

## The Curriculum Components for Marriage Preparation in the Richmond Diocese

<u>Category</u>	<u>Curricular Statement</u>	<u>Sub-Components</u>
Communication	<b>Self Discovery and Self Acceptance</b> <i>(God loves each of us as we are, but is challenging us to become more. Self discovery and self acceptance is necessary to share our true selves.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family of origin influences</li> <li>• Images that I project to others</li> <li>• Qualities, good and bad, others see in me.</li> <li>• What do I like/dislike about me</li> <li>• The risk and trust involved in sharing my true self</li> </ul>
Communication	<b>Romance, Disillusionment and Joy</b> <i>(Love is a decision. The cycle of romance, disillusionment and return to joy is present in relationships and to control this cycle, we make decisions to love each day.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Romance in our relationship.</li> <li>• Disillusionment in our relationship</li> <li>• Setting aside feelings and making a real decision to love</li> <li>• Experiencing the return to true joy</li> <li>• Where are we alike? Different? How do these qualities play out in our cycle of romance, disillusionment and return to joy</li> </ul>
Communication	<b>Open Communication – Risk, Trust and Acceptance</b> <i>(Risk, trust, vulnerability and acceptance are critical elements of open communication.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of open communication</li> <li>• Communicating feelings</li> <li>• Making the decision to trust</li> <li>• Challenges and barriers to openness</li> <li>• Arguing styles and conflict resolution</li> <li>• Blending families</li> <li>• Religious differences, practice of faith differences</li> </ul>
Communication	<b>Closed Communication – Unity-Growth, Change, Shared Expectations</b> <i>(Explored and shared expectations and differences provide a freedom to grow and change. Unshared expectations and differences are signs of a closed relationship.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations and attitudes we bring into marriage</li> <li>• Expectations of change in our partner</li> <li>• Not communicating feelings, thoughts and needs</li> <li>• Difficult issues in our relationship</li> <li>• Issues we bring into our marriage (e.g. finance, step-children, debt)</li> </ul>
Relationship	<b>Unity within Marriage and Life-giving Behavior</b> <i>(Marriage is a vocation and God’s plan for our love is unity. Morality in a Christian marriage consists of being life giving. Life giving behavior is that behavior which focuses on fulfilling the needs of our spouse.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing marriage as a vocation – the couple’s call to holiness</li> <li>• Unity rather than happiness as the true goal of marriage</li> <li>• Developing and nurturing life giving attitudes and behaviors</li> <li>• Morality within marriage</li> <li>• Faith and practice of faith issues</li> </ul>
Relationship	<b>Decision Making</b> <i>(Developing and using effective processes for making decisions and solving problems are important components to a life-giving marriage.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are we making decisions...now</li> <li>• Steps in Catholic decision making</li> <li>• Exploring the many areas requiring decisions now or in the future (e.g. career, faith, life style, family, etc.)</li> <li>• Effects of life-giving decisions.</li> </ul>
Relationship	<b>Sexuality and Intimacy</b> <i>(Sexuality and intimacy are God’s gift to our marriage. Through this gift we express our love for each other and deepen our relationship in marriage)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God’s design of human sexuality</li> <li>• How this gift of sexual intimacy can only be fulfilled within the marriage covenant</li> <li>• The marriage commitment as covenant</li> <li>• Loving each other as God loves us</li> <li>• The free, total, faithful and life giving qualities</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of this covenant</li> <li>• Discussing intimacy in our relationship, both sexual and non-sexual</li> <li>• Attitudes and expectations concerning sex</li> <li>• Past factors that may affect our ability to be intimate</li> <li>• Intimacy and the sacredness and unity of marriage</li> <li>• Living together, secondary chastity</li> </ul>
Relationship	<p><b>Family</b>  <i>(As a couple we are family on the day we are married. We now develop our traditions and values and our openness to new life. Our Church calls us to openness to life and Natural Family Planning is a response to that call.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family of origin values and traditions and integration into our family.</li> <li>• Children, a loving gift from God.</li> <li>• Children - number of, openness to</li> <li>• Stay at home parent; career planning; child rearing...</li> <li>• Spiritual growth and our family.</li> <li>• Different faith practices (within a Catholic marriage; within a Christian marriage; within a mixed faith marriage.)</li> </ul>
Relationship Sacrament	<p><b>Natural Family Planning</b>  <i>(Natural methods of planning a family that reflect our church's teaching on openness to life and an appreciation of the couple's gift of fertility.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church teaching on openness to life and responsible family planning.</li> <li>• Awareness of the full implication of the mission of "responsible parenthood"</li> <li>• Responsible parenthood implies that the couple recognizes fully their own duties towards God, towards themselves, towards the family and towards society, in a correct hierarchy of values.</li> <li>• The philosophy, methods and benefits of Natural Family Planning</li> <li>• Training in the practical aspects of an Natural Family Planning method</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<p><b>Marriage as a Vocation</b>  <i>(We are the Church. Our marriage is bigger than the two of us. We are called to show God's love, not just to one another, but to our world around us.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A real vocation given to the couple by God</li> <li>• Through the spouse's witness they contribute to the good of the Church and society</li> <li>• Service to each other, to their children, to family and friends, their Church, and their community</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<p><b>Marriage is a Sacrament</b>  <i>(A sacrament is God's presence and love for us revealed in a visible action or relationship. When we see a couple's love, we know God is present.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is part of our marriage; our marriage is a sign of God's love</li> <li>• Couples love reflects God's love for His people.</li> <li>• Importance of Sacramental marriage</li> <li>• How can we make our Sacrament visible to others?</li> <li>• Source of grace to help couples through difficult times</li> <li>• Living our Sacrament on a daily basis</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<p><b>Betrothal Pledge</b>  <i>(Allowing the couple to take specific steps to deepen their relationship and commitment between today and their wedding day.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for building our relationship from now until our wedding date and beyond.</li> <li>• Secondary chastity</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<p><b>Planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values</li> </ul>

	<i>(Planning allows us to fulfill our promises and commitments to our values, ideals and life giving decisions.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideals</li> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Difference in styles</li> <li>• Money management</li> <li>• Child rearing plans</li> <li>• Careers</li> <li>• Hobbies, free time, old friends</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<b>Stewardship</b> <i>(Planned sharing of time, talent and treasure within their Catholic community and the community at large.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacramental marriage calls us to discipleship</li> <li>• We have a responsibility to be generous with our love</li> <li>• Involvement with church and community</li> <li>• Time, talent, treasure</li> </ul>
Sacrament	<b>Forgiveness and Reconciliation</b> <i>(Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential in a healthy marriage relationship.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process of reconciliation and healing</li> <li>• “Forgive me” vs. “I’m sorry”</li> <li>• Overcoming feelings of hurt, rejection, etc.</li> <li>• Offering forgiveness</li> <li>• Receiving forgiveness</li> </ul>
All Categories	<b>Relationship assessment tool (e.g. FOCCUS)</b> <i>(Preferably given prior to educational component)</i>	

Revised August 20, 2008