

CELEBRATING MARRIAGE WITHIN THE MASS

What better way to celebrate marriage than within the mass! The Eucharist makes present Christ's sacrifice on the cross when he gave Himself up out of love for humanity. In the same way, spouses are called to give themselves up to one another in imitation of Christ's sacrificial love. Below are 12 things you can do to celebrate marriage within the mass.

- 1) Have a marriage theme.
- 2) Decorate the church with flowers.
- 3) Work with the choir to select songs to suit the occasion.
- 4) Ask the officiating priest to relate his homily to Christian marriage.
- 5) Invite a married couple to give a testimony.
- 6) Have a Renewal of vows for all married couples present.
- 7) Include a prayer for married couples in the Prayers of the Faithful.
- 8) Assign a married couple with their children for the Presentation of Gifts.
- 9) Have the worshipping community pray over married couples.
- 10) Give away a souvenir or appreciation gift to all married couples. (You may be able to get a sponsor or sponsors for this)
- 11) Invoke the help of our Blessed Mother by offering flowers to her shrine or statue.
- 12) Celebrate with food after the mass!

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Christian marriage is a sacrament that takes place in the Church, and which also makes the Church, by giving rise to a new family community.

- Pope Francis, May 2015

**Become a
marriage-
affirming
parish**

A Marriage- Affirming Parish

The most important part of a marriage-friendly community is cultivating an affirming and empowering mentality towards married couples. They are a tremendous resource in proclaiming the gospel. They are not simply another group with pastoral needs; they are a key resource for evangelisation. Try these ideas to empower and enliven marriage in your community.

1. **Have an annual ‘Celebration of Marriage’** to affirm couples and the giftedness of marriage. e.g. St.Valentine’s Day (Feb 14), Marriage Week, *World Marriage Day (second Sunday of February)*.

2. **Celebrate significant wedding anniversaries**—have a regular ‘Congratulations’ column in the parish/ school newsletter, invite couples celebrating an anniversary to be blessed by the community at Mass, or have a special annual Mass to which couples could be personally invited.

3. **Ask a couple (or several) to give a short testimony** on how God has blessed them through their marriage. They could share it at an appropriate time during the Sunday liturgy or it could be published in the community newsletter.



4. **Invite couples** (rather than individual spouses) to take up ministry or be members of the parish pastoral council or school parent council. Couples bring a special charism to the children’s liturgy, youth group, welcoming team, bereavement ministry, or pastoral planning. Seek out those who have a vibrant sense of their sacramental witness for leadership.

5. **Establish a ‘marriage/family ministry’ made up of couples** to plan and execute marriage initiatives in the community.

6. **Make information about marriage strengthening resources available** to parishioners through the newsletter, notice board and parish website.

7. **Combine resources with the parishes/school ...** to host a marriage enrichment event (such as couples retreat or weekend workshop).

8. **Sponsor a couple** to represent the parish/school at a marriage conference or marriage education training course. Make sure they share their experience with the community on their return.

9. **Invite couples to a movie night** with a positive marriage message (e.g. Fireproof, The Story of Us).

10. **Purchase some marriage resources** for the parish lending library , e.g. ... Holy Sex (Gregory Popcak), Good News about Sex and Marriage (Christopher West).

11. **Run a Theology of the Body Study Group** for couples of your community.

12. **Invite a couple to speak about the vocation of marriage** to the youth group, senior school classes or the RCIA group.

Source: Marriage Resource Centre
Add-ons in italics



“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

—Matthew 19:4-6