

Pre-Marital Inventories in Marriage Preparation

The pre-marital inventory is primarily used for two reasons: (1) The couple is given the opportunity to deepen their own understanding of and commitment to the values, practices, and relationship skills to help them navigate marriage. This is done both through the inventory results and the ensuing discussion. (2) The inventory allows the couple to deeply grapple with the decision to marry they are about to make, so as to more freely and wholeheartedly enter into marriage.

The facilitator helps the couple navigate, understand, and discuss the inventory results together. The presence of an objective observer in the conversation can provide the couple with realizations about their relationship and spur growth. The facilitator also makes sure there is a plan for follow-up or growth as needed. Because each parish does marriage preparation differently and works with different couples, we want to equip you to choose the best pre-marital inventory for your work with couples. If you have specific questions about an inventory, or if you are looking for an in-person training, contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at 614-241-2560 for more information.

Comparison of Pre-Marital Inventories within a Mentor Model

	Fully Engaged	Witness to Love
<i>Purpose</i>	Parish-selected mentor couples take each topic in the inventory and work through it with the couple in a workbook format, allowing more intentional follow-up than a traditional PMI would.	Engaged couples select a mentor couple to accompany them through engagement and their early years of marriage. Through this authentic relationship there can be more dynamic, personal formation in the virtues needed for a holy marriage.
<i>Unique Features</i>	The program, while including an exhaustive inventory of the aspects of marriage, focuses on catechizing the couple through these conversations. Twelve monthly emails are sent to the couple after the wedding with skill-based tips.	The bridge of trust between the engaged couple and their mentors allows for deeper formation. Mentors say their marriage is strengthened, and both couples deepen their relationship with the parish. Progress through the program can be tracked through the app.
<i>Catholic Elements</i>	Each question in the inventory comes with additional information and discussion questions, as well as any relevant comments from the Church's teaching. There is also a section on infertility and moral ways of handling it.	The book couples discuss together is centered on virtues, growth, and accountability. After the Pre-Cana or retreat, the engaged couple and pastor meet at the mentor couple's house to discuss the theology discussed at Pre-Cana.
<i>Variations</i>	Extensions are available for ecumenical marriages, second marriages, and blended families.	Offered in Spanish and French. A version for convalidating couples is also available along with materials to invite civilly married couples to come forward for the Sacrament.
Training Cost Mentor Cost/ Couple Cost	Training: \$25 + \$15 per couple trained \$40 mentor couple/\$25 engaged couple	Training: \$300 for full parish license \$75 (mentor materials, workbooks for the engaged couple, the videos, and the app)

Comparison of Pre-Marital Inventories

	FOCCUS	Prepare - Enrich	Better Together
<i>Purpose</i>	Assesses couple agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty on various topics, thus allowing the facilitator to guide couple conversations. This process celebrates areas of agreement, unearths new topics, and forms communication skills.	Reveals the relationship dynamics and strengths with customized insights, bringing understanding to the relationship and a positive approach to differences. This PMI also provides skill exercises for work with the couple's unique areas for growth.	Helps foster and teach the principles that build warm, healthy connection between the couple. Areas of relative strength and weakness are shown to the couple for their discussion of their relational skills and future marriage.
<i>Unique Features</i>	Particularly important questions are flagged to make reviewing the results easier. This inventory covers a very broad range of topics, and identifies patterns in the couple's responses.	Rather than a set of answers, the couple report includes graphic charts, as well as guidance to help the couple grow from a strength-based perspective. The test is tailored to the circumstances of the relationship. Unique variables like idealism, connectedness with their family of origin, and flexibility are also measured.	Based on Gottman research, this PMI tends to focus on what the quality of the couple's interaction is like (versus a topic-based approach.) Couples also have complete access to their responses once they both take the inventory.
<i>Ongoing Support</i>	Downloadable worksheets to facilitate conversations are available online.	A couple workbook can be downloaded. There is both a facilitator report and an optional couple report that can be given out to the couple.	There's a video program set available for free online that can also be sent to email, as well as a couple journal available for purchase.
<i>Catholic Elements</i>	Because this inventory is based on couple agreement, there are many Catholic items included on this widely used Catholic inventory.	Prepare includes questions related to the Catholic understanding of marriage and the spiritual life of a couple. It has an imprimatur and nihil obstat.	Shared faith and values, mass attendance, and prayer life are touched on.
<i>Variations</i>	Spanish, and an "Alternate" version (for couples with a low reading level) as well as add-ons for special circumstances.	Multiple languages are available; the inventory is automatically structured to fit the profile of the couple taking it such as for a remarrying couple.	None, but it is the simplest of the three to take.
<i>Training Cost Couple Cost</i>	\$100 (or \$65 through diocese) \$20 a couple	\$129 (\$95 through Witness to Love) \$35 a couple	No training necessary *FREE



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