

Marriage and Family Resources

Diocesan Programming

Anniversary Masses – Held in the Cathedrals in Altoona and Johnstown every September. These Masses, celebrated by Bishop Mark, honor married couples celebrating milestone anniversaries and their witness to love. There is a reception following each Mass for the couples. The Altoona Mass will be held on Sunday, September 10, and the Johnstown Mass on Sunday, September 17, 2023.

Outdoor Mass for Married Couples – Every summer in mid-July, Bishop Mark celebrates a Mass honoring all married couples, and as a means of prayerful support for their vocation.

Mass for Widows and Widowers – This Mass supports those whose spouse has died. While often held in the spring, this year it will be held on Sunday, October 29, 2023.

Marriage Preparation

Diocesan Marriage Preparation Guidelines can be found here:

<https://www.dioceseaj.org/family-life/marriage-prep/>

Marriage Preparation Dates recur at similar times each year and can be found online:

<https://www.dioceseaj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2023-Marriage-Prep-Dates.pdf>

Unveiled – this is the website for the marriage preparation program that we use in the Diocesan sessions: <http://www.unveiledmarriage.com/home>

Witness to Love – A mentor couple model of Marriage Preparation that could be used in parishes:

<https://witnessstolove.org/>

Marriage Enrichment and Healing

Worldwide Marriage Encounter – Retreats for helping to strengthen all marriages www.wwme.org
Philadelphia and Baltimore

Retrouvaille – A Retreat for Troubled Marriages by couples www.helpourmarriage.org
Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Scranton

The Third Option – A video series or parish program for Troubled Marriages www.thethirdoption.com

Communio – Communio equips local churches with proven strategies and outreach services to strengthen marriages and relationships within their memberships. Communio then helps churches use this new ministry as a form of outreach and evangelization to grow the church and transform their community. Has programs for singles, engaged, and marriage enrichment. <https://communio.org/>

Married Spirituality

Teams of Our Lady – a faith-sharing concept for couples <https://www.teamsofourlady.org>

Catholic Counselors – has significant resources on marriage <https://www.catholiccounselors.com>

Paradisus Dei – Helping couples and families discover the superabundance of God
<https://paradisusdei.org/>

Natural Family Planning

There are many different forms of Natural Family Planning. We have instructors in the area as well as online resources for it:

Elizabeth Mason, LSW – Teaches Billings Ovulation Method
State College Area
elizabethmason318@gmail.com

Kara Lechene, PA-C – Teaches Creighton Method
Northern Cambria Area
karalechene@gmail.com

Caroline Gindhart, MSN, NP-C – Teaches Creighton Method
Online
cgindhart23@gmail.com

NFP Models and Websites:

FEMM is a comprehensive women's health and wellness program for optimal reproductive health. FEMM's natural, breakthrough, science-based program helps women learn more about their bodies, and how to identify daily hormonal shifts to achieve their health and fertility goals. <https://femmhealth.org/>

The CREIGHTON MODEL FertilityCare System (CrMS) provides comprehensive, professional services through individualized follow-up, standardized teaching tools, and ongoing research. <https://creightonmodel.com/>

The Billings Ovulation Method[®] is a natural method of fertility management. It teaches you to recognize your body's natural signal of fertility. <https://billings.life/en/>

The Couple to Couple League trains couples in Fertility Awareness. It is the largest trainer in the world. <https://ccli.org/>

Infertility

Springs in the Desert – Is a website to accompany those struggling with infertility, by offering a place of respite and solidarity where they can know God's love for them and discover His unique call to fruitfulness. It is also a helpful resource for those looking for a Catholic way to accompany their loved ones dealing with infertility. <https://springsinthedesert.org/about-us/>

Family Ministry and Parenting Websites and Resources

National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers – The website for Diocesan and Parish Family Life Ministers: <https://nacflm.org>

Peyton Family Institute has a website with a resource library to help understand the challenges and opportunities in family ministry: <https://www.peytonfamilyinstitute.org/>

CatholicHOM (Households On Mission) offers a helpful app for Catholic family spirituality: <https://catholichom.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/668439547276474/about/>

Catholic Icing offers resources and activities for families to do together <https://www.catholicicing.com/>

The Messy Family Project is a blog about Catholic family life <https://www.messyfamilyproject.org/>

PRAY: The Film – an excellent documentary on the life of Fr. Patrick Peyton who popularized the saying, “The Family that prays together, stays together.”

Formed.org – The Catholic Netflix. It has many videos for learning and entertainment, for adults as well as children.

Book Suggestions

How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk by John Van Epp

Endgame: The Church's Strategic Move to Save Faith and Family in America by John Van Epp and J.P. de Gance.

Return: How to Draw Your Child Back to the Church by Brandon Vogt

Parenting with Grace by Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak

Digital Parenting

Protect Young Eyes is an app that equips parents to teach their children about safe use of the internet. It has a religious component to it that is compatible with our faith: <https://protectyoungeyes.com/>

Cyber Civics is a secular course that may best be applied in a school setting, to teach children about responsible use of the internet and social media: www.cybercivics.com

Cyberwise is a companion of Cyber Civics designed specifically for parents: www.cyberwise.org

VidAngel offers an option to filter inappropriate content on some movies and shows in Netflix and Prime www.vidangel.com

Common Sense Media – A secular website offering reviews and age recommendations for movies, shows, books and video games www.commonsensemedia.org

The Social Dilemma – A Netflix show about the background of social media and considerations in its use.

Childhood 2.0 – A documentary on the effects social media and internet use may be having on children. It is encouraged that parents preview this before allowing children to watch it.

Foster Care and Adoption Resources

Springs of Love – A website designed to encourage, educate and equip Catholics to discern and live out the call to foster and adopt. It has resources and links to ways our parishes can promote and support fostering and adoptive families as well. <https://springsoflove.org/>

Pornography Addiction Resources

RECLAIM Sexual Health – a Catholic site with quite possibly the best resources on overcoming sexual addictions for those who want to end them. It unfortunately comes with a heavy price tag.

<https://www.reclaimsexualhealth.com/>

Covenant Eyes – an accountability program to help those who are addicted to pornography.

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/>

Fight the New Drug – A secular site on the dangers of pornography and why it should be diminished in society. It has a lot of educational videos and material. <https://fightthenewdrug.org/>

Finances

Compass Catholic is a website trying to inspire individuals and families to unite their faith and finances by providing information and tools, illuminated by our Catholic faith, so that they may become financially unburdened and able to say “yes” to God’s call. <https://compasscatholic.org/> or

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_kQPdTIONw3zt2n7DZ3yVw

Domestic Violence

Catholics for Family Peace aims to inform everyone on ways for the Catholic community can promote family peace and prevent and respond to domestic abuse: <http://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org/>

Self-paced course on responding to domestic abuse <https://health-transformations.learnworlds.com/>

When I Call for Help – The USCCB’s official document regarding domestic violence:

<https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/when-i-call-help-pastoral-response-domestic-violence>

Separation and Divorce

Support Groups

Divorced But NOT ALONE – The gospel offers hope for life — whether things are going well, or everything is falling apart. In each circumstance, the Church is called to love, care for, and support each other. As the body of the church at Good Shepherd Parish in Port Matilda, we are hoping to build a community of support for those experiencing separation or divorce. There will be a social on Sunday, August 27, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Good Shepherd Parish Hall if you are in the process of a divorce, recently divorced or divorced for years. We invite those interested or curious to come and meet others who understand. You are not alone. Please contact Paula Campbell paulamcampbell@comcast.net or Marcella Fickes mfickes@dioceseaj.org for more information.

Resources

Surviving Divorce: Hope and Healing for the Catholic Family. A full course available online for individual use or as a resource pack to lead a group at your parish on www.Ascensionpress.com

Divorced Catholic - www.divorcedcatholic.com has resources for divorced Catholics as well as an online program. There is also a training program for parishes that wish to host the program.

Calm the Storm – An accompaniment and mentoring program for children and adolescents experiencing parental divorce or separation through the Faith Journeys organization. <https://www.faithjourneys.org/> They also have a Facebook page, “Help for Divorced Parents Who Want Their Children to Thrive” at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/485527839712935>

Life Giving Wounds – A retreat for Adult Children of divorce. Many adults did not receive any counseling to process the pain of their parents’ divorce when they were young, nor if they divorced after the children had already grown up. This is a retreat weekend to help them process and move forward from this pain. <https://www.lifegivingwounds.org/>

Beginning Experience – A retreat for those who have lost a spouse through death or divorce. There is also a training video for those who may be interested in starting such a retreat in our Diocese. <https://beginningexperience.org/>

Book Suggestions

Divorced. Catholic. Now What? Navigating Life After Divorce by Lisa Duffy and Vince Frese

The Divorced Catholic’s Guide to Parenting by Lynn Cassella-Kapusinski

What Do I Do Now? by Lynn Cassella-Kapusinski. A guide for teenagers when their parents divorce.

Disabilities Awareness and Ministry

National Catholic Partnership on Disability <https://ncpd.org/program-type/diocese-parishes>

USCCB 1978 Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/Pastoral-Statement-of-U-S-Catholic-Bishops-on-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>

1998 Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities <https://www.usccb.org/upload/justice-persons-disabilities-bulletin-insert.pdf>

2017 Revised Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities <https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities>

National Catholic Office for the Deaf <https://www.ncod.org/>

Xavier Society for the Blind <https://xaviersocietyfortheblind.org/>

Faith and Light – International Christian Community for those with Disabilities <http://faithandlight.org/>
or <https://www.foietlumiere.org/en>

Dementia training <http://www.actonalz.org/sites/default/files/documents/ACT-SectorGuide-Faith.pdf>

UMC - <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/the-dementia-friendly-church>

Autism Awareness and Ministry

Adaptive Sacramental Preparation Programs for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other special needs: <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/adaptive-learning-kits/>

The Nation Catholic Partnership on Disability has several resources for inclusion of persons on the Autism Spectrum including links to **special education trainings** and resources on planning a **Sensory Friendly Mass**: <https://ncpd.org/disability-ministry/autism-spectrum-disorder>

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has an excellent website on Autism and the Church including several videos and helpful links: <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/office-for-persons-with-disabilities/disabilities-2/autism-spectrum>

Pope Francis on Autism <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/45900/everyone-is-beautiful-in-gods-eyes-pope-francis-tells-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder>

An article about a priest who has Autism <https://uscatholic.org/articles/202205/father-matthew-schneider-on-being-autistic-and-catholic/>

Mental Health Ministry

Catholic Mental Health Association - Has training on starting a Mental Health Ministry in your Parish <https://catholicmhm.org/>