

Dear Marriage Ministers,

The marriage ministry webinar series is off and running! We began Tuesday, Sept. 26th. Apologies for the typo that listed it as the 29th! A recording is available for those who missed it. At any time, if you wish to register for the rest of the series, email me your name and parish to sarahbartel4@gmail.com, and put “WEBINAR SERIES” in the subject line. You can also print the form linked here to share with any mentor couples, volunteers, or others in your parish who would be interested in signing up. Please then email me an image of the form or the list of sign-ups.

Date: Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 am	Topic
Sept. 26	Marriage Prep
Oct. 3	Marriage Prep
Oct. 10	Online Programs and Retreats
Oct. 17	Spanish Marriage Prep and Enrichment Resources
Oct. 24	Post-Cana: Marriage Enrichment Programs and Resources
Oct. 31	Marriage Enrichment Programs and Resources (Remote Prep, Forming Teens and Youth, teaching the Facts of Life)
Nov. 7	Purity and online addictions, Marriage Help, Counseling

Online Marriage Prep

During the webinar last Tuesday I spent some time discussing an online marriage prep program called CatholicMarriagePrep.com. Having reviewed their content and met with the program’s creators, I highly recommend this program as a solid catechetical marriage preparation. Consider this as a good alternative to couple-to-couple mentoring or a group class at a parish when parish resources won’t allow those options, or as a supplement when you’re out of mentor couples available to handle the load of engaged couples at your parish. It is **available in Spanish and French** (*mais oui!*), and it is a great option for **military couples** or other **long-distance** situations in which one party of the engaged couple is not living nearby. Some couples’ schedules also make group classes or mentor sessions problematic: this can work for them. Also, some parishes don’t have the resources for an in-house marriage prep program. This online option is as simple for the parish as sending the engaged couple on a retreat, but with potential for more connection to parish staff and the preparing priest, as you will see.

“But isn’t an online class impersonal?” There can be some understandable skepticism that an online experience will not provide that personal care one hopes for in ministry. However, in the case of CatholicMarriagePrep.com, a real-life mentor couple is “behind the screen,” personally responding to and instructing the engaged couple. This model also allows the preparation to be custom-tailored to the needs of that particular couple, whether they are cohabiting, civilly married, or have other circumstances that require specific attention and care.

The preparing priest or parish staff listed at the couples’ registration also receives regular email updates about the couples’ progress, topics covered, and how the couple answered quiz questions. This gives the preparing priest the basis for a meaningful conversation with the couple during their meetings.

The results of CatholicMarriagePrep.com attest to the program's transformative impact: their results for couples coming through their program who say "yes" or "maybe" to abstinence until marriage, NFP, and participation in parish life are simply amazing! Check out their numbers [here](#).

I will mention other online programs in an upcoming newsletter. Not all are created equal! Feel free to reach out if you have one to recommend or if you have questions about an online marriage prep program that you have learned about.

Keep in Touch!

Are you looking for more marriage programs in Spanish? What other "Post-Cana" opportunities can we offer newlywed and long-married couples? Would you like more information about upcoming retreats and workshops? Check this space in the weeks ahead—there is so much to share with you! Write me and let me know about your parish's events supporting sacramental matrimony, share resources you love, or let me know what information would be most helpful for you in your ministry.

In the Joy of the Love of Family,

Dr. Sarah Bartel

Marriage and Family Life Consultant