

Journey of Faith



The Sacrament of Matrimony

"Today we're going to talk about sacramental marriage," Mrs. Evans said. "So I've brought Mr. Evans with me to help!"

The class was excited to have a visitor for the day and to hear about Mrs. and Mr. Evans' life outside of class.

"Why did you decide to get married?" Lisa asked.

"Is there a difference between Catholic marriage and other kinds of marriages?" Terrence asked.

"Did you have a big party with your families?" Tomás wanted to know.





What questions do you have about marriage as a sacrament?

Two Become One, and More

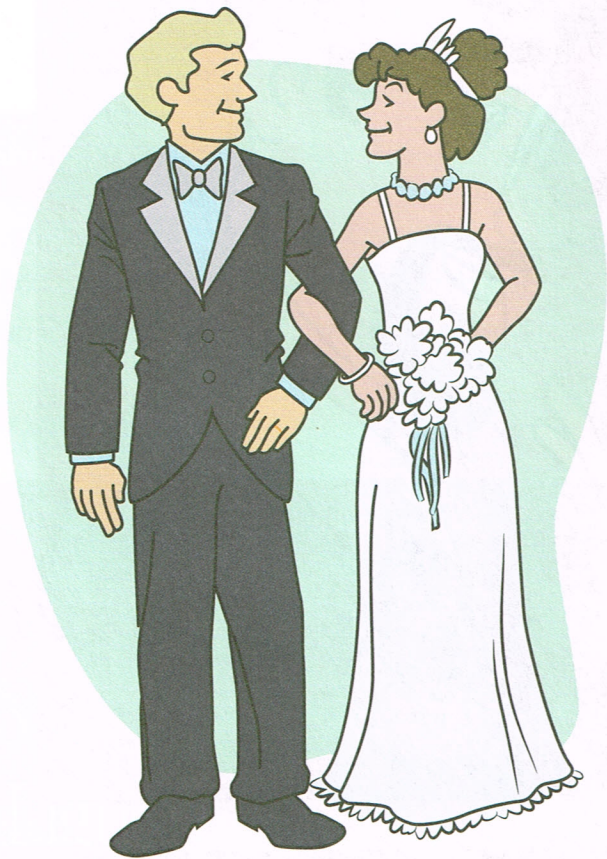
Marriage begins with two people in love. One man and one woman. These two people want to share their whole lives with each other.

Jesus grew up with Mary and Joseph. Jesus saw every day how their love for each other made their family strong, happy, and faith-filled.

Later, Jesus taught a deeper truth of marriage:

"From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh."

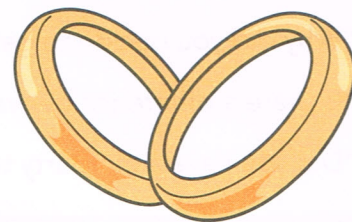
Mark 10:6-8



In the **sacrament of matrimony**, the bride and groom are joined together so closely that they "become one." The bride and groom promise to sacrifice and put their family first. This promise is similar to Christ's gift of himself to the Church. God helps the couple's love to grow and adds his love to theirs. Married love bears fruit, and often children are born. This beautiful union is like a picture of the Trinity.

What Happens at a Wedding?

Many weddings happen during a Mass. Even those that don't happen during a Mass usually begin with readings from the Bible. Then the bride and groom stand before the altar and speak their vows. **Vows** are their promises to each other. The bride and groom promise to love one another forever, "in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health," even "for richer, for poorer" (*The Rite of Marriage*). Then they exchange rings. In the sacrament of matrimony, **wedding rings** are a sign of a couple's everlasting bond.



Marriage is different from all the other sacraments. The bride and groom perform the sacrament themselves! Once they both state their vows, they are officially married. The priest or deacon stands as the Church's witness and leads other parts of the ceremony.

What do you think it takes to be married for life? List some of those things below.

Even if a marriage ends in a divorce or divorce and annulment, God is still present with that family. God doesn't stop loving parents or children just because a marriage wasn't a sacrament. Any arrangements separated parents make about where they will live or who their children will live with should be made with the same love God has for them.

Other Types of Unions

Sometimes two men, two women, or even more than two people will ask to be married or joined in a union together. A union like this may be legal, but it can never be a sacramental marriage because that can only occur between one man and one woman.

Married love both keeps a family together and makes it grow through the birth and raising of children. Christian husbands and wives promise to accept children into their family. This union of two people creating new life is God's image of marriage.



Married for Life

When two people get married before God, their marriage is for life. It takes a lot of hard work to live out that love every day. They need God's help, too.

But sometimes a marriage ends in divorce. After a divorce, the Church looks at the marriage to see if a husband and wife really meant the promises they made at their wedding. If they were too young, didn't understand what their vows meant, or didn't mean to keep their vows, the Church will give them an annulment. An **annulment** says the marriage wasn't actually a sacrament because something essential to that marriage was missing.

After an annulment is granted, both people are free to get married. If a person does remarry, the Church will bless the new union as a sacrament.



THE NEWS AROUND TOWN

Pretend you are a reporter. Find a married couple and ask them about their marriage. Write down what you find out.

Here are some questions to start with:

- How did you meet?
- How long did you date before you decided to get married?
- What's the best thing about being married?
- What's the hardest thing about being married?
- How is God a part of your marriage?



In Short



- Marriage reflects the paschal mystery.
- Marriage reflects the love of the Trinity.
- Marriage has many spiritual characteristics.

Journey of Faith for Children, Catechumenate, C8 (826344)

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Editors of the 2017 *Journey of Faith for Children*: Theresa Nienaber-Panuski and Pat Fosarelli, MD, DMin.

Design and production: Wendy Barnes, Lorena Mitre Jimenez, John Krus, and Bill Townsend. Illustration: Jeff Albrecht.

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