



Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage
at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish,
Ellicott City, Maryland



**Our Lady of
Perpetual Help**

“What is the mark of love for your neighbor? Not to seek what is for your own benefit, but what is for the benefit of the one loved, both in body and in soul.”

--St. Basil the Great

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

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We know that all of us need God's blessing at all times; but at the time of their engagement to be married, Christians are in particular need of grace as they prepare themselves to form a new family.

Let us pray, then, for God's blessing to come upon this couple, our brother and sister: that as they await the day of their wedding, they will grow in mutual respect and in their love for one another; that through their companionship and prayer together they will prepare themselves rightly and chastely for marriage. Amen.

--Catholic Prayer: Book of Blessings

You must be a registered parishioner to be married at Our Lady of Perpetual Help and to complete your marriage preparation here.

1. At least 9-12 months before the desired wedding date...

- **Have an initial meeting with the priest or deacon**
 - Discuss intentions with the priest or deacon and answer basic questions about readiness for marriage in the Catholic Church
 - Discuss potential dates for church and pencil in date on calendar (do this before scheduling a reception venue)
 - Date will be confirmed after you have paid the Marriage Prep fee, completed the Prepare-Enrich Inventory, and had your first meeting with the Marriage Preparation Coordinators and your mentor couple
 - Guidelines for scheduling the church: Friday evenings or Saturdays no earlier than 10:00 and no later than 1:00. (see [Planning your Wedding Ceremony](#))
 - Discuss parish requirements for marriage preparation
- **Pay Marriage Preparation Fee** (see Fees at the end of this document).
 - You will be registered for the Prepare-Enrich Inventory (*The Prepare-Enrich Inventory is a customized couple assessment completed online that identifies a couple's strength and growth areas. It is one of the most widely used programs for premarital counseling and premarital education.*)
- **Complete Prepare-Enrich Inventory**
- **Identify and ask a married couple to be your mentor couple.** (*Your mentor couple will walk with you on the journey of marriage preparation, sharing their marriage with you, and supporting you as you prepare for your lifetime together.*) See <https://witnessstolove.org/engaged-couples/> for requirements and guidelines for choosing a mentor couple.
 - The mentor couple will meet with you 6 times after the initial meeting with the Marriage Preparation Coordinator couple. Usually these meetings are scheduled about once a month.
- **Schedule a meeting with your mentor couple and the Marriage Preparation Coordinators** –their contact information will be in the information the priest or deacon gave you at the meeting. After this meeting you can confirm the wedding date on the church calendar and pay the church fee (See fees at the end of this document). After this meeting, you will also receive a personalized *Scavenger Hunt* that contains all of the activities that you will accomplish for your marriage preparation.
- **Begin personalized *Scavenger Hunt***

2. At least 6-9 months before the wedding date...

- **Obtain copies of your baptismal certificates and send them to the parish.** Catholic parties must obtain a newly issued copy of their certificate from the parish

where they were baptized. Non-Catholics may provide a photocopy of their original baptismal certificate.

- **Enroll in Natural Family Planning course** (See [Natural Family Planning](#))
- **Check church/priest calendars and schedule rehearsal**
- **Continue your *Scavenger Hunt***

3. At least 3 months before the wedding date...

- **Make sure that you have sent your baptismal certificates to the parish so that they are in your marriage file.**
- **Register for and attend GIVEN**, the archdiocesan marriage retreat day (from 9:00-2:00 on a Saturday. See <http://bemissionarydisciples.org/given/> for upcoming dates and to register).
- **Schedule the Night 5 dinner** with Fr. Arnold (or your priest/deacon) and your mentors. Schedule this after attending the GIVEN retreat, but try to schedule it ahead of time since the priest's schedules are usually busy.
- **Meet with organist/musicians** to discuss music choices from the recommended list (see [Wedding Music Selections and Policies](#)) (Other selections must be approved by your celebrant.)
- **Inform church about decision on flowers** (see [Planning Your Ceremony](#) document)
- **Schedule final meeting with Marriage Preparation Coordinators and your mentors** after you and your mentors complete the 6 meetings.
- **Schedule liturgy meeting with celebrant for at least a month before the wedding** date to plan the ceremony.
- **Continue your Scavenger Hunt.**

4. At least 1 month before the wedding date...

- **Get marriage license from Howard County** (both people getting married must be present)
- **Have liturgy meeting with celebrant**
 - Bring Scavenger Hunt document with signatures
 - Bring certificate of completion from NFP class (not necessary if you took Mark & Kathy's class)
 - Go over ceremony details—readings, music, etc.
- **Provide church photography guidelines to your photographer/videographer** (see [Photographer Guidelines](#)). Schedule a walk-through with photographer if they are unfamiliar with OLPH so they can see the lighting, etc.

Fees:

- The fee for **Marriage Preparation is \$125**. Please send or drop off a check payable to OLPH to the main office Our Lady of Perpetual Help, ATTN: Lisa Sliker, 4795 Ilchester Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043. Write Marriage Prep on memo line.
- The fee for the **Natural Family Planning Class is \$135**. The fee is payable on-line when you register for the class. (see [Natural Family Planning](#))
- The fee for **GIVEN is \$25**, payable on-line when you register (see <http://bemissionarydisciples.org/given/>)
- The fee for the **marriage ceremony is \$500** including the use of the church, organist, and cantor. If you use your own musicians, the fee is \$400. Please send or drop off a check payable to OLPH to the main office: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, ATTN: Lisa Sliker, 4795 Ilchester Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043. Write Marriage Ceremony on memo line.

Please pay the marriage preparation fee after the initial meeting with the priest or deacon. **You MUST pay the fee to begin the marriage preparation process.** Please pay the fee for the marriage ceremony when confirming the wedding date with the priest or deacon.