



## St. Joseph Marriage Prep Outline for the Mentor Couples

### Meetings

Mentors & engaged couples meet 4 - 5 times, for about an hour. A suggested format is detailed below. Couples are asked to complete their Mentor Couple meetings six months prior to their wedding.

### Contact the Engaged Couple

Introduce yourselves and set the first date to meet. Typically, mentor couples invite the engaged to their homes. Setting up a meeting location elsewhere works too, whatever works for you and the couple. Share with them a little bit about the mentoring process. Request that they complete their FOCCUS inventories prior to the first meeting. Email them each a link to answer the questions separately.

### About the FOCCUS inventory

The FOCCUS Pre-Marriage inventory provides individualized couple feedback on where each person stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. The results of the inventory point to issues or topics that may need to be addressed or explored more fully.

After the couple completes and submits their inventory, the results are sent to the mentor couple. The engaged couple does not receive them.

Review the results for areas of discussion ahead of time. It is important to discuss the FOCCUS results where the couple repeatedly answer differently.

Remember, the inventory is taken at a certain time and place, and will reflect the way they are feeling when they take it. Have them take it a week or two before you meet. *Not too far in advance.* People may not respond in exactly the same way today as they would prior. Be open to their feelings changing since they took it.

Results that reflect they are indifferent or disagree, may simply indicate that they have not yet discussed the topic, or it hasn't been brought up before.

Help them start their marriage without expecting perfection. During awkward silences, it may be helpful to share some of your personal experiences to relate... but be ok knowing that awkward silences can be good – allowing time for them to process and think. There are no right or wrong answers, they are not being tested. It is all geared to prompt conversation.

## RESOURCES

### Beloved Videos

"The Mystery and  
Meaning of Marriage"

Episodes are available to view  
at: [formed.org](http://formed.org)

To create a free account,  
go to:  
[stjosephwaconia.formed.org](http://stjosephwaconia.formed.org)

(search by 55387, then  
select St. Joseph)

A Couple's Guide is also  
provided to the engaged  
couple in their prep folder.

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### FOCCUS

[www.foccusinc.com](http://www.foccusinc.com)

Mentor Couples will have  
an account from which  
they will set up the engaged  
couple with a link to  
complete the inventory.

The suggested format for the meetings is a guideline. Don't stop a deep discussion about an important issue to the couple in order to stick to the format. You may skip over parts to allow for fruitful dialogue to continue.

If a discussion takes place that does not resolve, help it come to a good point and encourage them to continue discussing it later. Then, bring it up next time to see how they came to an understanding.

## Meeting 1

- ◊ Welcome and opening prayer.
- ◊ Get to know one another - ask them how they got engaged, how they met, and perhaps (quickly) share the same about yourselves. *Note: there are helpful conversation starter questions provided at the end of this document.*
- ◊ Begin discussion of their FOCCUS results.
- ◊ Closing Prayer.
- ▣ For next time: Have the couple watch the first two videos of the "Beloved" series together: "The Mystery and Meaning of Marriage" and complete the discussion questions in their guidebook.
- Let the couple know the meetings will be similar in format to this, with the addition of talking over the "Beloved" videos and their answers to the discussion questions.

## Meeting 2

- ◊ Prayer.
- ◊ Check in with the couple and ask about their wedding plans, or anything new from last meeting.
- ◊ Continue discussing FOCCUS results.
- ◊ Review Sessions 1 and 2 of the "Beloved" videos that they watched, their reflections and answers to the discussion questions.
- ◊ Prayer.
- For next time: Have the couple watch videos 3 and 4 of the "Beloved" series and complete the discussion questions in their guidebook.

## Meeting 3

- ◊ Prayer.
- ◊ Check in with the couple and ask about their wedding plans, or anything new from last meeting.
- ◊ Complete FOCCUS if needed.
- ◊ Review Sessions 3 and 4 of the “Beloved” videos that they watched, their reflections and answers to the discussion questions.
- ◊ Communication exercise, ask the couple: “Write down three things you would like your partner to do for you, or with you.” Have them read their answers out loud to each other, directly as written. Have each explain what the other’s answer means to them.
- ◊ Prayer. *Invite one of the engaged to give the closing prayer*
- For next time:
  - 1) Have the couple watch videos 5 and 6 of the “Beloved” series and complete the discussion questions in their guidebook.
  - 2) Give the couple a copy of the “Marriage Preparation Budget Sheet” to fill out.
  - 3) Also, have them ask another couple they know with children how their marriage changed after having children.

## Meeting 4

- ◊ Prayer.
- ◊ Check in with the couple and ask about their wedding plans, or anything new from last meeting.
- ◊ Review Session 5 and 6 of the “Beloved” videos that they watched, their reflections and answers to the discussion questions.
- ◊ Have them share what they learned from the couple with children, and how their marriage changed.
- ◊ Go over their budget sheet.
- ◊ Closing summary of the marriage preparation experience/any additional information you might need.
- ◊ Prayer. *Invite one of the engaged to give the closing prayer*
- Note: Be sure you have covered all the FOCCUS results.

### **Meeting 5 – *If Necessary***

To complete anything that is remaining. Some Mentor Couples plan a meal for their last meeting with the engaged couple... just an idea!

### **FINAL STEP – Send Comments & Results to Clergy**

The Mentor couple will complete a “Marriage Prep Evaluation Report” for the engaged couple and send it to Father Stan or Deacon Greg, along with the couple’s FOCCUS survey results.

### **Helpful Discussion Questions:**

To the man: What do you look for in a wife?

To the woman: What do you look for in a husband?

To the man: What kind of husband do you want to be?

The woman: What kind of wife do you want to be?

### **“Icebreaker” Questions:**

Where did each of you grow up?

Where do you live now?

What is the size of your family?

What is your birth order?

What was it like being (the oldest, youngest, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>)?

Where do you go to work or school?

Do you see your present job as a career for you?

What are your educational goals?

Where did you meet?

How did you meet?

Did you ever break up?

Why? How did you get together again?

How long were on this break up?

Where will you live after marriage?

What religion are your parents?

Where are you today in regard to prayer, church, spirituality, religion?

What is your faith life today?

How often do you attend Mass?

Are you comfortable praying together?

Was prayer, church, religion an influence I your family life while growing up?

What about your own marriage?

Where will prayer, church, religion fit in?

Have you discussed this already?

How do you get along now as a couple?

Are you satisfied with your relationship now?

What do you expect of one another in married life?

## **“Family of Origin” Questions:**

What was it like growing up in your family?

Tell us and each other about this. How were you raised?

How would you like to raise your kids?

How did your family celebrate holidays?

Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, 4th of July, birthdays, and other family activities?

Was togetherness at these events important to you? Was it important to your parents? To your family? Was prayer, church, religion a part of your family life?

Who was the model of prayer for you?

Who taught you to pray?

Do you prefer traditional, structured prayer or spontaneous prayer?

What are your earliest memories of prayer? How old were you then?

Do you remember any other experiences at that young age?

Would you say that prayer in your family was regular? Seldom? On Special occasions only?

How about church attendance? Regular or occasional?

How would you like prayer, church, and religion to be in your family?

How was discipline handled in your family? As a very young child? In your teen years?

Do you feel your family was strict?

Do the two of you agree on how to discipline?

Do you like the way your family handled its problems?

How was mealtime in your family? Was it an important part of the family day?

Was togetherness at mealtime important? Was it possible on a regular basis?

What are some of the traditions and customs that you want to hold on to in your new family setting?

How well do you know each other's family now?

How often do you see each other's families?

Have your families met?

How do your families feel about each of you?

Do they have any concerns about your marriage?

Do you feel your parents can "let go" in the way you would like them to?