laws, Siblings, and Healthy Boundaries

- **What role will our in-laws play in our lives?** (Support vs. interference).
- **How will we handle family conflicts?**
- **Will we celebrate holidays and traditions with both families?**

□ **Advice:** **Setting loving boundaries** is key. Marriage means “leaving father and mother” (Genesis 2:24), but without neglecting the Fourth Commandment (“Honor your father and mother”).

### C. Children: How Many? How Will We Raise Them?

- **Do we accept the Church’s teaching on openness to life?** (Humanae Vitae).
- **How many children do we want?** (Remember, natural family planning is the Catholic option).
- **How will we educate them in the faith?** (Catechism, Catholic school, sacraments).
- **What will we do if we face infertility?** (Consider adoption or discern a call to spiritual parenthood).

△ **Warning:** **If one wants children and the other doesn’t, this is a serious obstacle.** Catholic marriage is, by nature, ordered toward procreation.



## D. Finances: Will We Manage Money Wisely?

- **Will we have joint or separate bank accounts?**
- **How will we handle debt?** (Loans, credit cards).
- **Will one of us stay home while the other works?** (Valuing homemaking as a sacred vocation).
- **How will we tithe and support the Church?** (Giving is an act of faith).

□ *Practical Wisdom:* **Avoid unnecessary debt before the wedding.** Many marriages suffer from financial problems that could have been prevented.

## E. Roles in the Home: How Will We Share Responsibilities?

- **Who will cook, clean, and manage the household?**
- **If we have children, will one of us stay home or reduce work hours?**
- **How will we support each other's careers without neglecting the family?**

□ *Reflection:* **Marriage isn't 50-50—it's 100-100.** Both spouses must serve generously, following Christ's example.

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## 3. Uncomfortable but Necessary Questions

Some topics are tough, but **it's better to discuss them now than regret it later:**

- **What would we do if one of us loses faith?**
- **How will we practice chastity during engagement?** (Avoiding sin and near occasions of temptation).
- **Do we accept the indissolubility of marriage?** (No to divorce, yes to reconciliation).

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## Conclusion: A Well-Prepared Courtship Leads to a Blessed Marriage

Engagement isn't just a time for romance—it's a time for **serious discernment**. As St. John Paul II said: *"Love consists not in gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the*



*same direction.”*

If you want a happy marriage, **pray together, speak honestly, and seek spiritual guidance.** The Church offers **pre-Cana courses** and mentorship from priests or experienced married couples. **Don’t underestimate this preparation.**

In the end, a Catholic marriage isn’t just a human union—it’s a **covenant with God.** And like any great work, it needs a solid foundation.

**Are you ready to build yours?**

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*Would you like a more detailed guide on any of these topics? Leave your questions in the comments!*

□ *“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24).\**