



Recommendations for Parish Ministries and Families

For Parish Pastoral Leaders

Parish leaders should become familiar with the resources offered on the www.radiatelove.info website. The major themes that flow from the readings this weekend include:

- The first reading calls us to be responsible stewards of our resources, always with a view to taking care of ourselves and our families, but also to be prepared to be generous with others in need, trusting that God provides.
- The Psalm reinforces this message, reminding us that the Lord is faithful—setting captives free, feeding the hungry, raising up those who are laid low, protecting the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. With humility, we recognize that we may be called as God’s chosen instruments to fulfill these promises through our generosity.
- The second reading demonstrates that Christ himself set the example for how to give for the good of others through his saving and atoning sacrifice, namely by offering himself—body, blood, soul, and divinity—once and for all as high priest.
- By highlighting the generosity of the poor widow in the parable, Jesus reminds us that worldly honors and riches do not have eternal value—only love does. The example of the widow is not an invitation to be frivolous or irresponsible, but rather to love generously and carry one another’s burdens, especially as a family.
- For low-income couples preparing to marry, the wedding is not so much a capstone achievement that needs to be celebrated with lavish expenses; it is rather the cornerstone that sets the foundation of the rest of their life together. Costs should never become an obstacle to the sacramental life. See [Canon 848](#) and the explanation [here](#).





Sample ideas for parish programs and activities:

- Assess the diverse financial needs of families in the parish and invite lay people with expertise in these areas to provide workshops on: basic budgeting, financial planning, strategies for career growth, balancing work and family, security in retirement... and discuss how all of these can relate to stewardship in the faith community. For example, see [Seven Steps to Becoming Financially Free: A Catholic Guide to Managing Your Money](#).
- *Marriage and having children are powerful motivators for people to maximize their human potential (spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, economically, etc.) and generously make loving sacrifices for the good of others, following the example of Christ. Yet many people are fearful of taking those steps for the commitment they represent, or due to irregular situations. Find creative ways to lower the bar of cost or dispel common misunderstandings about sacramental marriage for people already in committed relationships, and seek opportunities to promote these options, such as:*
 - *Offering periodic invitations for communal celebrations of marriage or convalidation, adapting preparation as necessary.*
 - *Baptismal preparation and parent sessions for childhood sacraments can be a great opportunity to let people know about pathways for their own growth or renewal in the sacramental life, especially for committed couples who are not benefiting from sacramental marriage. Prepare and share a simple flyer about this opportunity and how to proceed in your parish.*
 - *Encouraging divorced and remarried Catholic couples to discover God's love for them and His plan to give them the fullness of life; this will require discernment, accompaniment, and a willingness to grow through the annulment process, whether or not it is ultimately possible to annul the prior marriage.*





- Make sure the parish does not abandon married couples after the wedding; a catechumenal approach to the married life may include couple-to-couple support and periodic promotion of marriage enrichment opportunities.
- Highlight services and opportunities in the parish for the pastoral care and accompaniment of couples whose marriage is facing a crisis or significant challenge.

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

Catechists and parents should be encouraged to deepen their understanding of God's plan for human flourishing for those who are called to marriage, and Christ's role in making it possible:

- PCLs: when you communicate with the parents and families you serve this month:
 - Share with them the parish or diocese's social media that reminds them of the call to give their all in marriage and family life.
 - Invite them to consider encouraging a couple they know who are not sacramentally married to invite Jesus into the heart of their relationship –there is so much more God wants to give them through this sacramental grace!
- Catechists: take some time to:
 - Appreciate the beauty and goodness represented by the free offering of consent in marriage—the ultimate act of love, following the example of Christ (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 1625-1632 and the explanation here)
 - Learn about the process of convalidation so that you can better communicate this grace-filled opportunity to the families you serve (see explanation here)
 - Likewise, learn about the annulment process for couples who are divorced and either remarried or seeking marriage in the Church (see explanation here)



- Incorporate a 5 to 10-minute reflection, discussion, or activity into the catechetical sessions this week, drawing from the materials and resources in this *Radiate Love* packet. Some options might include:
 - Select a few verses from the first reading (Elijah saw a widow gathering sticks and called to her: do not be afraid! 1 Kgs 17:10-13) or the Gospel (A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents, Mk 12:41-44) and do a *lectio divina* with the children. Pflaum's [Gospel Weeklies](#) provides age-appropriate content you may find useful
 - Use the [Saint of the Month](#) (*Venerable Vittorio and Rosalia Trancanelli*) as a group conversation starter
 - Offer gospel-themed coloring pages (i.e. [here](#)) for the younger kids

For Parish Youth or Young Adult Ministry Leaders

The recommendations for PCLs and catechists also apply to parish youth ministry leaders. This month would be a great time to conduct a session on one or more of these topics:

- The importance of free consent in a sacramental marriage: the free and total gift of self is the greatest expression of love that human beings are capable of, mirroring the love of Christ, because we are created in the image and likeness of God (see [this month's bulletin insert](#))
- The differences between marriage in the natural order, marriage as a civil contract, and sacramental marriage. This can lead into a discussion about convalidation and annulment and how they both reflect and respect the high standard Jesus sets forth for Christian marriage. See the resources for catechist formation above for more insights.
- The role of missionary disciples to *radiate love* by sharing the Good News about sacramental marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman in an exclusive, faithful relationship that is naturally open to bringing forth children.





For Catholic Couples and Parents

Families and couples are always encouraged to visit the *Families* and *Married Couples* sections of the *Radiate Love* website. In addition, take some time this month to learn together as a couple and pray as a family:

- **USCCB** – Visit [For Your Marriage](#) and [Por Tu Matrimonio](#)
 - [The Freedom of the Wedding Vows](#)
 - [Convalidation: Bringing Your Marriage into the Church](#)
 - [Marital Love Needs to Be Other-Focused](#)
 - [Simple Weddings](#)
- [Family Culture: The Secret Weapon of the Catholic Family](#)

