

GOD'S PLAN FOR  
A JOY-FILLED  
*Marriage*



Training Program  
for Instructors

# GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED *Marriage*

*God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* is a highly-effective marriage preparation program based on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. The program emphasizes those key aspects of marriage that the Church is uniquely qualified to address, namely the theology of marriage, human sexuality, and the sacramental life.

Because of the importance of these topics, we are working with dioceses throughout the country interested in training individuals to become Instructors of the *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* program. As a leader, you would be asked to discover individuals willing to become theologically adept and pastorally astute in premarital education. Competent leaders will ensure the high quality of instruction and the integrity of the program. The proper formation of leaders will make your *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* a success.

Our training program is designed to help Instructors incorporate the liberating message of the Theology of the Body into Catholic marriage preparation. We have employed highly-skilled theologians, staff members, and consultants who will work with your team of prospective leaders.

*God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* is also designed for dioceses, parishes, and individuals to easily run the *God's Plan* video/DVD presentations without training and remain successful. However, nothing replaces well-trained leaders who have a strong understanding of the Theology of the Body and its application to marriage preparation.

Our training will prepare leaders to confidently approach their marriage preparation ministry with a rich knowledge of the theological and pastoral issues facing today's Church. Your leaders will become evangelizers of the Faith and lead others to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church.





## God's Plan Program Presentation Models

There are generally four ways of incorporating the *God's Plan* DVD with live presentations and talks by your Instructors.

1. **Watch the DVD**—The *God's Plan* program is structured in such a way that you can simply train leaders to facilitate the process of watching the full-length DVD presentation. In this role, the *God's Plan* Instructor is simply facilitating the materials through introducing the DVDs and then stopping and starting the DVD at certain points to highlight aspects of the DVD presentation or to answer questions.

2. **Watching the DVD with Some Presentation:** *God's Plan* also allows you to incorporate a live presentation of one of the segmented sections of each of the talks. Instructors simply use our Segment Guide to help prepare them to give a portion of one or more of the talks. The DVD is still used predominately with exception of one or two segments per talk that the presenter would offer live. This allows for more interaction with the engaged and for the presenter to get some additional practice presenting.

3. **Presentation with some DVD:** *God's Plan* also allows with the help of the Leader's Guide and Segment Guide to prepare for each of the talks. The Instructor offers a majority of the talks. This is highly interactive and it allows for the interspersing of DVD Segments that may have not yet been mastered or which treat a particular sensitive topic that the Instructor is not yet comfortable presenting.

4. **Presentation with no DVD:** *God's Plan* also allows for the "Live" teaching of the entire program without any recourse to or use of the *God's Plan* DVD. Live teaching can be done by an individual, couple, or couple team. Often couple teams master one or two talks and share the presentation with another couple who masters another set of talks for the weekend.

## Selecting Potential Instructors

One challenge facing the Church today is that many Catholics, though they have a sincere desire to serve, lack an adequate understanding of key aspects of Catholic theology. Unfortunately, due to a lack of sound catechesis, many Catholics either misunderstand or do not fully assent to Church teaching in the areas of marriage and human sexuality.

In considering the *God's Plan* program, we are asking dioceses and parishes to carefully select potential leaders. You need individuals who embrace fully the teachings of the Church about the theology of marriage and human sexuality as it impacts faith and morals. While our training programs assist people in coming to a solid understanding and appreciation of Catholic teaching, we do not envision the training process as an appropriate forum to attempt to *convince* potential leaders of the truth of Catholic teaching.

You may be concerned that an adequate number of potential leaders cannot be found in your area. However, our experience has shown us that there are deeply-committed Catholics in every diocese who are currently working in ministry or have done so previously. In addition, there are others who are willing to get started in a new ministry. While it may take some effort to recruit quality leaders, rest assured that whoever responds to God's call to serve in this special ministry will receive from our training the encouragement, working knowledge, and support they need to be successful.

If possible, it is helpful for the diocese or parish to consider a training model in which your leaders receive a stipend for their service. (For example, young parents who have children often need some assistance with childcare expenses, and offering this kind of compensation tells your presenters that you appreciate their gifts.)

# Our Training Program Will Prepare Your Marriage Preparation Leaders

In addition to the required prerequisite reading, the *God's Plan* program offers a "Live" weekend training to help prepare your marriage preparation team.

## "LIVE" WEEKEND TRAINING PROGRAM

Although a rich understanding of *God's Plan* and prerequisite material is essential for potential Instructors, we believe that our in-person training is extremely valuable.

Our weekend training session will effectively prepare your prospective leaders to conduct the *God's Plan* program in your diocese or parish. Trainings can be held on-site in your diocese at a local retreat center, pastoral center, or hotel. The training is highly interactive, consisting of a guided, interactive review of each of the *God's Plan* presentations, highlighting the methodology of the whole program. The training also offers a profile of today's Catholic engaged couple, tips on how to lead large- or small-group discussions, and a discussion of the most commonly asked questions about the theology of marriage and sexuality.

Ascension Press, in collaboration with the Theology of the Body Institute, is offering training for the *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* program at a variety of locations throughout the country. For information on where trainings will be held or to schedule a training in your diocese, visit our website at [www.JoyFilledMarriage.com](http://www.JoyFilledMarriage.com).



## Responsibilities for Host and Ascension Press

### Host's Responsibilities:

- **Determine** who will pay for the training and materials
- **Recruit** possible *God's Plan* instructors and distribute training materials to them
- **Secure** an equipped location for training (hotel or retreat center) and determine pricing for room and meals.
- **Market** the program to local diocesan parishes or to a group of selected facilitators (with the help of Ascension Press)
- **Host Weekend** with two *God's Plan* Trainers—providing them a room, meals, and airfare.

### Ascension Press' Responsibilities:

- **Determine** overall pricing for materials and training
- **Provide** customized marketing materials to Host
- **Ship** materials to Host for distribution to facilitators
- **Provide** Two *God's Plan* Trainers for Training Weekend
- **Offer** customer service and phone support to Host for training process with *God's Plan* team member.

1.800.376.0520

[www.JoyFilledMarriage.com](http://www.JoyFilledMarriage.com)



Below is a suggested five-step process for identifying potential Instructors. Your diocese or parish may require a slightly different procedure:

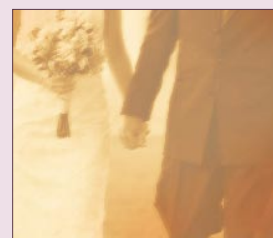
1 Information—Invite potential Instructors to an information session where you or a *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* representative will share the vision and instructional approach of the program. During this time, prospective leaders will learn about the training programs and the spiritual and personal benefits of becoming an Instructor.

2 Discernment—We encourage you to give potential Instructors several weeks to prayerfully discern if they are truly called to this ministry. After this period of discernment, we recommend that you contact them to determine which individuals are interested in becoming Instructors.

3 Decision—Individuals decide if they want to become Instructors. Once a list of possible Instructors is identified, the diocese or parish determines who will pay for the prerequisite materials. Payment could come from the diocese, the parish, or the individuals themselves, or even a combination of all three.

4 Instruction—The next step is to attend a *God's Plan* training. The potential Instructor should then complete the prerequisite work and attend a *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* Training hosted in your diocese or in another location. After they complete the training and submit their written assessment, the Instructors will receive a Certificate of Accomplishment with their corrected assessment.

5 Implementation—Once Instructors have been trained, a diocese or parish can begin coordinating the use of the Instructors in its marriage preparation programs. The diocese may wish to continue the formation of their Instructors. The local diocesan or parish leadership after training and screening of Instructors will make the final decision about who will serve as a marriage preparation provider.



## Becoming an Instructor

An Instructor is trained to administer the *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* program. The instructor comes away from the training with a strong understanding of the basic message of the Theology of the Body, a rich understanding of the logic and content of the *God's Plan* program, and a basic knowledge to handle questions from an audience of engaged couples. For those wishing to exercise their public speaking skills to teach the course, we encourage the Instructors to use the Segment Guide and Leader's Guide begin to workshop each of the talks in the program.

### Prerequisite Work

1. The diocese or parish pre-selects potential Instructors who demonstrate:
  - Fidelity to the Church's teaching on marriage and human sexuality
  - Good communication skills
  - Pastoral sense to offer answers to questions and additional resources
2. Fulfill the following prerequisite study:
  - Listen to the *Introduction to the Theology of the Body* audio CD provided in your prerequisite materials.
  - Read the book *Good News About Sex and Marriage* by Christopher West.
3. Listen to *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* program on CD or view DVD.
  - If a DVD viewing is possible, we highly encourage it as part of the preparation for the "Live" Weekend Training.
4. Read the following texts:
  - *Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage* - Pontifical Council for the Family (downloadable)
  - *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life) - Pope Paul VI
  - *Frequently Asked Questions Guide for God's Plan Instructors*- Ascension Press
  - *Leading a Group Discussion Guide*- Ascension Press
5. Attend a "Live" Weekend Training

### Costs for God's Plan Instructor Training

#### "Live" Weekend Training

Training Fee: The standard cost for the training is \$2,500, which covers the cost of the speaker stipends and Ascension's basic coordination costs. The standard costs for training materials are \$125 for an individual and \$135 for a couple. In addition, there would be costs for the transportation and lodging for our *God's Plan* trainers. Hosts would also need to consider the meal costs and possible hotel/retreat costs for participants.

#### Materials\*\*

- *Introduction to the Theology of the Body New 8-Part Gift Series* (audio CDs)
- *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* (audio CDs)
- *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* (Leader's Guide)\*
- *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* (Segment Guide)
- *Good News About Sex and Marriage* (book)
- *Frequently Asked Questions Guide*
- *Leading a Group Discussion Guide*
- Documents: *Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage* and *Humanae Vitae*

Total value: (\$135/per couple/\$125 per person)

\* Married couples share all materials, with the exception of the Leader's Guide.

\*\**God's Plan* DVDs are not included in these materials. We encourage dioceses and parishes to purchase these separately after the training weekend concludes.



## God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage Weekend Schedule

Day	Start Time	Duration	Topic
Saturday	8:00 AM	30min	Breakfast
	8:30 AM		Registration
	9:00 AM	15 min	Opening Prayer, Welcome, Introductions
	9:15 AM	30 min	Philosophy/Pedagogy of the <i>God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage</i> Program
	9:45 AM	30 min	Understanding Today's Engaged Couple
	10:15 AM	30 min	Introduction to <i>God's Plan</i>
	10:45 AM	15 min	Break with Snack
	<b>Part 1: Catholic Faith and Your Marriage</b>		
	11:00 AM	90 min	Talk 1. <i>God's Plan</i> for Marriage "In the Beginning"
	12:30 PM	45 min	Lunch
1:15 PM	90 min	Talk 2. Christ Restores <i>God's Plan</i> for Marriage	
2:45 PM	30 min	Break	
3:15 PM	90 min	Talk 3. What Are You Saying "I Do" to?	
4:45 AM	75 min	Extented time for Q/A or Mass/ or Extended break	
6:00 PM	60 min	Dinner	
7:00 PM	90 min	Question & Answer Session	
8:30 PM		Dismissal	
Sunday	<b>Part 2: Sacramental Sexuality</b>		
	8:00 AM	105 min	Mass and Breakfast
	9:45 AM	90 min	Talk 4. The Joy of Sexual Honesty before Marriage
	11:30 AM	90 min	Talk 5. The Joy of Sexual Honesty Within Marriage
	1:00 PM	60 min	Lunch
	2:00 PM	45 min	Talk 6. Some Practical Benefits of NFP
	2:45 PM	15 min	Break
	3:00 PM	60 min	Group Breakout: Workshop a <i>God's Plan</i> Talk
4:00 PM		Final Prayer and Dismissal	

*This is a typical weekend schedule which can be adjusted according to your needs.*

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**ASCENSION  
PRESS**



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