

Pre-Cana Discussion Topics

Discussion 1 – Decision to Love

Key Points:

- 1- It is important to look at your beginnings as a couple and what has brought you to this point.
- 2- The initial feelings of excitement and magic are important to every couple but are not what carry you through a marriage.
- 3- All decision making is rooted in love.
- 4- Focus on what made you a couple in the first place. These are the beginning of the foundation that you need to have a strong marriage and live out the decision you have made.
- 5- What are the reasons people get married?

Discussion 2 – Communication

Key Points:

- 1- Good communication and negotiation skills are crucial to a good marriage.
- 2- Though your focus right now is on each other, as the years go by other things will fight for your attention. It is important to make time to spend with each other.
- 3- Good communication is not something that just happens—it takes time, commitment, patience and skill. LEARNING TO LISTEN is perhaps the most important skill of all.
- 4- Conflict resolution (fighting) is also a type of communication that can be very destructive but does not have to be.
- 5- There are tools that can be used to help couples develop communication skills.
- 6- Once mean and hurtful things are said it is impossible to ever take them back.
- 7- There should be no winner/loser mentality – in this case your marriage is the real loser and no argument is as important as your marriage.
- 8- This topic helps you see how well you are communicating as a couple and how you resolve conflict.

Discussion 3: Our Separate Pasts and Personalities

Key Points:

- 1- You are two different people even though you may have a lot in common. This is based on the fact that you have two distinct personalities and histories.
- 2- Opposites attract? One social, one quiet. One neat, one sloppy. One emotional, romantic, stubborn?
- 3- Sometimes things that attracted you to each other in the first place may be the things you try to change later. One important thing you need to know right now: YOU CANNOT CHANGE YOUR PARTNER. People only change if they want to.
- 4- This topic will help you look at how you are different and that can change and will affect your marriage.

Discussion 4: Our Family of Origin

Key Points:

- 1- The most influential system in everyone's life is their family of origin.
- 2- This is where you develop your values, view on life and your concept of what marriage is.
- 3- All your experiences in life up to this point with you into your marriage... this is what is known as your "baggage".
- 4- It is important to be aware of and understand how each other's families handle various situations such as birthdays, holidays, family illness and death.
- 5- Abuse in any form, whether physical or emotional, is never acceptable.
- 6- This topic will help you become more aware of the "baggage" you are carrying and also what your partner is carrying. This, in turn, helps you to accept and understand each other better.

Discussion 5: Our Sexuality

Key Points:

- 1- This topic is not just about sex, although it does include it. Sex is only one aspect of sexuality.
- 2- Sexuality includes feminine and masculine traits that each of us have, role identification, intimacy in daily life, romance and sex.
- 3- Keeping “the spark” alive in marriage through the years requires time, effort and imagination.
- 4- The Church’s views on sex are often misunderstood. There is an equal value placed on sex as a means of procreation and as an important aspect of the married couple’s relationship.
- 5- This topic helps you discuss some of these things and become aware of your feelings on them.

Discussion 6: Our Children

Key Points:

- 1- Having children is a life altering decision, affecting marriage, careers, lifestyle, finances, to mention a few.
- 2- Important to know each other’s feelings on this subject. Do not assume you will be able to “change your partner’s mind” on such issues as to how many children you will have, timing, etc.
- 3- Natural Family Planning is recommended by the Church, it is healthy and natural and allows for both partners to participate in the process. More information is available through the Diocese.
- 4- Dual career couples need to come to a decision regarding what arrangements they will make once the children are born...will someone stay home? For how long? Will a relative be asked to stay with the child(ren)? Is day care an option?
- 5- Some of the other issues in this topic will help you focus on the subjects of infertility, adoption, and how you will raise your children.

Discussion 7: Our Finances, Friends, Work and Leisure Time

Key Points:

- 1- These areas can cause strain in your marriage if not dealt with openly and honestly, It is important to have a healthy balance of all of them.
- 2- Finances (The major cause of conflict in marriage).
 - Important to come up with a budget and stick with it.
 - Come to an agreement on the use of credit cards.
 - Agree on all major purchases.
- 3- Work and Leisure Time
 - Need to have a balance in your lives.
 - Very important to make time to have fun together.
- 4- Friends
 - Relationship with friends is important but will probably change once you are married (especially with single friends).
 - Need to remember that your spouse should be your best friend and should be the one you turn to for support – not others.
- 5- Dual Career Couples
 - Important to discuss and come to an agreement on household chores, financial management, etc.

Discussion 8: Our Spirituality

Key Points:

- 1- This is the topic of which you are least likely to know each other's feelings.
- 2- This subject does not just include organized religion, but more importantly, includes the areas of your personal beliefs, your faith and your relationship with God.
- 3- At this point, most engage couples are still at the point where they are questioning their beliefs. It is important to remember that your spirituality is a journey, which you will now be on together.
- 4- The love in their relationship is holy because God is present in that love.
- 5- There is a difference between contract and covenant.
- 6- Marriage is a sacrament because the love that they have for each other is a sign of the love God has for us. It is ongoing because they become a sacrament to each other and to the world each day.
- 7- The purpose of this topic is to give you and opportunity to reflect on your feelings and share those feelings with your partner. This will help you determine the role God will play in your life together.