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## Marriage and the “Older Couple”

*Age does not automatically mean “We are ready for marriage...no pre Cana needed!”*

- (1) **ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED:** In working with older couples we have discovered issues that need to be discussed include:
- a. review of former marriages and former “alliances”;
  - b. finances of each individual and financial impact on each extended family- mixing finances, pre-nuptial agreements to protect inheritances ;
  - c. attitudes of children toward the future spouse;
  - d. individual health
  - e. what are the attitudes of the future spouse toward the fiancée’s life-style (e.g. “Do I expect him to change.”?);
  - f. lessons learned from a divorce
  - g. ability not to let an idealized memory or loyalty to a deceased spouse block a new marriage;
  - h. assessment of “baggage” (bad habits, unresolved anger or guilt, self-defeating attitudes) from the previous marriage(s) .

It is wrong to presume that since there was a long and “good” marriage in the past, there is nothing more they can learn about marriage. Remember, while they have been married before, they have no experience being married to this person and the WE that the new family will become.

**PROCESS:** Couples of any age can benefit from a FOCCUS Premarital Inventory and FOCCUS facilitation. Issues to be addressed can be explored through the couple’s responses on the FOCCUS and the resulting discussions. It would be best to have a more “mature” couple facilitate the FOCCUS. There are excellent books with “exercises” aimed at the remarriage couple that compliment the FOCCUS and will help the facilitator. Programs such as Engaged Encounter or Christian Marriage Formation can also be useful to the more mature couple. Natural Family Planning as a part of the marriage formation process is not necessary however, awareness of our Church’s teaching in the area of family planning (the God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage program is excellent) and the availability of NFP may allow them to advise their adult children ...your call.

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:** (If you have additional ideas, please let us know)

1. Marriage in the Lord, Family Ministries, Archdiocese of Chicago, ISBN 0-940679-01-9

2. Catholic Re-marriage, Ave Maria Press, ISBN: 1-59471-038-4
3. For Better and Forever, Marriage Preparation Resources, ISBN 0-9677223-0-6
4. FOCCUS areas that might lead you to better facilitation: Lifestyle Expectations; Friends and Interests (esp. questions 35, 149, 86); Personality Match (esp. questions 7, 114, 58); Personal Issues; Communication; Religion, Spirituality and Values; Problem Solving (exp. Questions 26, 72, 61); Extended Family (exp. Pattern 3); Financial Issues; and, Readiness Issues (exp. Pattern 1).

**DO YOU HAVE A TOPIC FOR A FUTURE NEWSLETTER?**

**PLEASE LET US KNOW AT [marriageformation@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:marriageformation@richmonddiocese.org)**

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