



Recommendations for Parish Ministries and Families

For Parish Pastoral Leaders

In preparation for the year of Radiate Love, parish pastoral teams should take time to discern how this year can mark the beginning of a permanent improvement in the way parishioners are prepared for and supported in marriage and family life. Special events, speakers, parish retreats or missions, and other activities could be planned to strengthen marriages and families.

This year is an opportunity for parishes to ask: How are we helping couples and families to deepen their love and commitment to each other and to Christ, allowing their love to radiate out to others in the community? How welcome do couples feel when they come for marriage preparation or baptismal preparation, and how effective is the preparation we provide? What opportunities do we offer families to engage in service as a family? How are we equipping parents to welcome and respond to the questions their children may have about the faith? See the Parishes section of the radiatelove.info website for some practical ideas.

For Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) and K-8 Catechists

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage begins in the home, starting from the first welcome newborns receive from their parents. This is called “remote preparation.” A new document from the Vatican says that remote preparation for marriage has two goals with respect to children:

“(a) to teach children self-esteem and respect for others, and the awareness of their own dignity and respect for that of others; (b) to introduce children to Christian anthropology and the vocational perspective implicit in Baptism which will lead to marriage or consecrated life.”
([Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life](#), n. 36)





That is primarily the responsibility of parents, but catechists serve an important role by guiding families and creating spaces for children to open their hearts to these teachings, in age-appropriate ways. Before catechetical instruction begins, catechists should be encouraged to deepen their own understanding of the social benefits, goods, and Catholic vision of marriage so that they can be effective messengers and guardians of the goodness and beauty that shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel. To better prepare themselves, we encourage:

- Scheduling a one-hour formation session with all their catechists to review and discuss the first quarterly online training, available at www.radiatelove.info.
- Taking some time to learn more about:
 - The social benefits of marriage (i.e. sociologist [Brad Wilcox](#))
 - The effects, goods, and requirements of marital love (CCC nn. 1638-1654; see Fr. Mike Schmitz' Catechism in a Year, Days [224](#), [225](#), and [226](#))
 - The Catholic vision of marriage (CCC nn. 1659-1666; see Fr. Mike, Day [227](#))
- Planning ahead to incorporate a 5 to 10-minute reflection, discussion, or activity once each month, drawing from the materials in the corresponding Radiate Love packet
- Reviewing the Ministries section of the Radiate Love [website](#) for catechetical resources





For Parish Youth and Young Adult Ministry Leaders

The recommendations for PCLs and catechists also apply to parish youth and young adult ministry leaders. However, the remote preparation for marriage in these age groups is more complex. The Vatican guidelines identify the following priorities:

“c) to form adolescents in affectivity and sexuality in view of their future call to generous, exclusive, and faithful love (whether in marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life); d) to offer young people a journey of human and spiritual growth to overcome immaturity, fears, and resistance, in order to open themselves to relationships of friendship and love which are neither possessive nor narcissistic, but are rather free, generous, and self-giving.”
(Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life, n. 36)

Much more detail is provided in the document, so leaders would do well to review nn. 29-35.

As with catechists, preparation to delve deeply into remote marriage preparation begins with formation for the leaders. In addition, youth or young adult ministry teams should look ahead at the thematic topics for the year on the radiatelove.info website and develop a plan to offer topical ministry sessions that complement what the young people may hear at Mass on the corresponding weekends. Some resources that may be helpful can be found in the Ministries section of the [website](#).

For Families

Families and couples are encouraged to visit the Families and Married Couples sections of the Radiate Love [website](#). This month, we highlight the vocation of raising children through an [article](#) that describes parenting as a form of intentional mentorship. In addition, family service projects are a great way to bring parents and children together:

- [How to Volunteer as a Family](#)
- [Volunteer Match](#)

