

## About CatholicCare

We are the social services agency of the Catholic Church in Sydney. Every day we walk in solidarity with individuals, families and communities to realise our vision of a society in which we all feel supported and that we belong.

Our services help people to live and thrive at every age, irrespective of beliefs and abilities. We provide locally-based disability services, counselling, education and support for children, young people and families and deliver ageing services in the home. We can also help people navigate the new world of My Aged Care, by understanding your needs and applying our knowledge to help find your best possible plan.

Our greatest wish is to see the people in our communities thrive.



## Contact Us

### Marriage and Relationship Education Program

Head Office: Mary Potter Wing  
2C West Street  
Lewisham 2049



02 9509 1234



02 9509 1199



[mre@catholiccare.org](mailto:mre@catholiccare.org)



## MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM



# Marriage and Relationship Education Program

Are you curious about how intimacy and closeness can be nurtured in marriage as you grow together as a couple?

Would you like to learn ways to maintain emotional safety while discussing sensitive topics with your future spouse?

Have you ever wanted to focus on the 'bigger picture' – the core values, goals and aspirations you want to have as a married couple?

Do you want to find out what the Sacrament of Marriage means to each of you, and what the Church teaches about marriage?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, we invite you to participate in marriage education with us.

Australian society experiences high rates of separation and divorce. Research shows us that the most common causes of relationship breakdown include communication difficulties, different expectations and values, and lack of trust. When couples have the knowledge, skills and motivation to address problems early, they are better equipped to sustain healthy marriages.

We know that weddings are expensive, but we also know that they only last one day. We encourage you to view the cost of your marriage education course as an investment in your future.

## Who comes to our courses?

All of our courses meet the requirements of the Sydney Catholic Archdiocese Norms for Marriage Preparation, and are suitable for couples who have been requested by their celebrating Priest to present a Certificate of Attendance at marriage preparation.

Our courses are also suitable for couples who may not be marrying in the Church, but who may wish to engage in some work preparing for marriage.

We are also seeing more and more couples come to our courses who may not be engaged, but who wish to explore their relationship and build some knowledge and skills with a view to engagement.

At the other end of the spectrum, some couples who are already married have come to our Intimate II course to refresh their skills, reconnect and strengthen their marriage using an educational approach.

## Our Content

Our Marriage and Relationship Education Program uses the latest clinical research combined with hands-on, experiential activities to help couples reflect deeply on their relationship and future vision, and learn some skills to help prevent relationship distress.

We offer three course formats, specifically suited to couples at different stages of their relationship.

**Becoming One** - is a larger group-based marriage preparation course which aims to help couples increase their self-awareness and strengthen their communication and conflict resolution skills. This course is most suitable for young couples in the early stages of their relationship. It is offered as 3 weeknights or a weeknight plus 1 weekend day.

### Topics covered in this course include:

- ▶ Dr. Gottman's Sound Relationship House – 7 principles of keeping your relationship healthy
- ▶ Family of Origin – reflection on patterns of interaction you have brought into your current relationship from your respective families
- ▶ Influences in conflict – physiological, emotional and cognitive processes under stress
- ▶ Communication risk factors and antidotes
- ▶ Speaker-Listener technique
- ▶ Roles and expectations
- ▶ Role of social media and information technology in your relationship
- ▶ Values, rituals and vision of your marriage
- ▶ Sacramental and Natural Fertility Planning session

**Intimate I** - is a smaller group course designed to allow couples to focus more deeply on the topics covered in Becoming One and have more coaching from the facilitator on issues particular to the relationship. The activities included in this course are built around the 7 principles of Dr. Gottman's Sound Relationship House. This course is most suitable for couples who have been in their relationship longer, and who may be living together. It is offered as 3 weeknights or a weeknight plus 1 weekend day.

**Intimate II** - is a course involving a couple meeting with a facilitator over 3 sessions of approximately 1 ½ hours in length. This course is more suitable for couples in a longer-term relationship, who may have children together or from a previous relationship, and who may have been married before. It is also suitable for married couples seeking to strengthen their relationship. The couple completes an online Prepare-Enrich questionnaire prior to attendance. The discussion topics are chosen according to the unique couple relationship circumstances, for example, a second marriage, different cultural or religious traditions, parenting/step-parenting, intergenerational and health issues. The resulting customised report highlights the strength and growth areas of the relationship and helps the couple to discuss specific issues with the assistance of the facilitator. Referrals for additional support are also available.

## Locations and Costs

For locations, dates and costs please see the 2018 Calendar Insert.

## Fees

Whilst the Program is partially funded by the Australian Government, we are required to charge fees for the services outlined.

## Qualifications

All CatholicCare services are provided by qualified, skilled and experienced professionals who meet the required standards of competency.

## Testimonials

*"I came into it thinking that it would be a waste of time, but came out with positive learning and techniques that I can further benefit our relationship and marriage"*

**Becoming One Participant**

*"I had a really good experience and believe that these new skills and the information received will make our relationship stronger. Thank you!"*

**Intimate I Participant**

*"Really opened my eyes to the key areas on how I can maintain a healthy relationship"*

**Intimate II Participant**