



**FOCCUS®**  
Marriage Ministries

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

FOCCUS®  
Convalidation  
Mid-Life & Beyond

**THE Catholic**  
marriage inventories since 1985

# MARRIAGE PREPARATION

## Inventories Overview

Pope Francis recently stated that there is a “need for a true catechumenate for the Sacrament of Matrimony, not just two or three meetings and then proceed.”<sup>1</sup> This necessitates an intentional process which provides engaged couples with accompaniment and friendship but also a support and formation that the Church mandates and engaged couples deserve. When friendship and formation meet in the FOCCUS® process, a real mentorship of marriage can begin. FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries strives to build strong marriages that in turn lead families to heaven.

*<sup>1</sup>Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the Course of the Marriage Process, Clementine Hall Saturday, 25, February 2017.*



## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY?

The purpose of Marriage Preparation Inventory is to facilitate open and honest communication between the engaged couple. It can be used as the sole tool for marriage preparation or in combination with other marriage preparation processes or programs, skill training, educational programs or facilitation by mentoring couples.

## WHAT IS MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY?

Marriage Preparation Inventory was developed based on decades of extensive research and is a self-diagnostic Inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It is not a pass/fail test nor meant as a predictor of success or failure in marriage. When couples complete a Marriage Preparation Inventory it provides an easy-to-read and unique profile of the couple so that the preparation work can reinforce the strengths in the relationship and concentrate discussion or problem solving on the challenges that the couple may face.

Marriage Preparation Inventory provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to areas that are important to marriage. Results of the Inventory point to issues or topics that may need to be addressed or explored more fully. This helps the couple to communicate together about those key problems that they may not have talked about before. The comprehensive, user-friendly Inventory is administered by a trained Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator(s) who is typically clergy, lay



individuals, mentor couples or professional counselors who help engaged couples with their marriage formation. The Inventory helps engaged couples appreciate their unique relationship, learn more about themselves, and discuss topics important to a lifelong marriage.

## WHEN SHOULD MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY BE USED?

The recommended guideline:

- **FOCCUS® Inventory** is for newly engaged couples.
- **Convalidation Inventory** is for civilly married couples married at least 5 years wishing to marry in the Catholic Church or for engaged couples who have been living together for more than 5 years.
- **Mid-Life & Beyond Inventory** is for engaged couples who are getting married for the first time later in life. It can also be used for previously married, divorced, or widowed couples.

## WHAT IS THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY PROCESS?

### Step 1 – Meet with a Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator

Couples can either contact the person officiating their wedding about their marriage preparation which includes Marriage Preparation Inventory or they can go to the FOCCUS® website to locate a trained Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator in their area or by contacting FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries.

## Step 2 – Couple Takes the Inventory

The Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator sets up the Inventory for an engaged couple to either take the Inventory online or in paper-pencil form. Engaged couples complete the Inventory independently, and as honestly as possible to gain maximum benefit. Most engaged couples complete the Inventory in 45 to 60 minutes and statements are presented to each member of the engaged couple responds with agree, disagree, or uncertain. Depending on the Marriage Preparation Inventory and the engaged couple there may also be statements for remarriage, interfaith marriages, cohabiting couples and couples who bring a child to the marriage, infertility and empty nesters.

## Step 3 – Marriage Preparation Inventory Results

Once the engaged couple completes the Marriage Preparation Inventory, an online report, called the Couple Report is generated for the Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator and a Couple Take Home Report is generated for each member of the engaged couple. The Couple Report provides the Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator a starting point to facilitate discussion with the engaged couple. Couple Report provides a profile of the engaged couple at the time they responded to the Marriage Preparation Inventory statements. Thought and discussion following that time usually modifies their attitudes and level of awareness. The Couple Report is not a permanent measure of the couple relationship. The Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator Manual helps the facilitator interpret the Couple Report and guide the engaged couple's discussion, as they prepare for a lifelong marriage that is holy, happy, and healthy. The Couple Take Home Report includes the engaged couple's Graphs of Agreement and listing of potential organizational resources.



## Step 4 – Couple Conversation Wrap-Up

Facilitators should try to meet with their engaged couples four – six times to go over their results in the Couple Report. The Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator can share additional resources for the engaged couple to integrate what they have learned from their Marriage Preparation Inventory discussion.

### WHAT MAKES MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY DIFFERENT?

Our Marriage Preparation Inventories are one of the most comprehensive and complete inventories available. Marriage Preparation FOCUS® Inventory was developed in 1985 in the Archdiocese of Omaha with extensive research and study and has been used with thousands of couples in all church denominations and many countries around the world.

“In a comprehensive survey of currently divorced Catholics, less than 34% said they spent a substantial amount of time discussing trust and commitment during their marriage preparation.”

*Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate Georgetown University Washington, D.C.*  
*Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Survey of U.S. Catholics, October 2007, pg. 95*

Many of these conversations never happen for one simple reason: engaged couples are not provided with an intentional and targeted context for these conversations to occur. A key benefit of the precision statements and topics within Marriage Preparation Inventory is to identify (or uncover) critical topics that may have never been previously discussed by the engaged couple, and, if left undiscussed, could lead to significant challenges for a marriage and for a family.



## HOW CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION BECOME A FOCCUS® MEMBER?

It is easy and free for your organization to become a FOCCUS® Member. FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries offers resources to help an organization manage the FOCCUS® Marriage Preparation Inventory, Marriage Enrichment Inventory, and your Facilitators. Contact FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries today!

## HOW DO YOU BECOME A CERTIFIED MARRIAGE PREPARATION/MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT FACILITATOR?

FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries offers website self-paced online modular training and resource tools to become a certified Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator in our Marriage Preparation Inventories (FOCCUS®, Convalidation and Mid-Life & Beyond) and Marriage Enrichment Inventories (REFOCCUS®, Deacon Formation). You will receive access to the online modular training, a frameable facilitator certificate, Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment facilitator manual, and a training participant guide. After the training you will be able to:

- Administer the Marriage Preparation Inventories
- Interpret the Couple Report
- Encourage couple interaction and meaningful discussion

The online modular training is available in Catholic English. FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries offers certified Marriage Preparation/Marriage Enrichment Facilitator training in other editions and languages. Contact FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries for all training options.



## SAMPLE FOCCUS® MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY

10 random sample statements

	Inventory Statements	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
<b>6</b>	We have discussed the expectations each of us has as to our role as husband and wife.	A	D	U
<b>7</b>	There are certain behaviors or habits in my future spouse that sometimes annoy me.	A	D	U
<b>26</b>	We have discussed the ways our families' solved problems and how this may affect our problem solving.	A	D	U
<b>50</b>	We disagree with each other over some teachings of the church.	A	D	U
<b>39</b>	My future spouse and I are open to having children.	A	D	U
<b>116</b>	I am concerned that my parents or my future spouse's parents may interfere in our marriage relationship.	A	D	U
<b>29</b>	My future spouse and I can talk candidly about our sexual intimacy in marriage.	A	D	U
<b>44</b>	We have decided how we will share specific responsibilities in managing our finances.	A	D	U





	Inventory Statements	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
<b>132</b>	I sometimes feel that this may not be the right person for me to marry.	A	D	U
<b>27</b>	My future spouse and I have discussed our sacramental marriage commitment to each other under all circumstances.	A	D	U

## FOCCUS® MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORY CATEGORIES

<b>Match</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle Expectations</li> <li>• Friends &amp; Interests</li> <li>• Personality Match</li> <li>• Personal Issues</li> </ul>
<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> </ul>
<b>Bonders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion, Spirituality &amp; Values</li> <li>• Parenting Issues</li> <li>• Extended Family Issues</li> <li>• Sexuality Issues</li> <li>• Financial Issues</li> </ul>
<b>Integrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness Issues</li> <li>• Covenant/Commitment</li> </ul>
<b>Summary Categories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Issue Indicators</li> <li>• Family of Origin</li> <li>• Dual Careers</li> </ul>
<b>Special Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interfaith Couples</li> <li>• Remarriage Couples</li> <li>• Cohabiting Couples</li> <li>• Couples with Children</li> </ul>



Our Marriage Preparation Inventories reflects the values and ideals of marriage as sacred. Statements dealing with religion, spirituality and values are worded differently in each of the editions (i.e., Catholic, Christian, General, Maronite, etc.). For the most up to date list of editions and languages please visit [www.foccusinc.com](http://www.foccusinc.com).

Since 1985, FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries, a non-profit, is an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Omaha, has provided trusted resources that help couples discuss issues important to establishing a healthy foundation for life-long marriage and strengthened family life. Our marriage preparation and enrichment resources, including Marriage Preparation Inventories (FOCCUS®, Convalidation, Mid-Life & Beyond) and Marriage Enrichment Inventories (REFOCCUS®, Deacon Formation) have been reviewed and revised with resources developed to address societal changes and the needs of today's engaged and married couples.



# MARRIAGE PREPARATION INVENTORIES

Marriage preparation is a profoundly important ministry in the Church and in our world. FOCCUS® Marriage Ministries seeks to assist clergy, marriage mentors, professional counselors, engaged couples and spouses in this great work by building up holy, happy, and healthy marriages in a world thirsting for authentic intimacy and sacrificial love. It is our prayer that our Marriage Preparation Inventories shows both the couples preparing for marriage, and those who prepare them, that the institution of marriage was meant to serve as the image of our merciful God, who is the very essence of love itself.

**FOR INFORMATION ON OUR MARRIAGE  
PREPARATION INVENTORIES OR OTHER  
PROGRAMS VISIT:**

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