



Pope Francis recently advised engaged couples to take time to prepare spiritually for their lives together. Most brides-to-be are busy creating Pinterest boards and checklists of things that need to get done before the big day. Details such as flowers, colors, napkins, and centerpieces are painstakingly agonized over.

Grooms often get wrapped up in details of the bachelor party and honeymoon, as well as making final decisions over menu and cake options. There is no other season of life quite like the engagement period. However, many couples become so focused on the day, that they forget to plan for the lifetime.

We have a checklist for you of the spiritual things you should be doing in preparation not just for your wedding day, but for your marriage.

From the date of engagement – 6 months before the wedding:

1. Pray together. It can be as simple as saying, “Thank you God for the gift of my future spouse. Bless us and help us prepare for marriage.” Establish a routine of when and how you will pray together. Many couples find the good night phone call a great way to include a prayer and close the day.

2. Recommit yourselves and keep praying for strength to remain pure until your wedding day. God wants you to have this gift to give to your spouse. If you have had difficulty with this in your relationship, go to Confession and begin again. God makes all things new.

3. Begin meeting with a priest to help guide your spiritual preparation for your marriage.

4. Find a mentor couple that can also help you prepare for marriage.

5. Start watching the Beloved DVD Series created to help couples prepare for marriage.

6. Register to take a class on Natural Family Planning. [Find out more information](#) about the options.

3-6 months before the wedding:

1. Register and attend a retreat for engaged couples. This will be a special way for you to prepare spiritually for your wedding. The time away from the busy season of wedding preparation will be much needed for you and your future spouse. The Pre-Cana retreat offered by many parishes and [the Engaged Encounter](#) retreat are good places to start looking.

2. Read Alessandro Manzoni's "The Betrothed" together. Pope Francis recently encouraged engaged couples to read this book, which he described as a "masterpiece".

3. As you prepare your guest list, invite God to your wedding. Think about ways you can incorporate the witness of your love and your relationship with Christ into not just your ceremony, but your reception. A few ideas: Instead of having the groom remove the bride's garter, have him wash her feet as a sign of Christ's love for His Church; Instead of a traditional favor, give your guests rosaries or prayer cards; For a first dance, choose a song with lyrics that showcase your values.

1-3 months before the wedding:

1. Meditate on the scriptures that you have chosen for your ceremony. Incorporate them into your daily prayer.

2. Look for a Novena to begin to pray before your wedding day. We suggest a novena to either St. Joseph or St. Raphael. For a little help with this check out <http://www.praymorenovenas.com>.

3. Prepare a prayer that you will be able to read at your wedding shower. This is a way to show others your love for God and appreciation for the gift of marriage.

4. Schedule a time to take each of your parents out to dinner. Take this time to honor them and to seek their advice for your future marriage. You may also wish to give them a special gift to say thank you for the many ways they have supported you through the years.

5. Plan a time to have your families gather to pray for you as a couple.

6. When buying gifts for your wedding party, try to incorporate something that will help them grow in their faith and relationship with Christ.

7. Find a meaningful spiritual gift to give your future spouse on the wedding day.

Take the time to write a love letter to him or her as well. This will be a cherished gift for years to come.

The week of the wedding:

- 1. This will be a busy week, but plan in advance a time with your priest to go to Confession.**
- 2. Make time to go to Adoration with you fiance.**
- 3. Read the passages from the Catechism (1601-1666) on marriage and the graces that come with this sacrament.**
- 4. Choose something for both you and your future spouse to fast from (social media, tv, chocolate, etc) during this week.**
- 5. Make God's presence known at your rehearsal dinner.** Write a prayer for the evening and honor Him for the joy He is bringing into your lives.

The Wedding Day:

- 1. Begin your day with prayer and praise.** Relax and trust that God has all the details under control.
- 2. Many couples will find a way to pray together without seeing one another.** Some use the confessional to do this, others find a wall and stand holding hands. This [beautiful picture](#) of this young bride and groom praying before their wedding has gone viral.
- 3. Participate fully in your ceremony.** Don't let your nerves distract you from the joy and grace being bestowed on you!
- 4. Be a witness to marital love and purity at your reception.**
- 5. Prepare for your first night together as a married couple by starting it with a prayer.** Read Song of Songs to one another. Rejoice in the gift God has given!

The perfect family doesn't exist, nor is there a perfect husband or a perfect wife, and let's not talk about the perfect mother-in-law! It's just us sinners." A healthy family life requires frequent use of three phrases: "May I? Thank you, and I'm sorry" and "never, never, never end the day without making peace. Pope Francis. Meeting with engaged couples, Feb. 14, 2014.

Extracted from CatholicLink: <http://catholic-link.org/2015/06/08/engaged-couples-spiritual->

checklist/