

# Marriage Mentoring

Every engaged couple at HNOJ that is preparing for marriage, participates in the Marriage Mentor component of the Marriage Preparation process.

## What are Marriage Mentors?

Marriage mentor couples are couples who are motivated and excited to help guide engaged couples through the challenges of beginning a new life together. Mentor couples demonstrate a strong faith, who have been married for at least five, preferably 7 years, and who appear to have a healthy, growing relationship to participate in this unique and richly rewarding ministry. We have recruited a variety of couple types, in terms of age, years married, with and without children, in second marriages, and from different backgrounds.

Mentor couples offer a unique peer relationship and a couple-to-couple dynamic of support that is invaluable as the engaged couple begin to prepare for a lifelong marriage. HNOJ recruits and trains “marriage-mature” couples to work with engaged couples to provide outstanding support for those in the early, formative stages of their engagement. Our mentors are trained to understand the *Prepare* premarital inventory and to discuss the results with their assigned couple(s). Mentor couples do not function as counselors or therapists. They offer peer-level caring and sharing, alongside services provided by a pastor and those involved in the Marriage Preparation process.

The Mentor couples know how to facilitate the engaged couple’s learning process, rather than preaching to or lecturing them. Mentor couple training includes ample use of experiential activities, role-play, and hands-on practice. Such activities, especially if built around various situations that may actually arise while working with their assigned couples, help mentor couples feel more comfortable and confident.

## What Mentor Couples Do

Using the results of the Prepare inventory and the Catholic Couples workbook, Mentor couples work with engaged couples to explore a variety of issues: marriage goals and expectations, communication, conflict resolution, financial planning, household roles, faith issues, and spiritual practices. They reinforce the strengths of the couples with whom they work, while modeling and teaching the communication skills needed for enduring, fulfilling relationships. A mentor couple meets privately with the engaged couple assigned to them.

There is typically a commitment of 3-6 meetings between the Mentor couple and the engaged couple. Both couples often develop a lasting relationship that go beyond their initial interactions with one another, and become supportive in nature. It is not uncommon to see Mentors attend the weddings of their mentees.

Mentor couples do not need have “perfect” marriages, but should be willing and able to share stories of their own married life and what they have learned through experience in regard to nurturing love, relating to in-laws, playing together, handling money, communicating effectively, solving problems, balancing family and work, raising children, fostering intimacy, planning for the future, and celebrating the holidays.

For further information about the Marriage Mentor ministry contact Lauri Becker at 763-745-3495 or email [Lbecker@hnoj.org](mailto:Lbecker@hnoj.org)