



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF  
SAINT PAUL &  
MINNEAPOLIS

**Office for Marriage, Family & Life**

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## OFFICE OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY & LIFE

*A program guide*



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Updated April 2011

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Archdiocesan Office of Marriage, Family & Life is to assist and encourage all Christians to fulfill their call to holiness. Pope John Paul II and the documents of the Second Vatican Council call the laity to transform the world where they live. Our office promotes this evangelization, helping to restore the culture of marriage and life through programs that support and educate on the vocation of marriage, the single state, and outreach to youth and young adults. We seek to support the development of strong faith rooted in Christian freedom and lived in service in witness to our families, civic communities and church parishes.

In 1975, the Family Life Commission for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis was established to help Catholics fulfill the roles of Christian family living as a *“total family ministry witnessing to the love, faith and service of the domestic church.”* Years later the office is now named the Office of Marriage, Family & Life, but the goals remain the same. Visit our website at: [www.archspm.org/family](http://www.archspm.org/family).

This brochure outlines the programs & resources we provide in support of our mission.

### Family Life / Respect Life Liaison

This is a necessary and important connection in all parishes. These individuals receive our communications and evangelize and advocate on parish councils while supporting the Pastor in promotion of Life Issues. **Family Life Liaisons** view marriage and family as a vocation and central to the vitality and growth of the church. Please call our office if you would like more information about becoming a liaison for your parish.

### Living God’s Love

This program was designed by our office to offer engaged couples the opportunity to focus on the Sacrament of Marriage. Offered in both weekend and evening formats, **Living God’s Love** is structured to help engaged couples prepare for the Sacrament of marriage and to reflect on the beauty and richness of the church’s teaching on marriage and the family. Couples listen to presentations by priests, educators, physicians, and married couples who share the beauty of the Church’s teaching about the vocation of marriage as a call to holiness and a gift of self.

### Natural Family Planning

Our **Natural Family Planning Office** promotes several highly effective methods of NFP taught by recognized provider groups throughout the Archdiocese. The NFP advisory board assists with the promotion and understanding of the gifts of life, fertility, and sexuality. Instruction in both Spanish and English are offered to the entire Archdiocesan community and to people of all faiths with the hope of strengthening marriages and families.

### Christ-Centered Couples Program

This program for the newly married (five years or less) gathers couples together in parish-based small groups to offer support and encouragement to one another. Our office has prepared resources for these small groups that focus on key areas in new marriages.

### In His Time

**In His Time** is a support group for Catholic couples who struggle with infertility. This group provides a supportive environment for couples who follow the Church’s teaching on fertility and allows them to share their experiences with others who are on a similar journey. These meetings offer comfort, hope and peace as they wait for God’s plan to unfold in their lives. For more information call Deacon Darrell & Chris Branch at 651-291-4488.

### Early Catholic Family Life

**ECFL** is a parent-child program created for families with children who are under five years old. It consists of a parent-child interaction component, parent discussion time and play time for the children. The program is a seven session, two-hour class patterned after the highly successful Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. ECFL gives Catholic parents an opportunity to learn more about passing on their Catholic faith to their children. This program is also offered in Spanish for the Latino-Hispanic community.

### All in God’s Plan

This is a three-level program for children and their parents. Each program is age-specific and intended to assist families in teaching youth about God’s gift of human sexuality and the sacredness of human life, along with the importance of the family. These programs are designed to foster communication between the child and the parent and to reinforce a positive family life.

## Faith in Action: Courage

**Courage** meetings help individuals with concerns about same-sex attraction in a safe place to talk and to learn the Catholic Church's teaching on this matter, especially in the area of chastity. The support groups, one for men and one for women, meet biweekly to talk, pray and enjoy Catholic fellowship as they pursue the goal of living a chaste life and finding the peace and grace to grow in Christian maturity.

## Faith in Action: EnCourage

The goals of **EnCourage** closely parallel those of **Courage**: family members and friends come together for spiritual and emotional support and strive together to bring the Church's teaching on same-sex attractions to others. The program is open to all people, regardless of their loved one's lifestyle. It confirms the Catholic Church's teaching on sexuality and reflects the Church's approach toward helping persons with same-sex attractions lead a chaste life. The support group meets monthly.

## World Marriage Day

This special day honors husbands and wives and celebrates their faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily married life. The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1981. While World Marriage Day is celebrated each year in February, our Archdiocesan celebration for couples married 25 & 50 or more years is in June at the Cathedral of Saint Paul.

## Newly Married Retreat Day

This retreat is for newly married couples (married seven years or less) who desire an opportunity to reflect on the beauty of marriage and receive suggestions on how to enhance their marriage. Topics have included: Praying together as a Couple, Encouraging Vocations, Building a Culture of Life, Dual Careers, Raising Children, Finances and Time Management Styles. **Newly Married Retreat Day** is held in February.

## Family Forum

This annual event focuses on educational outreach and topics pertinent to family issues that directly involve the laity. Workshops feature nationally and locally renowned speakers offering a variety of topics that include: Healing Family Relations, Parenting Skills for Fathers, Media and Our Kids, Issues Surrounding Death and Dying, The Role of Family in Forming Vocations, and Single Parent Issues.

## Women's Apostolate

Please join us for the Archdiocesan **Women's Retreat** held annually during Lent. This is an invitation for women of all ages to attend a morning of prayer and reflection with a dynamic presentation by a local priest. Participation in the sacraments will also be made available. Gather your friends and loved ones and plan to attend this beautiful morning of renewal as you prepare your hearts for the Lenten Season.

## Men's Apostolate

The men of the Archdiocese gather publicly and formally every other Spring to strengthen their roles of husband, father, grandfather, provider, etc. The spiritual growth continues at parish-level men's groups.

## Single Parent Alliance

Are you a single parent looking for a supportive, hopeful, welcoming and safe place to get information and ideas? Our office offers a Single Parent Newsletter (bi-monthly) which offers family tips on parenting, resources, spirituality and events in the Twin Cities. Copies of the Single Parent Newsletter are available as PDFs on our Family & Laity Outreach page. You may also contact us to receive the newsletter via email. Every February a **Single Parents Retreat** is offered. This is a time to reflect, recharge and connect with other single parents who share your Christian values and are raising their children in the Catholic faith. Participants regroup and refresh from the demands of the single parent experience. This is open to all single, divorced, widowed and widower parents.

## God's Children

**God's Children** is a Catholic support group for parents grieving the loss of a child and sponsors an Archdiocesan Mass in the fall for parents who seek to grow in faith while providing a nurturing environment which integrates prayer and grief. This program offers support and comfort for parents who have lost a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. Ongoing support is provided as necessary.

## Persons with disAbilities

The mission of the Outreach to Persons with disAbilities is to facilitate the implementation of the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with disAbilities which calls for "realizing the unique gifts that individuals with disAbilities have to offer the church" and society, and to advocate for the inclusion of persons with disAbilities in full participation of liturgical, sacramental and parish life. It is also to advocate for people with disAbilities, which is centered in Christ's love. As the people of God, we ALL have gifts to share. Call for more information, please Call Deacon Sean Curtan at 651-291-4543.

## Life Fund

This is an outreach to help women carry their unborn baby or care for their newborn baby with the dignity they both deserve. It provides one-time, last resort emergency funding to women in need during their pregnancy and the first year of their child's life. "And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me." (Luke 18:15)

## RESOURCES

### Family Placemats

These placemats, on the practical side, keep family spills contained, while at the same time help your children to learn prayers while gathered around the family table. Also available in Spanish.

### Mentor Session Guidebooks

The marriage preparation guidebooks, each specifically designed for either mentor or engaged couples, have received the imprimatur of Archbishop Harry J. Flynn. The guidebooks are based on the Archbishop's Pastoral Letter of Marriage and the Family and are designed for use in the parish as part of a marriage preparation program. The guidebooks share the rich and life-giving tradition of the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage.

### Reading & Viewing Materials

Our office has a wide range of resources available on such topics as teenage issues of sexuality, married love, NFP and Catholic parenting. Please call us if you are interested in brochures of the tapes we offer from our lending library.

### Opportunities

If you are interested in taking an active role in assisting our office with event planning, serving as a member of one of our advisory boards or serving as a liaison to a committee, we have a number of opportunities available. Please contact us today!

## ONGOING TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

### FOCCUS Mentor Workshop

This workshop is offered twice a year for mentor couples who work at the parish with engaged couples. It is based on the Archbishop's Pastoral Letter on Marriage and the Family and is designed for enrichment and training for the use of the pre-marriage inventory.

### Project Rachel / Marian Project

Post abortion outreach referral for individuals in emotional, psychological and spiritual pain as a result of abortion. Contact [respectlife@archspm.org](mailto:respectlife@archspm.org) or 651-291-4515.

## ANNUAL EVENTS

- Women's Retreat Morning
- Children's Rosary procession
- Single Parents Retreat
- Men's Conference
- White Mass honoring the Catholic Medical Association
- Blue Mass
- Family Forum
- Newly Married Retreat
- Marriage Day
- World Youth Day
- Prayer Service for Life
- Mass for Persons with disAbilities
- Mass for God's Children
- Champions for Life Awards
- Adoption Mass
- Birth Mother's Retreat
- National Catholic Youth Council Events
- Veteran's Mass
- Parish Marriage Mentor Training
- Early Catholic Family Life
- Natural Family Planning Week
- Christ Centered Couples