

Dioceses That Require NFP Education in Marriage Preparation
Update 2008-2014



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Introduction

In 2008, diocesan NFP coordinators were interested in learning how seven dioceses developed and implemented the requirement of a full course of Natural Family Planning (NFP) instruction as part of their marriage preparation programs. The dioceses were: **Amarillo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Fargo, Laredo, Phoenix and St. Augustine**. At the time, the staff of the USCCB's NFP Program surveyed these dioceses and received responses from all but the Diocese of Laredo. The report provided detailed information on the strategy that was used to create and implement the policy. The results of that survey are reported at:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/upload/report-marriage-prep.pdf>.

Since 2008, responses in the annual Diocesan NFP Program Profile Survey have shown growing interest in the topic. Many diocesan NFP coordinators have said that their staff are now exploring the issue and would like to know more about the policy's success. This report is a response to that interest. It provides an update on the diocesan programs that first reported, as well as provides information from three additional dioceses where the policy was created and implemented since 2008.

This report is divided into three parts. Part I provides the update on the original dioceses that reported in 2008. Part II provides the new information from the dioceses of Covington, Little Rock, and Lexington. And, Part III offers an Appendix of supplemental information from the reporting dioceses.

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Update 2008-2014 Diocesan Responses

Summary

Among the dioceses that have implemented a complete course of NFP education as part of marriage preparation, several important elements for future program planning have been identified. They are:

- Clergy should be involved from the beginning of the development of the policy to its implementation. Ongoing communication with clergy is essential for the policy to be effective. Newly ordained priests and deacons will need an orientation to the policy. Finally, clergy need continuing education on NFP and its importance in married life.
- Create a formal process for NFP teacher recruitment. Included in the process should be an in person interview to ascertain the person's qualifications. In addition, when the diocese pays for the teacher's training, a commitment to teach for a certain period of time should be agreed upon in writing.
- Criteria for an engaged couple's exemption from the NFP education requirement should be created in advance of the policy's launch date.
- Create a formal process for evaluation of the requirement. Survey the couples as well as the clergy who work with the couples.
- Create a means for accountability of the couples' completion of the NFP education requirement to the appropriate diocesan office. This may require a certificate of completion and additional contact with clergy who may have to submit the documentation to the marriage and family life office, if appropriate.

What follows are the detailed diocesan responses.

Diocesan Responses per Topic

1. Program Changes Since 2008

Colorado Springs

In collaboration with the diocese of Phoenix, we trained several Spanish speaking NFP instructors for the Hispanic community.

We also extended the online NFP formation for couples to include more NFP providers, such as Northwest Families Services and the Couple to Couple League (CCL). When we implemented this requirement in 2006, these NFP providers were not offering online formation.

Denver

Few changes have been made since the policy had been instituted in 2000. This is partly due to the fact that we have had leadership turn over in the marriage ministry office. I, myself am relatively “new” and have only made some minor changes to the program.

Currently, an on-going NFP teacher recruitment program is in development. Also, an NFP method has been taken off our diocesan approved list because it did not meet the USCCB *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. We are in the process of adding another USCCB Approved method in our diocese—offering teacher training for the Billing Ovulation Method. We will then have four methods represented: CCL, Creighton Model, Billings, and Northwest’s Sympto-Pro.

Fargo

We have achieved Endorsement according to the USCCB’s *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. This requires us to maintain program goals and objectives. Maintaining Endorsement also helps us to grow in programming as new situations present themselves.

In addition to maintaining the USCCB’s NFP standards, we have developed diocesan standards for our NFP instructors. We have also added a priest’s survey tool and have trained about 25 new instructors since 2008. Finally, we have established a formal application process/scholarship request for training new NFP teachers.

Laredo

An NFP course is introduced in the marriage preparation classes. There is a designated period of time in which the instructor goes over all the information for the NFP method, how to do the charting and the observation of the fertility signs. We distribute interactive resources for the couples to use so that they will learn the information.

Once the NFP method introduction happens we expect the couples to call us at any time. We ask the couples to chart at least 2-3 months so that we can have a follow-up. It is during the follow-up that we provide one-on-one consultation. It is difficult to schedule a follow-up with both the man and the woman. We also provide extensive materials when the couple first learns. This will help us assess whether or not the couple understood the NFP information. In the follow-up, the NFP teacher can correct any misunderstanding.

When we first created the policy, a certificate confirming that the couple had completed the NFP follow-up was issued by the priest working with the couple. This now has changed so that once the couple completes the introductory NFP class and their 2-3 month follow-up, they receive a certificate from the trained certified NFP teacher. They, in turn, give a copy of it to the priest who then puts it in the marriage packet.

We are currently looking into NFP Apps because we have noticed that many young women arrive at marriage prep. with NFP charts and information already loaded on their smart phones.

Phoenix

The biggest and most positive change since implementing the policy is that the NFP ministry is part of the larger marriage department of the diocese and staff work together to provide each couple with a daylong grounding in Theology of the Body prior to them receiving instruction in NFP.

We focused heavily on recruiting and training NFP instructors of most USCCB Approved NFP methods, and we recruited and trained Parish Representative Couples. We use an application/interview process to screen potential instructors, pay for their training, and require a three year minimum teaching commitment in order to provide them with free training. We began offering yearly in-service meetings, retreats, and an annual appreciation Mass and dinner for all volunteers in NFP ministry. This has helped to build a robust, happy NFP education community.

We made efforts to engage and inform the Catholic medical community.

We launched a new registration website and database so it is easy for couples to find and register for classes and for us to compile reports.

We have begun remote marriage prep. in the form of the Catholic Academy for Life Leadership for high school teens.

St. Augustine

No changes have been made to the policy or programming.

2. NFP Instruction: On-Site NFP Teachers and Distance Learning**Colorado Springs**

We have on-site NFP teachers as well as make use of NFP distance learning programs.

Denver

We have on-site NFP teachers as well as make use of NFP distance learning programs.

Fargo

We only use on-site NFP teachers. Occasionally couples will request NFP distance education. We help such couples find the right program.

Laredo

We only use on-site NFP teachers. In this way, we believe that we have better control of the information that is given to the couples.

We believe that it is very important to provide on-site NFP education. This may change since we have noticed that many women have NFP Apps on their smart phones. In fact, sometimes the women will bring their phone Apps to the follow-up instead of their charts (or that is how they chart!). We are hesitant to encourage exclusive use of the NFP Apps because having a hard copy of one's chart allows for important cycle detail to be

recorded. Also, phones can be lost, so unless a woman can download the NFP information from the App, she will need back up.

Phoenix

The NFP education base is comprised of our on-site teachers. We also use online NFP instruction via Northwest Family Services' SymptoPro program. And, we have hired a part-time instructor to be our online NFP teacher for our Phoenix clients. She works 15 hours per week and teaches about 300 couples per year.

St. Augustine

We prefer on-site instruction but also use NFP distance learning programs.

Note: Currently several national NFP providers offer distance learning for couples. Many dioceses find this useful due to many factors including: few local teachers; busy couples with little time to enroll in on-site classes; and large geographic expanse of the diocese. For a list of NFP distance learning providers see: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/nfp-distance-learning.cfm>

3. Lessons Learned

Colorado Springs

At first our main obstacle was to cover the whole diocese in both English and Spanish NFP education. Now, due to the Internet, the availability of online NFP formation in several languages reaches all couples who have access to computers.

For couples with no computer access, we realized that it is possible to provide access in the parishes.

We quickly realized that the ongoing formation of the clergy is critical. For example, we have brought in Fr. Matthew Habiger (www.nfpoutreach.org) to offer retreats to the clergy. We also forward his newsletter to every priest and deacon in the diocese. Every member of the clergy is invited to participate in the Catholic Marriage Preparation program. Many deacons and their wives participate as well.

We are happy with the design and development of our program!

Denver

Since I am new to this position I can only comment on the issue of creating strong strategies for NFP teacher recruitment. This is important when establishing NFP education as a requirement for marriage preparation.

We offer "Information Nights" for potential NFP teachers. Based on my personal experience with recruiting teachers for the Creighton Model, this format is "personal" and "invitational." We invite people to consider "God's calling" to this work. We provide a short presentation with testimonies from a FertilityCare™ Practitioner, medical consultant, and engaged couple (who went through program). We summarize the Education Program and provide time for questions and answers. The presentation is

positive (we do not talk much about cost, time consuming aspects, difficulty of education program, etc.). The content highlights: that NFP teacher education is a special calling from God. The NFP teacher participates in the New Evangelization by helping couples to learn and hopefully grow by using NFP in their marriages. We help the potential NFP teacher to understand that their work in NFP will help to build strong families for generations to come.

Remember, it is easier to invite people to an information meeting verses asking them if they want to be NFP teachers. We provided two of these events in the Archdiocese of Denver and everyone who attended decided to become Creighton Model NFP teachers. Personal invitation is the key. If someone asks you to considered becoming an NFP teacher, most people understand the compliment. When people feel good about themselves, they are more willing to consider the invitation to become an NFP teacher!

Fargo

One important lesson learned relates to recruiting NFP teachers. As we had more young couples requesting to be part of our teaching program, we realized that there was a need for a formal application process which includes scholarship assistance. Prior to this, I had taken referrals from priests or requests from individuals, who, though well intended, did not fully understand the dynamics of being an NFP instructor and what skills were needed for the work. I found I needed to do an in-person interview in addition to reviewing letters of recommendations from pastors and friends.

In addition to this, it is also important to have some kind of accountability in place for priests and teachers who are responsible for couples taking instruction in a method of NFP as part of a diocesan requirement. We do this in the form of an annual survey of instructors and review of marriage files. This process allows both the priests of the diocese to know we are serious about the policy, and for teachers to know that they need to follow diocesan standards for NFP instructors.

Laredo

It is very difficult to use only NFP volunteer teachers. A paid employee can do the NFP training and devote their time to teach their classes and conduct follow-ups. Although our volunteers are extremely generous with their time, it would be easier if we could hire paid NFP teachers.

The biggest challenge is to certify volunteer NFP teachers. Teacher education is costly and our diocese prefers to award grants to diocesan staff. This is understandable when we consider that as a volunteer, there is no guarantee that the NFP teacher will stay with the diocesan program. That said, our Chancellor has allowed us to use diocesan grants to train our volunteer NFP teachers.

Phoenix

If starting again, I would have created a means to screen teacher applicants more thoroughly! Training NFP teachers is costly and it is best to confirm the suitability of the trainees and their ability to make a long term commitment to this specialized ministry.

It would also have been helpful to have gotten all the evaluation systems in place at the beginning of the program and ensure that all coordinators, priests, marriage prep. leaders were on board with our exemption policy so that couples would get the same answer from the diocesan offices that they receive from their parish.

When speaking with an NFP teacher and inviting them into the diocesan program, I would have been more candid in requiring all NFP teachers to be treated equally and let them know it is important to work together collegially for the good of the couples they serve. It has been wonderful to see teachers of each method work together, refer couples to each other and see the benefits of each method.

St. Augustine

We learned that one can't communicate enough with the clergy. This is true with regard to soliciting their involvement in developing the policy and, of course, in executing the policy. Having the clergy's support is absolutely essential to the effectiveness of the policy. And, on-going communication with clergy is important. Some clergy were not aware that an introductory session offered at our marriage preparation programs did not satisfy the requirement of a "full course" of NFP instruction. It has taken a few years to clarify this policy.

4. **Evaluation of the Policy**

Colorado Spring

We have an evaluation system.

A diocesan feedback form evaluating each step of the marriage preparation program is available. Unfortunately, parishes have been very inconsistent in using these forms. We have thought of making the completion of this form mandatory. We have also thought of asking the parish to send copies of their wedding files to the diocese (e.g., Tribunal or Office of Marriage and Family Life), especially now that many different online NFP education programs are available. It would be important to have a copy of the certificate of completion for each couple.

Catholic Marriage Prep asks each engaged couple, after they have completed the marriage preparation program if they are planning on practicing NFP in their married life. Results are very encouraging (please see Appendix).

Denver

Throughout the years of implementing this policy, we have not had a formal diocesan evaluation process or instrument. In fact, we have relied on each method to conduct their evaluations.

A current goal is to develop an archdiocesan evaluation process and instrument in 2015. Our plan is to develop the instrument in 2014 and implement it in 2015.

Fargo

We have a formal two-part evaluation: we want to know if this education was helpful to the couple and did it change couple behavior (see Appendix for the two forms). We have about a 75% participation in the evaluation process annually.

Laredo

Our method of evaluation is based on the information we gather in one-on-one follow-up. This is not necessarily an instrument of review, but in discussing the couples' NFP charts or reviewing their NFP Apps, we can tell if the couple understands the NFP method. We believe that personal contact is central to this process.

Phoenix

We now have the same evaluation that couples complete after taking the Theology of the Body seminar (God's Plan for Joy filled Marriage, Ascension Press) and after their NFP classes.

We have also added to the registration fields so that we can report on attitudes and practices prior to taking NFP classes and measure the changes. These evaluations are done online so reports are easy to generate.

St. Augustine

Years ago we had a general assessment of the process. It has not been done in some time.

We are in need of a more systematic way of evaluating instruction and are currently in the process of addressing this concern.

5. Pastoral Exemption**Colorado Springs**

The tribunal will exempt couples who are infertile upon their priest's requests.

Denver

Our current practice is informal. We recommend that clergy proceed with the marriage preparation of a couple if, for various reasons, the NFP component cannot be completed.

We intend to develop a formal pastoral exemption policy.

Fargo

We have a formal diocesan exemption policy.

Priests must apply for a relaxation from policy through the Tribunal Office. The policy states that couples beyond child-bearing years or those who have been sterilized prior to entering into the Sacrament of Marriage are exempt, but there are also other situations that a priest may request a relaxation. On the average, the Tribunal grants about 30 relaxations a year.

Another exemption occurs among those couples who have been prepared outside of our diocese for marriage, yet schedule their weddings in a parish in the Diocese of Fargo. These couples follow the marriage prep. policy of the diocese they are being prepared in rather than the diocese where they will be married. On the average, we have about 25 couples a year prepared for marriage outside of our diocese.

Laredo

The pastor or priest working with the couple is the only one who can give an exemption to the policy.

Phoenix

We have a pastoral exemption. Pastors have the right to waive the NFP requirement if they have sufficient reason to do so. They generally do so for older couples who are past child bearing age, and some waive the requirement for those couples who are sterilized.

St. Augustine

We have a formal diocesan policy of exemption.

The policy affects only couples of “child-bearing age.” Priests may exempt couples individually but notice of this exemption needs to be submitted to the Chancellor and kept in the couple’s marriage file.

6. **Couple Evaluation** *When couples have completed the NFP course, are they asked whether or not the information they have learned was helpful?*

Colorado Springs Yes

Denver Yes

Fargo Yes

Consistently, our evaluations reveal that about 98% of couples find this education very helpful and that they leave with a better understanding of the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.

Laredo

When couples have completed the NFP course, they are asked whether or not the information they have learned was helpful.

Phoenix

We have an evaluation process.

St. Augustine

We have an evaluation process.

7. Continuing Obstacles

Colorado Springs

Some clergy still hesitate to require NFP formation from all engaged couples. For example, from couples asking for a convalidation, some clergy are less likely to ask them to take an NFP class.

As mentioned above, it may be best for the Tribunal or the Office of Marriage and Family Life to have copies of the certificates of completion for each step of the marriage preparation process for each engaged couple. We are still considering options and have not implemented a change at this time.

Denver

Even though we have a NFP mandate in our archdiocese, we are still not 100% compliant with all engaged couples completing their NFP course before marriage. Currently, I am working on fixing this problem.

Fargo

We are happy to report that the major obstacles have been overcome. We deal with issues as they come up, mostly pertaining to NFP instructor circumstances.

Laredo

The continuing challenge is working with mostly volunteer NFP teachers. We need NFP teachers to staff the classes and conduct follow-ups. This requires a time commitment that many volunteers cannot provide. In the Diocese of Laredo, the Family Life director and the Family Life secretary are also certified teachers; therefore, they assist in the follow-up appointments. They conduct most of the NFP education.

Phoenix

There are some parishes (thankfully, very few) whose pastors have not complied very well. It is difficult to know how to win them over when they also do not come to trainings, Clergy Days about NFP, etc.; however, I think if we are patient they will eventually meet couples in their parishes who joyfully practice NFP and who will witness to them.

It is also somewhat problematic in speaking to couples who are preparing for marriage in our diocese but are marrying in another diocese where there is no NFP requirement. Couples who don't want to take NFP feel that the Church is being arbitrary and inconsistent when they get different marriage prep. depending on where they live. This happens frequently since we prepare many couples for other dioceses.

St. Augustine

Teacher retention has been an issue. Over the years we have consistently had a large base of NFP teachers to draw from in theory but, at any given moment, they are not always available because of pregnancies (which were planned, not as a result of method

failure) or other life situations. What helped grow our initial base was financial support from our office towards the education of NFP instructors but this practice proved prohibited both because of cost and trained teachers discontinuing instruction after the diocese had invested in them.

Additional Comments

Colorado Springs

Please see the Appendix for the Catholic Marriage Prep. statistics for the last five years, with answers from engaged couples who completed their marriage prep program. In general, we have found that engaged couples are not familiar with NFP. Some couples have never heard about NFP, or have a misconception about NFP and equate it to the Rhythm Method.

Unfortunately, most Catholic couples have a shallow grounding in the teachings of the Church. Typically, they know very little of the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding contraception and pre-marital sex. In general, again, they do not see any problem with cohabitation and contraception. In our opinion, it would be a big mistake to send them to a mandatory NFP class without preliminary teaching on the theology behind NFP, and sufficient preparation for several weeks. In fact, it may be the only opportunity they have to get familiar with NFP and adopt it in their own married lives.

It would also be a big mistake to think that these engaged couples will embrace the teachings of the Church, especially NFP, after a one day, weekend, or video based marriage preparation program. They need more. Each one of these couples is far too precious and they need the truth of God's plan for married love. If we miss this opportunity it may very well never happen again and these couples will be using contraception all their lives.

In our diocese we suggest that the clergy send their engaged couples to the Catholic Marriage Prep. program first where they will learn about their faith and the teachings of the Church. Our goal is to catechize and evangelize them before we send them to an NFP class. We help them to learn about the formation of conscience and the "why's" of the teachings of the Church. Once this is done, they will be able to trust the Church and its teachings. We also hope that this will lead them to trust in God. Then they will be more open to the NFP formation, make NFP part of their way of life in their married lives.

Laredo

Funding for diocesan NFP ministry is the most important obstacle since lack of funds can prohibit the growth of the program. Also, the lack of knowledge about the science and methodology of NFP among healthcare professionals is a major obstacle since most women will see their doctors for family planning concerns.

St. Augustine

Most couples getting married in our diocese take either the diocesan-run Pre Cana course or Engaged Encounter. Our office processes registrations for both and so have access to the couples' e-mail addresses and wedding dates. Please see the Appendix for the results of a "post-marital" survey we used to issue two months after their stated wedding date congratulating

couples on their wedding and providing a link to an online survey that assessed the preparation process as a whole. Again, we have not done this in a few years for several reasons, not the least of which was staffing turnover and lack of time. This information did prove to be insightful for our own development as well as communicating the effectiveness of the policy.

Also, a lot of NFP methods seem to be moving to online instruction. This is not necessarily a bad thing but our diocese only refers couples to an online method (Northwest Family Services) if necessity warrants it. Our position is that face-to-face instruction is *always* preferred because NFP is not just about a system, it's about relationship. Anecdotally, many instructors have been thanked by women for actually listening to them (something doctors often fail to do in their casual distribution of the pill). This relationship can be more powerful evangelization than the content itself. NFP offers a woman more than just an effective way to plan her family but deeper insight into her overall gynecological health and wellbeing. I believe this face-to-face interaction goes a long way in ensuring the couple continues with the method after instruction, as opposed to simply going through a program by the most convenient means necessary to satisfy a requirement they may or may not believe in. I could be wrong, though, and would be very curious to see a study that compares rates of method retention between online and face-to-face instruction.

Part II Report from three Dioceses

**Covington
Lexington
Little Rock**

Part II Report from three Dioceses **Covington, Lexington and Little Rock**

Diocese of Covington

Date of policy implementation: January 2009

Stage One: Creation of a Diocesan NFP Education Preparation Requirement

The NFP requirement in the Diocese of Covington was an indirect outcome of years of prayer and “seed-sowing” and a direct outcome of a three-year Diocesan Synod.

Since the 1970’s, various individuals and groups, especially the Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Couple to Couple League (CCL), have worked tirelessly to promote Natural Family Planning (NFP), laying the groundwork for the current requirement.

Soon after Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, D.D. was installed as the Bishop of Covington in 2002, representatives of the local CCL Chapter met with him to discuss the history of their ministry in the diocese and to request that NFP instruction become a required part of marriage preparation for engaged couples. Bishop Foys asked the representatives to be patient. The following year (2003), the Diocesan Synod was called. Solidly pro-life, pro-NFP individuals, including two CCL Chapter members, were appointed to the Writing Committee for the Gospel of Life-Respect Life portion of the Synod Documents. All documents went through a review process on the parish and diocesan levels and were signed into law on August 13, 2006. The synod policy requiring a full course of NFP instruction for all engaged couples was one of the first to be implemented.

The former Diocesan Family Life Office took responsibility for implementation. The Family Life Director's first step was to draft an action plan in September 2007 (see copy In the Appendix) as part of the annual Synod implementation process. The action plan was presented at a diocesan meeting to representatives of the Deanery Pastoral Councils. These representatives then took the plan back to their respective deaneries and parishes for review and affirmation. Several months later, another diocesan meeting was called at which the Family Life Director received and responded to the comments and concerns of the deaneries and parishes.

Since the Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Couple to Couple League, Inc. (CCL) has been a consistent and viable presence in the diocese since 1975, theirs was the primary group with whom the Family Life Director collaborated. One, maybe two, meetings took place in May 2008 at which the director and CCL representatives discussed the ability of the Chapter to teach the typical number of engaged couples in the diocese (the number of engaged couples was estimated based on the average number of weddings each year). Discussion centered on several issues: the number of available teaching couples (3 to 4 at the time); the number of courses needed each year (at 25 couples per course); the distribution of courses during the year (to accommodate times of heavier demand); facility space, etc. It was determined that CCL would be able to provide what was necessary.

At the time, only one other NFP method was offered in the Diocese—the Creighton Model. Unfortunately, there were only two certified teachers and no real infrastructure that would have made it possible to include this method as an option for the requirement.

Communication/promotion regarding the NFP requirement was done primarily via the diocesan newspaper. A front-page article in the October 3, 2008 issue explained the requirement, and a longer article described how the requirement fit into the broader marriage preparation requirements (see Appendix for the longer article). Just prior to the newspaper articles, the Family Life Director sent a letter to the priests of the diocese giving further clarification of the policy (to my knowledge, there was no pastoral letter sent by Bishop Foys, probably due to the fact that the requirement was part of the well-publicized Synod implementation).

The only budget consideration for the Diocese was CCL's need for additional projectors at a total cost of \$3,000. Prior to the requirement, when fewer course series were taught, teaching couples shared one or two projectors among themselves. Since a greater number of course series were needed as a result of the requirement, it was necessary that each teaching couple have their own projector. CCL asked the diocese to subsidize this cost. All other costs, such as registration and materials fees, are passed on to the couples who take the courses.

One unforeseen “budget consideration” for the Diocese of Covington has been the generosity of the local CCL chapter! The increase in the number of couples taught has meant an increase in their funds which they have graciously donated to help fund diocesan family life programs.

NFP Program Resources

The following are the NFP resources that we had available before we launched the NFP education requirement.

1. The Sympto-Thermal Method through CCL is the primary method taught in our Diocese and fulfills the diocesan NFP requirement for marriage preparation.
2. NFP teachers receive training through CCL.
3. Other methods provided in the diocese are the Creighton Model and the Ovulation Method through Family of the Americas. To date, instruction in either of these methods does not fulfill the requirement due to the lack of an infrastructure among these teachers.
4. The current program relies primarily on NFP teachers and on-site instruction; however, distance learning through virtual courses or the Home Study Course are available through CCL for those unable to attend the on-site classes.
5. Most program elements had been developed by CCL’s national office and their local chapter (e.g., program content, format, materials, registration method/fees, financial assistance/scholarships for couples in need, teacher training, local course scheduling, local facility reservation, etc.).

The only elements that our diocese needed to develop were:

- Ongoing promotion in diocesan marriage preparation materials (e.g., brochures, website, newsletters, etc.)
- A means for verifying couple attendance (a certificate of completion was developed by CCL which the couple gives to their priest/deacon and which is kept in the parish marriage records).

Stage Two: Launch and Administration of the NFP Education Requirement

Currently, no formal diocesan evaluation of couples' reaction to the program has been developed. Only anecdotal feedback from some CCL teaching couples and marriage preparation program couples is available. These comments include stories of engaged couples' negative reactions during the first couple of years, (e.g., couples sitting in silence with their arms folded during classes, or couples complaining about the requirement during their regular marriage prep. program, etc.). These stories have decreased over time.

Currently, no formal diocesan evaluation of the clergy response to the policy exists.

There was no formal statement of pastoral exemptions to the policy. When we receive questions about extraordinary circumstances, we tell priests and deacons to use pastoral discretion/common sense (e.g., when an engaged couple is beyond child-bearing years).

Many engaged couples are using hormonal contraception. As such, the topic is addressed during classes. Women are encouraged to stop using it because of the physical and spiritual harm it does (including its abortifacient properties), as well as the fact that it is contrary to the idea of marriage as a total gift of self to the other. Brochures on the topic are available at classes.

Stage Three: NFP Education Requirement Program Evaluation

The local CCL chapter has developed an exit survey for couples (see Appendix). This is used when couples have completed the course. Couples are asked to name the priest or deacon who is preparing them for marriage. In this way, we can track compliance.

We have not developed a system to measure what percentage of couples actually go on to practice NFP after their complete course. Couples are asked about their attitudes upon completing the course as compared with when they began. They are also asked if they would recommend the course to a friend. Responses to both of these questions are encouraging.

Additional Information

1. The NFP requirement was developed and implemented before family ministry and marriage preparation were added to the responsibilities of our department of Catechesis and Formation (this was also before I was hired); however, having dealt with questions

from couples and clergy since 2009, I would recommend more comprehensive communication regarding the policy. I believe a presentation at a diocesan clergy formation day would have been helpful including basic practical method information (e.g., an overview of the different NFP methods, not detail); the various learning formats available (e.g., on-site, virtual, home study); resources available to assist clergy in speaking to engaged couples about the requirement, etc.

2. With the focus now being directed toward engaged couples, the local CCL chapter is concerned that we have been neglecting to reach out to married couples who have never learned NFP. They are working to address that.
3. Regardless of which method is taught, it is important that couples receive formation in the “why” behind NFP - why the Church teaches what she does on this issue. CCL builds theology and morality into their instructional program (Theology of the Body); however, some other NFP providers do not. If the theological/moral component is not part of instruction in a particular method, then it would be important to include it elsewhere in marriage preparation programming.

Diocese of Lexington

Date of policy implementation: July 2007

Stage One: Creation of a Diocesan NFP Education in Marriage Preparation Requirement

- In early 2006, at the request of then-Bishop Ronald Gainer, the Family Life Office convened an ad hoc Marriage Prep. Task Force to examine current diocesan marriage preparation processes and to make recommendations. The task force consisted of clergy, veteran parish-level marriage prep leaders, and NFP instructors (CCL). The task force members recommended a policy that required three primary components of marriage preparation:
 1. The God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage course (Theology of the Body);
 2. A “Married Life” (i.e. relationship skills) component (fulfilled either via a parish-based pre-Cana course, a sponsor couple, or an Engaged Encounter weekend);
and
 3. A full course in Natural Family Planning, either fulfilled via attending an in-person course (Sympto-Thermal, Couple to Couple League) or via an on-line course (through Northwest Family Services).

The policy was promulgated in December 2006 and began in January 2007 (except for the NFP component, which began six months later).

- The new policy was publicized in the diocesan newspaper, on the diocesan website, in parish bulletins, via e-mails, etc.
- The God’s Plan course was self-funded and required no diocesan funding. The parish-based courses (already in place) were funded there. And, the NFP courses also required no funding.

NFP Program Resources

1. We began with two NFP teaching couples trained by CCL. We currently have three CCL teaching couples. We offer six “in-person” courses per year, and also offer the on-line option through Northwest Family Services.
2. Before beginning the policy, we had to ensure that our teaching couples were willing to increase their number of courses taught throughout the year.

Stage Two: Launch and Administration of the NFP Education Requirement

- We primarily evaluate couples’ reaction to the policy “anecdotally.”
- Through dialoguing with our clergy, we have been able to assess their response to the policy.
- In trying to determine a pastoral exemption from the NFP requirement policy, our bishop indicated that “discretion” belonged to the presiding minister. He also noted that exemptions would be “rare.”
- All our NFP teachers are experienced in dealing deftly with a variety of reproductive situation including women who are on hormonal contraception.

Stage Three: NFP Education Requirement Program Evaluation

Currently, we do not have a formal process to evaluate the NFP requirement program either from the clergy and NFP teachers who work with the couples, or the couples themselves.

Additional Information

Lessons Learned

In our work we have learned that if an on-line NFP education option is available, that is similar in cost to the in-person classes, the vast majority of couples will choose the on-line education.

Remaining Obstacles

We continue to need NFP teachers of other methods besides the Sympto-Thermal, in order to provide a diversity of options.

Diocese of Little Rock

Date of NFP Requirement in Marriage Preparation launched: January 1, 2012

Stage One: Creation of a Diocesan NFP Education in Marriage Preparation Requirement

Initially, a representative from the national office of the Couple to Couple League (CCL) and their local representatives met with Bishop Anthony Taylor to discuss Natural Family Planning education. Bishop Taylor then asked for a presentation to the Presbyteral Council by a local priest who was, also, on the CCL board. The Council was asked to consider the idea of a required full-course of Natural Family Planning being added to our Marriage Preparation requirements. The Council asked for statistics of marriage for the diocese and an implementation time line (see below). The staff of the diocesan Family Life Office then collaborated with the offices of the Chancery, Tribunal and local NFP providers to create the policy.

After the approval to proceed by the Presbyteral Council, text on the policy change was developed, considered and adopted.

LITTLE ROCK NFP SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY CHANGE

Previous:

All couples of child-bearing years are strongly encouraged to attend an “Natural Family Planning” (NFP) program offered by the local Church.

NEW: (passed September 21, 2010 by the Presbyteral Council)

All couples of child-bearing years are required to complete a certified Natural Family Planning (NFP) course approved by the diocese. Instructors and class schedules are available through the Family Life Office and the diocesan web site. The instructor of the selected program is to provide written verification of course completion of the NFP program of instruction to the minister preparing the couple. The priest who is responsible for preparing the couple may exempt the couple from this requirement in exceptional cases. * See Compendium

The policy was promulgated on January 1, 2012. Prior to the promulgation, Bishop Taylor communicated the change to the diocese through a taped announcement at all Masses in the diocese. It was also advertised in the parish bulletins and Arkansas Catholic Newspaper. Meetings were held at the deanery level to explain the policy to the priests. A weekend meeting was held for the deacons. Brochures were placed in the foyers of the parishes for pick-up. Teachers were informed and prepared for the change.

The Diocese of Little Rock is a Home Missions diocese and was able to request a grant to support the program.

Timeline		
Full NFP Course Requirement as Part of Marriage Preparation		
Date	Action	Tier
March/April 2010	Planning meetings with Bishop, Presbyteral Council, and Family Life Office, Chancery Office, and Father Eric Pohlmeier.	Prepare supplemental policy
May 2010	Present time line for approval to Bishop / Presbyteral Council.	Prepare supplemental policy
June – July 2010	Bishop / Presbyteral Council reviews draft #1 of supplemental policy to Provincial Policy prepared by Chancery Office, Family Life Office and clergy. Draft of document sent to small group of diocesan staff and priests, especially those involved in marriage preparation, and instructors in natural family planning for input.	Prepare supplemental policy
June – July 2010	Meetings with Chancery Office to address implementation of supplemental policy; impact on Marriage packet; documentation of completion of class; “Who can dispense the requirement (pastor, priest, deacon) and on what basis (availability of class, time, etc.)?”; policy on couples being prepared outside of Arkansas.	Prepare supplemental policy
June – July 2010	Meetings with Family Life Office and Natural Family Planning Leadership to discuss: which methods are approved; requirement of certification of NFP teachers; need for teachers especially Hispanic; cost of classes; determination of who will need financial assistance for class, including the funding of scholarships (by the parish or the Diocesan Family Life Office?); compliance details such as, “Will couples be required to take the class together or will a class taken only by the woman be sufficient?”; addressing areas of the State where there is insufficient number of teachers and availability of classes.	Prepare supplemental policy & details of implementation
July 2010	Capitalize on NFP week with mailing to priests, sample homilies, USCCB NFP posters and materials and other resources. Encourage witness talks at parishes where able. Offer homily hints to clergy.	Prepare faithful
July 2010	Family Life Office select members for Natural Family Planning Committee for the Diocese (representatives from Deaneries and NFP methods providers); Consider Volunteer Coordinator to oversee Committee and details.	NFP Leadership
Sept 2010	Supplemental policy changes approved by Bishop / Presbyteral Council.	Prepare supplemental policy
Sept 2010	Have first meeting with Natural Family Planning Committee, facilitated by Director of Family Life Office. Set guidelines	NFP Instructors

Timeline		
Full NFP Course Requirement as Part of Marriage Preparation		
Date	Action	Tier
	and expectation of committee.	
Oct 2010	Bishop/Presbyteral Council announces to clergy of the diocese plan to implement a policy on a full course of NFP for engaged couples being prepared for marriage.	Prepare supplemental policy
Oct 2010	Implementation plan sent to clergy.	Prepare clergy
Oct 2010	Present Special Clergy Seminar or during Continuing Education for all priests and include all or deacons who work with marriage preparation Presenters could be: Bishop – Articulates supplemental policy, its importance, and his personal message; Chancery and Family Life Office – Presents procedural points pertaining to the supplemental policy; Theology of the Body speakers (e.g., Christopher West, etc.); Witness/personal testimony of users and teachers of NFP Program Packets could include: - Brochures - Background papers (i.e. take away summaries of NFP method) - Copies of diocesan supplemental policy and implementation procedures - Presentation outlines (PowerPoint note-takers)	Prepare clergy
Oct 2010	Meeting with NFP Teachers to discuss concerns.	NFP Instructors
Nov 2010	Meet with Marriage Preparation Leadership to discuss concerns. i.e. Pre-Cana presenters, sponsor couples	Laity involved in Marriage Preparation
Jan 2011	Teacher recruitment continues	NFP Instructors
Jan – June 2011	Conduct 1-2 hour deanery meetings across diocese. Family Life Office and local NFP teacher meet and dialogue with clergy. Discussions center on services offered by NFP instructor, and specific pastoral concerns for that deanery.	Prepare clergy & NFP Instructors
Feb 2011	Supplemental policy announced and released to diocese.	
March - Sept 2011	Series of Theology of the Body workshops for the faithful offered throughout the diocese (i.e. Christopher West programs). Or Tobit program.	Prepare faithful
April 2011	Family Life Office Conduct meeting with NFP Instructors. - Bishop addresses NFP Instructors of all methods within the diocese. - Seminar on large class dynamics, scheduling, follow up,	NFP Leadership, teachers and supporters

Timeline		
Full NFP Course Requirement as Part of Marriage Preparation		
Date	Action	Tier
	tips/tools, and the like. - Breakout sessions by instructors of all methods grouped geographically to collaborate on upcoming potential challenges and possible solutions.	
May 2011	Run articles and ads related to new supplemental policy and importance of NFP in diocesan periodical. Materials can also be sent to Catholic News Service and secular media.	Prepare faithful
June 2011	Declaration of Supplemental Policy Change	
July 2011	Capitalize on NFP week with mailing to priests, sample homilies, USCCB NFP posters and materials and other resources. Encourage witness talks at parishes where able. Offer homily hints to clergy.	Prepare faithful
August 2011	Press Release sent to national catholic outlets and secular media to generate additional exposure on local radio and news outlets.	Prepare faithful
Sept 2011	On site teacher training seminar(s) hosted in English and Spanish if required	Prepare clergy & NFP Instructors
Oct 2011	USCCB Office for Development of NFP to run supplemental policy and article in their quarterly issue.	Prepare faithful
Jan 2012	Full-Implementation of Supplemental Policy Change	
?	Virtual Teaching Couples identified and assigned	Prepare clergy & NFP Instructors
Late Spring 2012	Family Life Office hosts follow-up meetings with Clergy, NFP Instructors (all NFP methods) to share pastoral concerns, policy and procedures, challenges, and solutions. Could become annual meeting to keep FLO and NFP Instructors connected.	Prepare clergy & NFP Instructors

NFP Program Resources

3. As you developed the NFP education requirement, what kind of NFP resources did you have available?

We consulted with all of the providers that were currently in our diocese. They included, Couple to Couple League, Creighton FertilityCare™, Billings and Family of the Americas. We called other dioceses (e.g., Fargo and others) to collect their information on how they implemented their policy. We solicited the clergy for names of couples who might want to learn to teach NFP. Family of the Americas and Couple to Couple League were invited to the diocese to train instructors. Other teachers were trained for instruction and certification by going out of state for classes. To comply with the policy we use Northwest Family Services as our online tool and home study programs from CCL for those who do not have access to a course or a computer. We have also used group online courses for couples via internet.

4. What elements of your NFP ministry program did you have to develop before setting an implementation date?

Education of the clergy, providers and laity

Training of additional teachers (especially for Hispanic couples)

Development of a tool (compendium) to assist the clergy.

Development of a brochure to explain the church's teaching of NFP. (Attached)

Development of a comparison tool that showed each provider's expectations and cost.

Generic certificate of completion to be used by the various providers.

Inclusion in the status of documents the data on compliance.

Stage Two: Launch and Administration of the NFP Education Requirement

At this time, we have not evaluated the couple's reaction in any formal/statistical way. General observations of couples who already use contraceptives are more likely to be dis-interested in the course. Some women were surprised at how the charting could reflect the fact they were on using artificial hormones. An assessment tool is being created to see how effective the classes are.

We have not evaluated the clergy response to the policy. Generally, they are open and positive about the policy. The responsibility of the requirement is given to the couple and the provider, and not on the priest. This helps lessen the load in their role preparing the couples for marriage.

Pastoral exemptions are suggested in a provided compendium, which includes exemption basis. (See Below)

2. What is the definition of "child-bearing age"?

Child-bearing years can be any age at which a woman can conceive a child, between puberty and menopause. Menopause is the point in time when a woman reaches 12 consecutive months without having a menstrual period.

3. Who will be required to complete a course in Natural Family Planning?

All engaged couples of child-bearing age are required to complete a course in Natural Family Planning. Exemptions may be made for couples where the woman is 45-50 years of age at the discretion of the pastor. Other exemptions may include: the woman has experienced early menopause, the woman has had a hysterectomy, or one or both partners are infertile. Pastoral judgment will be made by the priest. If needed, clergy should contact the Chancellor for Canonical Affairs for further guidance in this decision. Couples should still be encouraged to attend the class to allow for further learning of the Church's teaching. Special classes are available for couples in the perimenopause phase. Instruction offered at PreCana, Sponsor Couple or Engaged Encounter serves as an introductory session but does not satisfy the requirement for the couple to complete a course in Natural Family Planning. (Diocese of Little Rock Compendium)

Although a couple may be using hormonal contraception, they are still required to complete the full course. Teachers are informed that couple's charts will not be accurate, but that the course can still give the couples critical church teaching information. Couples are not required to stop using hormonal contraceptives to take the course.

Stage Three: NFP Education Requirement Program Evaluation

In general, we do not have a formal process for evaluating the program. Some providers request a critique from the couples, but generally that information is not requested.

Additional Information

Lessons Learned

A volunteer is needed to administer the process of the compliance and follow-up.

Continuing Obstacles

Assessing the policy, due to lack of staff.

Improving the diocesan website to give clear information of the policy and selection of a provider.

Although the providers give good information on the scientific usage of Natural Family Planning, I believe each provider could give more in depth explanation of the Church's teaching of planning families.

Comments

At the beginning of the process, we considered an alternative of only requiring a stronger introductory course. Our critique sheets from our program reflected that most couples were fascinated, interested and open to looking further into a NFP course; but they never followed through to take a class, as shown by the lack of couples taking an NFP class. The full course requirement gives a starting place for understanding the teaching of the Church and the Church's support of NFP for the couples' family and future generations.

Part III: Appendix

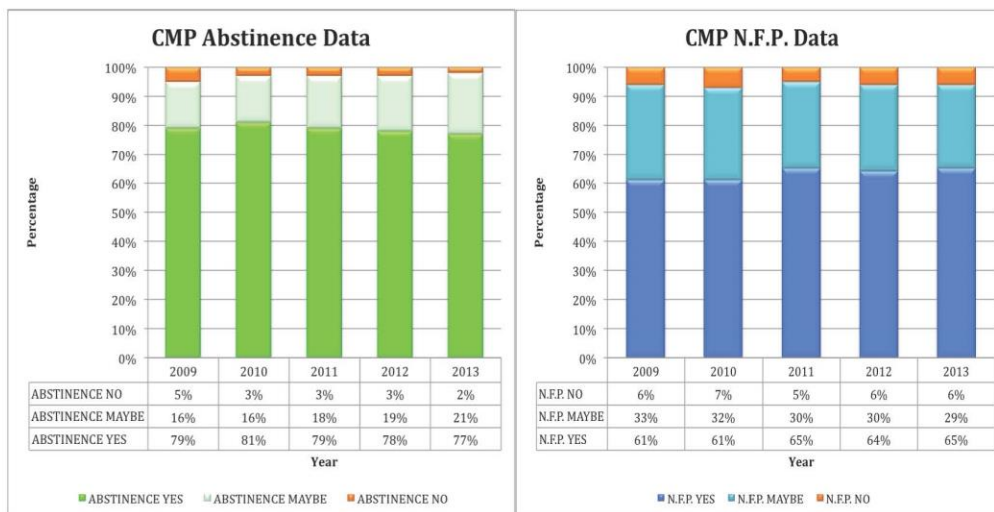
Diocese of
Colorado Springs

CatholicMarriagePrep.com Statistics History and Methodology

"The Church says "YES" to the dignity and the beauty of marriage as an expression of a faithful and fecund alliance between man and woman." Pope Benedict XVI Jan. 19, 2013, address to the Roma Rota.

More engaged couples go through the Agapè Catholic Marriage Prep program every year and the very positive statistics remain strong and steady. It's a great opportunity for conversion.

Even though abstinence and N.F.P. are not the core teachings of the program, they are good indicators of the engaged couples' reception of the Church's teachings.



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Couples	1208	1500	1600	1800	1000

How do we get these very encouraging numbers? **We care for our engaged couples** and give them:

- A solid content; faithful to the Catholic Church teachings and John Paul II Theology of the Body. We proclaim the Truth and the couples welcome the Truth!
- A one-on-one mentoring of each engaged couple by trained Instructor Couples faithful to the Magisterium who live what they teach.
- A solid relationship between the Engaged Couples and the Instructors, based on trust.
- Couples have time to process the information and can ask all their questions to real life Instructors.
- No lecture type, no video only training, but rather hard work from the Instructors and the Engaged Couples.

We also give the right life skill tools to the engaged couples to cope with every aspect of their daily lives: communications, conflict resolution, finances, family of origin, parenting, and much more. We take a holistic approach of the life-skills and cannot separate the practical from the spiritual so we show that even when learning these life skills Christ still comes first and is entwined in everything we do every day.

Diocese of Covington

GOAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**Family Life Office****Synod Document : Policy Life****Policy # 7****Goal Statement: The Diocese will implement the Synod Documents of 2006.****Objective # 1 Statement : The Family Life Office will implement a required program of Natural Family Planning (NFP).**

Obj. #	Step	Activity	Due No Later than	Person Responsible	Others Responsible	\$\$\$
1	1	Meet with local NFP teaching couples.	May, 08	Marianne Bosch	Teaching couples	
	2	Evaluate current teaching contents and method.	August, 08	"		
	3	Study updated copy of Couple to Couple (CCL) NFP manual	I am currently doing so	"		50.00
	4	Assess use of CCL teaching couples vs. the development of diocesan teaching couples	Sept, 08	M. Bosch	Msgr. Due Pastors?	
	5	Implement mandated program	Jan. 09	M. Bosch	Teaching couples	

Everyday Families, Everyday Faith



Diocesan
Family Life Office

The Family Life Office of the Diocese of Covington offers education, enrichment, resourcing and support to engaged couples, married couples, families of all types (traditional, single parent, blended or extended), the separated and divorced, widowed, and families of gay/lesbian children.

The art of Natural Family Planning with CCL

The Catholic Church has historically recognized the unmistakable link between contraception and abortion and teaches that "fecundity [fruitfulness] is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal [married] love tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which is "on the side of life," teaches that "it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life." (The Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Natural Family Planning is fertility awareness, the knowledge of a couple's fertility. It is a means of reading a woman's signs of fertility and infertility. The Couple to Couple League teaches three basic signs of fertility — temperature, mucus and cervix — and how to apply this knowledge through the Sympto-Thermal Method (STM) of NFP, which can be used both to achieve and to avoid or postpone pregnancy.

With the Couple to Couple League, the art of Natural Family Planning[®] goes beyond the method as couples are taught about NFP within the moral constructs of the magisterium (teaching authority) of the Catholic Church, with an emphasis on the teachings of Pope John Paul II, especially his teaching on the "theology of the body." Couples learn of God's vision and plan for marriage and family, and how to live out their sexuality while upholding and respecting the dignity of each other and their union. A married couple's virtuous application of their fertility awareness, either to try to achieve a pregnancy or to postpone a pregnancy, is called responsible parenthood.

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Getting married in the Catholic Church

Because the Catholic Church wants couples to form strong, lasting marriages, it has a long history of helping couples to prepare for marriage. The Church has learned a great deal that can benefit any couple, regardless of religion.

Meaning and purposes of marriage

Marriage is the intimate union and equal partnership of a man and a woman. It comes to us from the hand of God, who created male and female in his image, so that they might become one body and might be fertile and multiply (see Genesis chapters 1 and 2). Though man and woman are equal as God's children, they are created with important differences that allow them to give themselves and to receive the other as a gift. Marriage is both a natural institution and a sacred union because it is rooted in the divine plan of creation. In addition, the Catholic Church teaches that the valid marriage between two baptized Christians is also a sacrament — a saving reality and a symbol of Christ's love for his Church (see Ephesians 5:25-33). In every marriage the spouses make a contract with each other. In a sacramental marriage the couple also enters into a covenant in which their love is sealed and strengthened by God's love. The free consent of the spouses makes a marriage.

From this consent and from the sexual consummation of marriage a special bond arises between husband and wife. This bond is lifelong and exclusive. The marriage bond has been established by God and so it cannot be dissolved.

Permanency, exclusivity and faithfulness are essential to marriage because they foster and protect the two equal purposes of marriage — the growth in mutual love between the spouses (unitive) and the generation and education of children (procreative).

The mutual love of a married couple should always be open to new life. This openness is expressed powerfully in the sexual union of husband and wife. The power to create a child with God is at the heart of what spouses share with each other in sexual intercourse. Mutual love includes the mutual gift of fertility. Couples who are not able to conceive or who are beyond their child-bearing years can still express openness to life. They can share their generative love with grandchildren, other children and families, and the wider community.

The family arises from marriage. Parents, children, and family members form what is called a domestic church or church of the home. This is the primary unit of the Church — the

place where the Church lives in the daily love, care, hospitality, sacrifice, forgiveness, prayer and faith of ordinary families.

As a result of their baptism, all Christians are called to a life of holiness. This divine calling, or vocation, can be lived in marriage,

or in the single life, or in the priesthood or consecrated (religious) life. No one vocation is superior to or inferior to another. Each one involves a specific kind of commitment that flows from one's gifts and is further strengthened by God's grace. All vocations make a unique contribution to the life and mission of the Church.

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Getting married in the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky

In September 2003 Bishop Foys called for a Diocesan Synod. During the following three years, a consultation process was utilized to review eight topics resulting in eight Synod documents. The Synod was completed on August 13, 2006 when Bishop Foys signed the Synod document into law at the cathedral witnessed by hundreds of priests, deacons, religious, and parish representatives.

The "Gospel of Life/Respect Life" Synod document states:

"The Diocese of Covington will require each couple planning a wedding in the Diocese to complete a certified natural family planning (natural fertility awareness) [NFP] course as part of marriage preparation. This requirement is not fulfilled by attendance at a one-time lecture on natural family planning. It is fulfilled only by full participation in a certified course."

In light of this Synod directive, the diocesan Family Ministry Office has revised its guidelines for marriage preparation.

Beginning January 1, 2009 couples who wish to marry in the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Covington, KY must:

1. As soon as you are engaged, contact and meet with your parish priest, register for a marriage preparation program, and register for a Natural Family Planning course.
2. Take a significant period of time (at least six months recommended) to intensively prepare for your marriage. This goes beyond choosing a date and church, reserving a place for the reception, and picking out dresses. It means using this time to delve more deeply into your relationship and approach this momentous day with prayer and reflection. (Some parishes in the Covington Diocese ask couples to take a marriage preparation inventory [such as FOCCUS]. This is not a "test" to determine whether you can get married in the Church, but rather a discussion starter to assess what issues you already agree on and what you might need to discuss further.)
3. Attend an approved marriage preparation program. There are three different marriage preparation programs available in the Covington Diocese, ranging from intensive weekends (Engaged Encounter), a two concurrent Saturday series (Living Marriage as Sacrament), and an "in home" mentor couple program (Evenings for the Engaged). For more information about these programs and for a registration form, please visit our website, family.covingtondiocese.org. Catholic marriage preparation programs are usually presented by a team of lay married couples and a priest or deacon. They are not restricted to Catholics, but they are always in keeping with Church teaching.
4. Attend a certified Natural Family Planning course. Visit our diocesan website at: family.covingtondiocese.org for details.

Most importantly at the time of your engagement, the Church welcomes you to this sacrament of marriage in the spirit of Jesus who said, "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:12-13)

For more information about the Diocesan Family Life Office, call (859) 392-1591 or email mbosch@covingtondiocese.org.

NFP Class Evaluation Please help us improve our classes. Thank you!		
Marriage requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Priest's Name	Wedding Church
1. Before Class #1, did you have a positive attitude about coming? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
2. Was the content of the classes easy to understand? <input type="checkbox"/> Not very <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very understandable		
3. After taking the class, do you have a better understanding of your fertility? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
4. How beneficial do you believe the content of the classes will be to you? <input type="checkbox"/> Not beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Very beneficial		
5. Would you recommend our classes to a friend? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the Teaching Couple's presentation. 1 = worst 10 = best		
___ Friendliness	___ Humor	___ Class Length
___ His Voice Volume	___ Her Voice Volume	___ Clear Explanations
Would you like to help CCL by becoming a: <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher? <input type="checkbox"/> Promoter? Name & contact info: (Needed only if you would like to be contacted)		

Please make additional comments on the back (Name optional)

NFP Class Evaluation Please help us improve our classes. Thank you!		
Marriage requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Priest's Name	Wedding Church
1. Before Class #1, did you have a positive attitude about coming? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
2. Was the content of the classes easy to understand? <input type="checkbox"/> Not very <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very understandable		
3. After taking the class, do you have a better understanding of your fertility? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
4. How beneficial do you believe the content of the classes will be to you? <input type="checkbox"/> Not beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Very beneficial		
5. Would you recommend our classes to a friend? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
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___ Friendliness	___ Humor	___ Class Length
___ His Voice Volume	___ Her Voice Volume	___ Clear Explanations
Would you like to help CCL by becoming a: <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher? <input type="checkbox"/> Promoter? Name & contact info: (Needed only if you would like to be contacted)		

Please make additional comments on the back (Name optional)

Diocese of Fargo

Evaluation Form – Diocese of Fargo NFP Program

Your feedback is very important to us. Please honestly evaluate the program and answer the following questions:

1. Overall I found the program to be: **Very Helpful** **Helpful** **Not Helpful**
2. I now have a better understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching about NFP: **Yes** **No** **Somewhat**

Confidential Survey

The following questions are of a personal nature. There is no obligation to answer them. However, your anonymous responses will help in our on-going efforts to better understand the profile and needs of those coming to the Catholic Church for marriage preparation and taking instruction in Natural Family Planning.

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 3. My fiancé(e) and I are living together: | YES | NO | |
| 4. My fiancé(e) and I have been sexually active: | YES | NO | |
| 5. (If yes to #4) We now plan on saving sex until we are married: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 6. We had been planning to use contraception in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 7. (If yes to #6) We still plan on using contraception in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 8. We definitely want to practice NFP in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 9. I would like to have | 1-2 | 3-4 | more than 4 children in our marriage. |

Thank you!

Evaluation Form – Diocese of Fargo NFP Program

Your feedback is very important to us. Please honestly evaluate the program and answer the following questions:

1. Overall I found the program to be: **Very Helpful** **Helpful** **Not Helpful**
2. I now have a better understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching about NFP: **Yes** **No** **Somewhat**

Confidential Survey

The following questions are of a personal nature. There is no obligation to answer them. However, your anonymous responses will help in our on-going efforts to better understand the profile and needs of those coming to the Catholic Church for marriage preparation and taking instruction in Natural Family Planning.

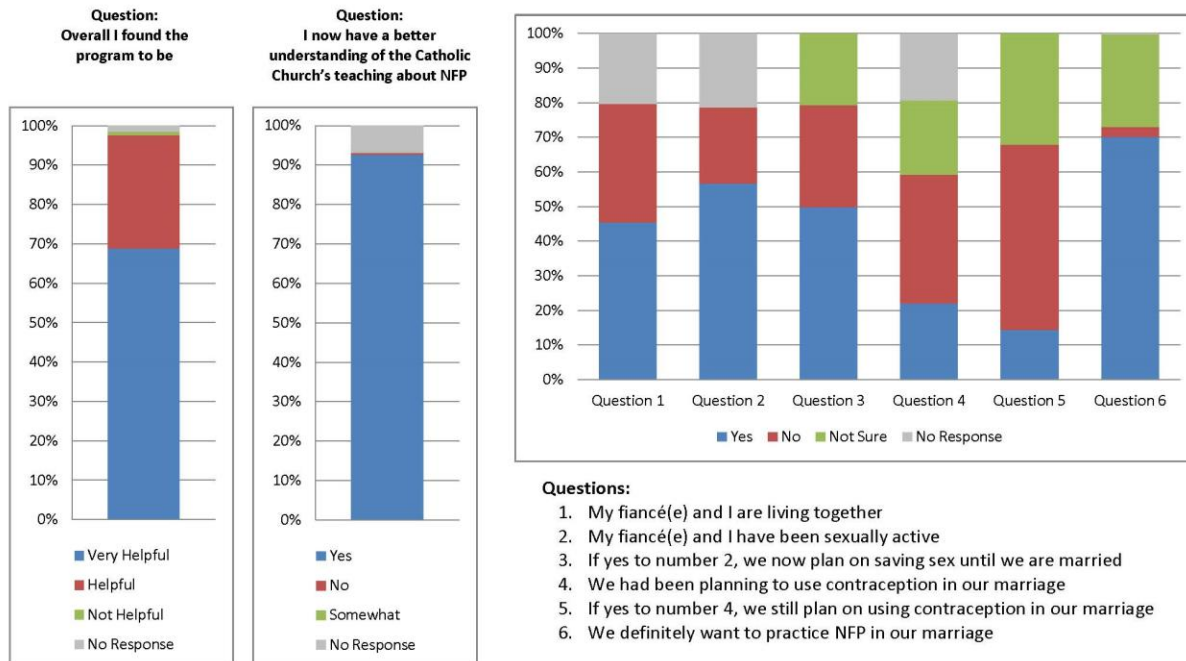
- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 3. My fiancé(e) and I are living together: | YES | NO | |
| 4. My fiancé(e) and I have been sexually active: | YES | NO | |
| 5. (If yes to #4) We now plan on saving sex until we are married: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 6. We had been planning to use contraception in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 7. (If yes to #6) We still plan on using contraception in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 8. We definitely want to practice NFP in our marriage: | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
| 9. I would like to have | 1-2 | 3-4 | more than 4 children in our marriage. |

Thank you!

Diocese of Fargo

Diocese of Fargo NFP Program Annual Survey Results for 2013

The Chancellor's Office together with the Respect Life Office annually collect and review statistical information as it pertains to marriage preparation for the Diocese of Fargo and couples who have participated in Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes. In review for 2013, our statistical records include both information reported on the deanery map with number of marriages, NFP certificates, relaxations, NFP instruction offered and NFP instructors. Included on the following graphs are responses to an evaluation offered to couples who take instruction in NFP. These responses help us better assess if the NFP program is affectively changing hearts and minds by providing instruction on the Church's teaching for love and life to those being prepared for marriage within the diocese.

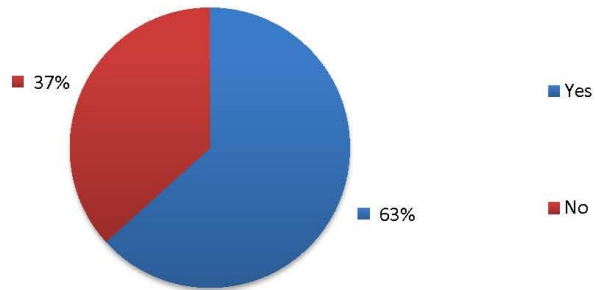


Diocese of **St. Augustine**

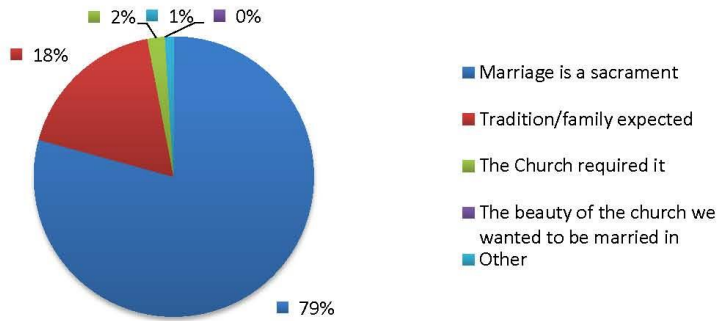
**Marriage Preparation:
Summary of
Post-Marital Survey Results
June 2012**

I. General Questions

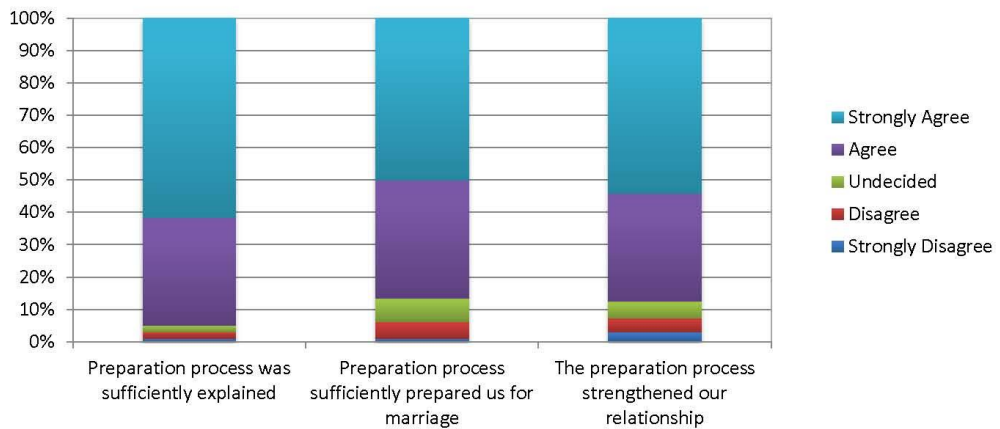
Did you marry in the Diocese of Saint Augustine?



What factor most affected your decision to be married in the Church?

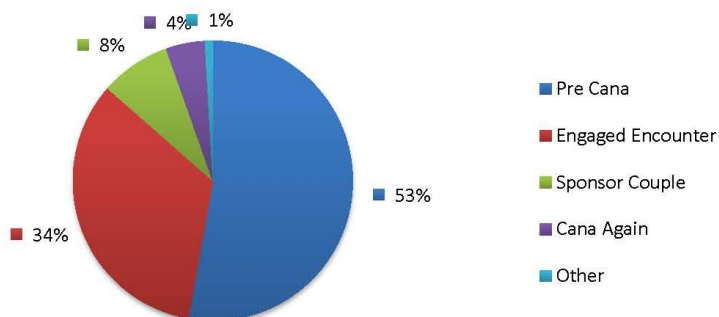


How would you respond to the following?

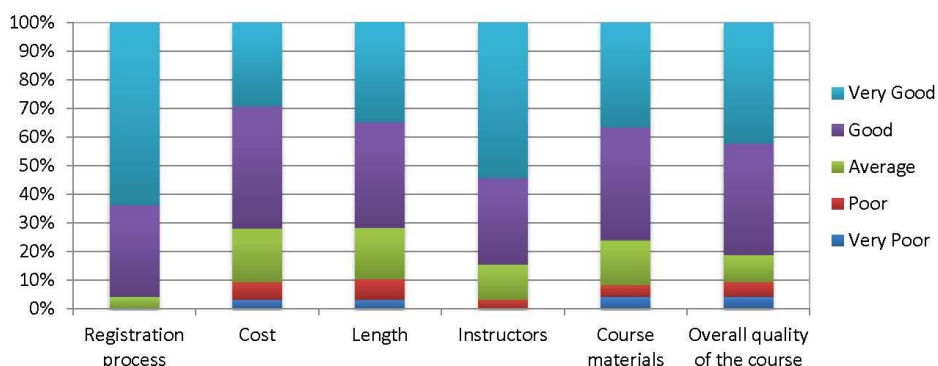


II. Preparation Courses

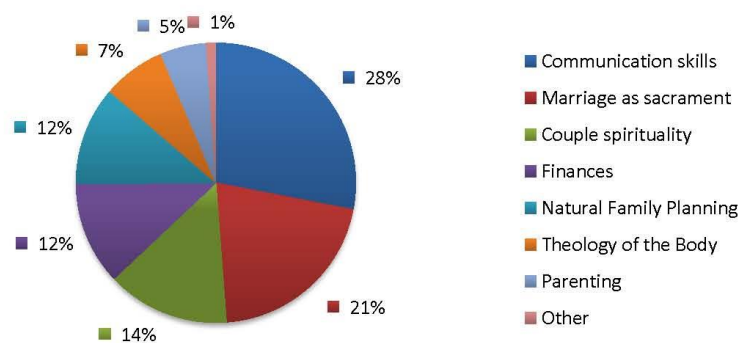
Which preparation course did you attend?



How would you rate the following aspects of the preparation course?

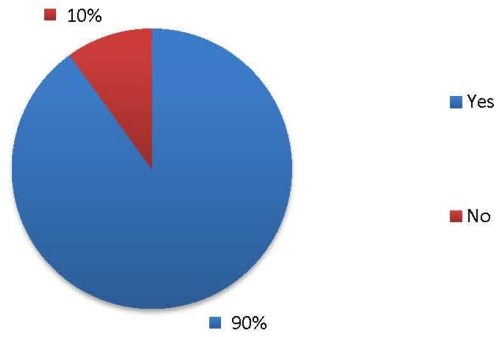


What topic(s) did you find most valuable?

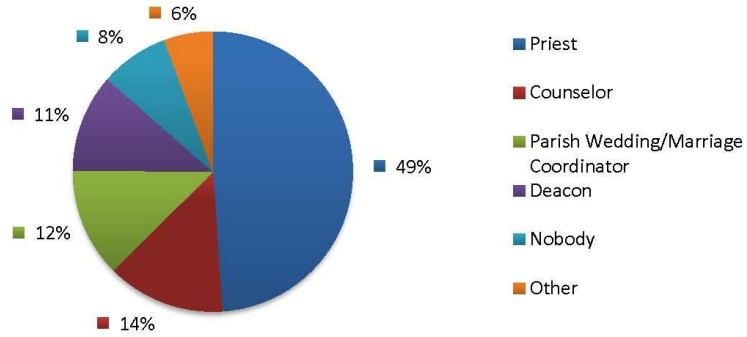


III. FOCCUS

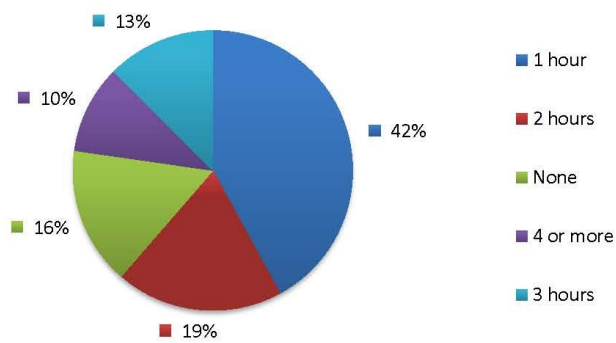
Did you take FOCCUS?



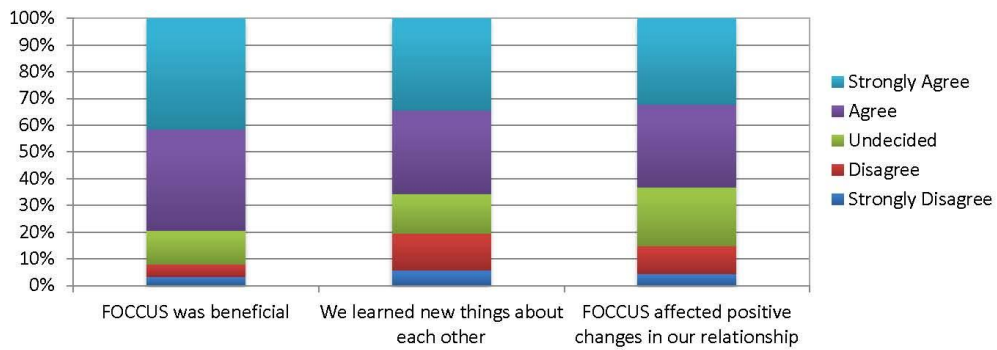
Who discussed the results with you?



How much time was spent going over the results of FOCCUS?

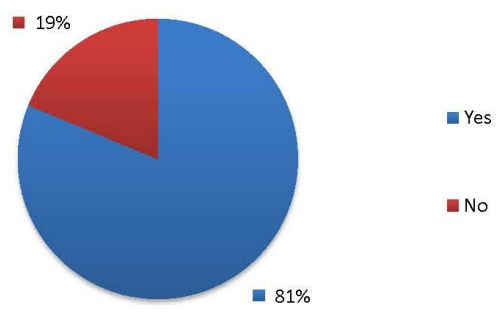


How would you respond to the following?

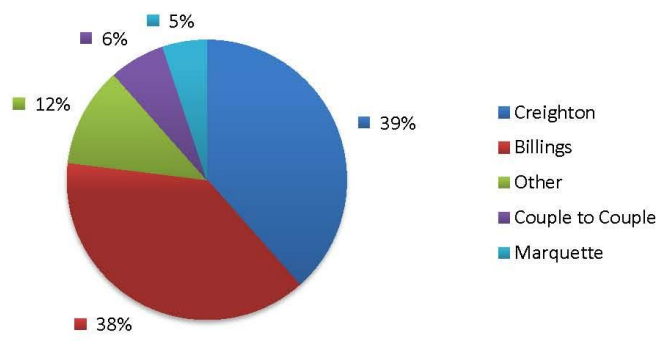


IV. Natural Family Planning

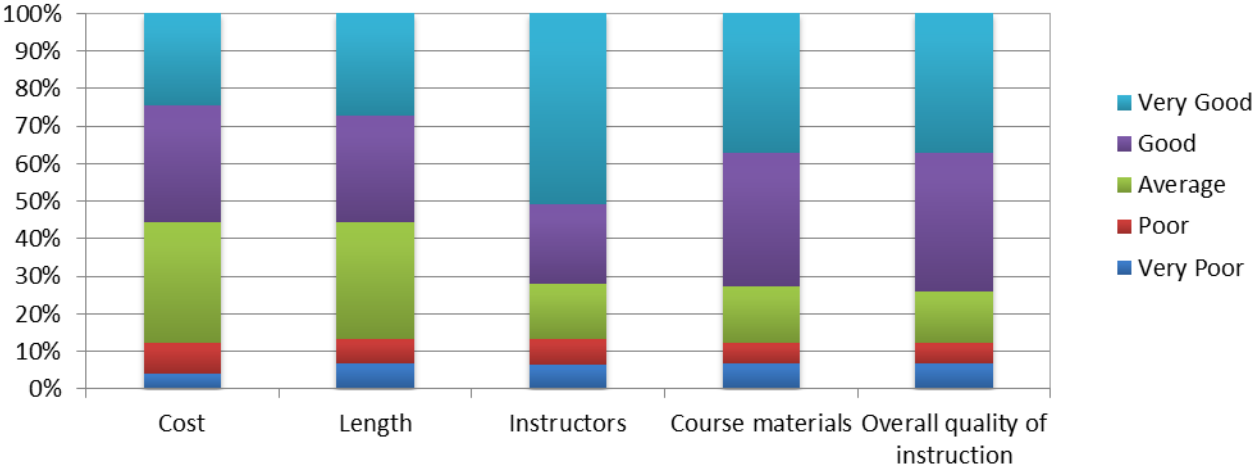
Did you receive instruction in a method of NFP?



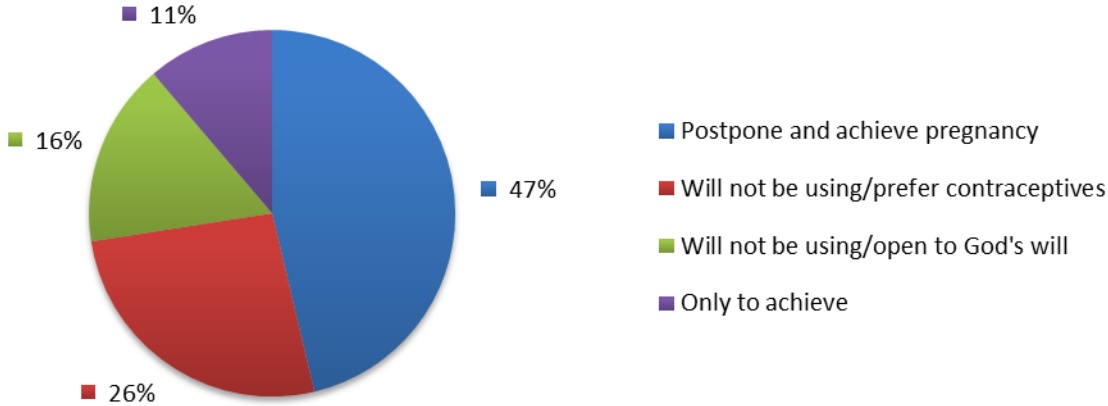
Which method of NFP did you learn?



How would you rate the following aspects of NFP instruction?

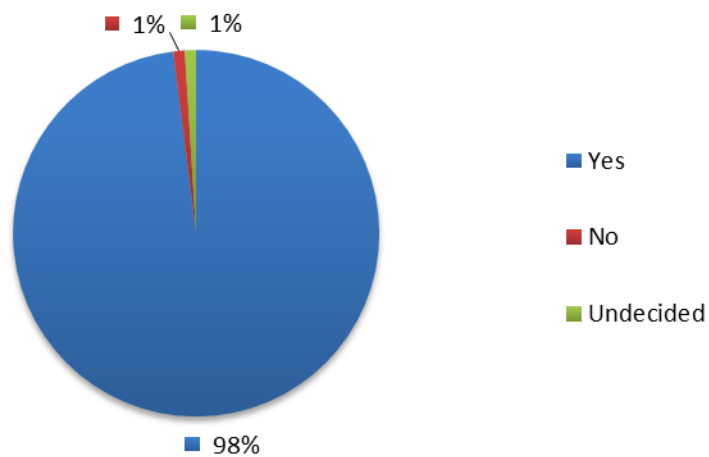


How do you plan to use NFP?

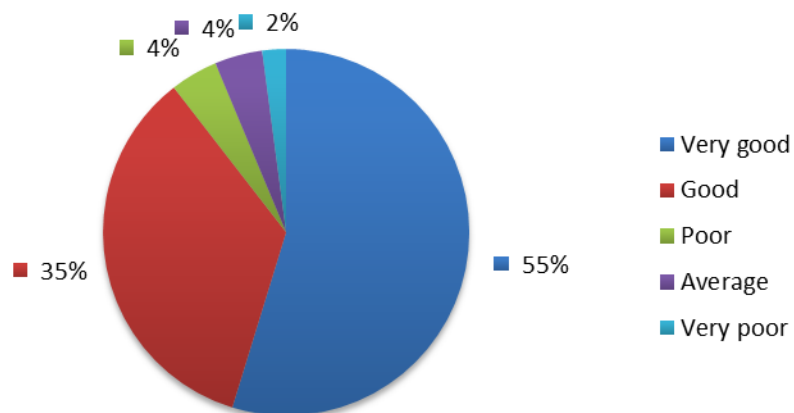


V. Miscellaneous

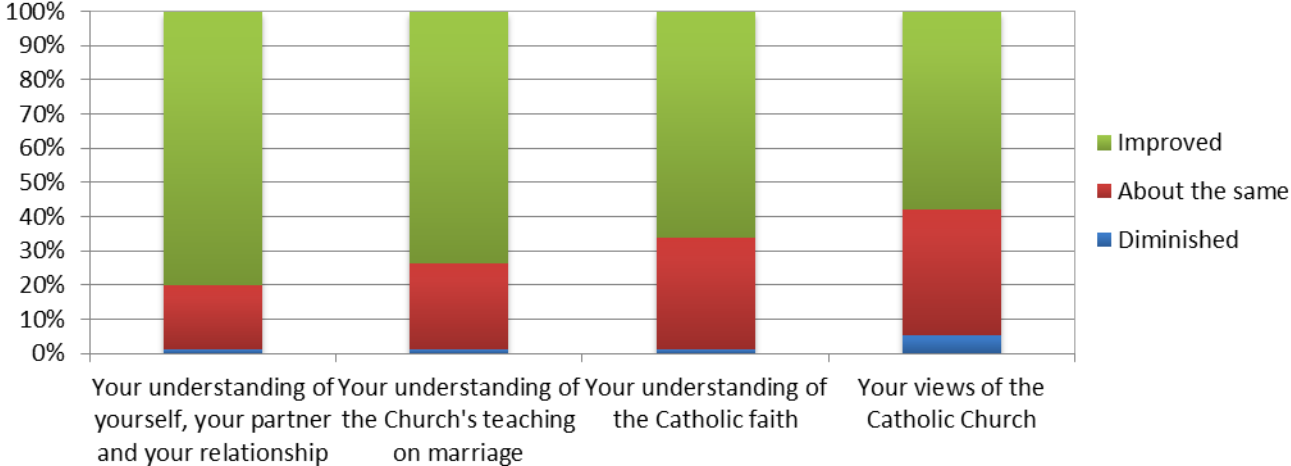
Are you glad you married in the Church?



Overall, how would you rate the marriage preparation process?



How has your experience affected the following?



Are you interested in additional resources for strengthening your marriage?

