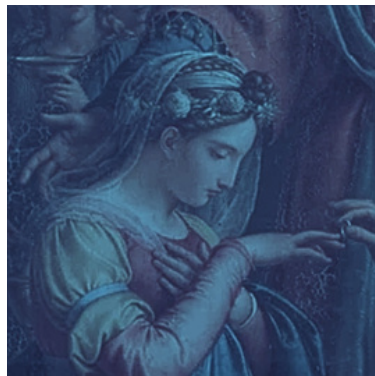
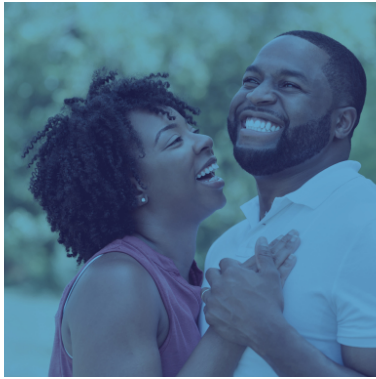




JUBILANT MARRIAGES

PARISH PROCESS

Discover how the Jubilant Marriages Initiative offers parishes a easy-to-understand process to build Parish Marriage Ministry that will benefit individual couples, groups of couples, extended families, service ministries, and the entire parish community.

www.MarriageandFamilySTL.org





The Jubilant Marriages Parish Process

Jubilant Marriages is a comprehensive pastoral plan to foster within marriages and families a living relationship with Jesus through prayer and the sacraments, to provide families with healthy human, spiritual, intellectual, and missionary formation, and to offer pastoral strategies for the accompaniment of couples through all seasons of life. This process will energize the health and holiness of married couples as the heartbeat of thriving parish communities. Look at the framework below followed by two real-world parish case studies.

What is the **GOAL** of the Jubilant Marriages Process in a parish?

- To cultivate **holier and happier** married couples and families.
- To empower couples with **resources and support** for times of trial
- To help couples and families **draw strength from prayer and sacraments**
- To enhance parish participation, service, and **vibrant parish culture**.
- To infuse a **matrimonial mindset** in future generations of youth.

HOW do we implement Jubilant Marriages in our parish?

- ESTABLISH: Core Team of 4-6 married couples.
- EMPOWER: Identify Core Team roles/responsibilities.
- ENRICH: Parish couples through events, small groups, and resources
- COMMUNICATE: Information and resources to help couples.
- (Later) INVITE: couples to become Matrimony Mentors for other couples

WHAT kinds of things does the Jubilant Marriages Core Team do?

- EVENTS: Host community-building marriage enrichment events
- COUPLE SMALL GROUPS: Help organize groups for friendship & solidarity.
- OFFER HELP: Accompaniment and support for couples who are struggling.
- ENGAGE: Through Sunday bulletin, newsletter and personal conversations

What **HELP** is available from the Office of Marriage & Family Life?

- Personal guidance and help for implementation of the JM Process
- **MarriageandFamilySTL.org** webpage with links and resources.
- Fully prepared content for community-building enrichment events.
- Monthly Jubilant Marriages digital resources for clergy and parishioners.
- Jubilant Marriages Prayer Cards and Resource Booklets
- Jubilant Marriages Banner to promote awareness and participation
- Training for Matrimony Mentors

Questions? Contact The Office of Marriage and Family Life:

Marriage & Family Life Program Manager: Paul Duker PaulDuker@archstl.org Office: 314-792-7178

Jubilant Marriages Coordinator Cathy Gilmore CathyGilmore@Archstl.org Cell: 636-391-3999



Jubilant Marriages Case Study #1

St. Gerard Majella Parish Launch 2026

BEGIN: Informational Core Team Pot-Luck Supper - January

Welcome new members to the Core Team

Onboard new couples / Confirm overall plans for the year

Build sense of community for marriage / couple-based ministry

World Marriage Sunday – (repeat yearly in Feb)

Announce the new Parish Marriage Ministry program and emphasize the importance of marriage and family. Banner in Church narthex and on TV screen.

Regular Marriage-themed content in the bulletin begins.

PREPARE THE WAY:

Establish Core Team leading Marriage Ministry + test M&M Small Group structure.

Core Team demographics:

1 couple with kids in PSR, 1 couple with kids in high school, 1 couple who are empty nesters, 1 couple with husband who is a deacon, 1 couple in the “baby” season of life, 1 couple with kids in parish school.

Core Team Roles and Responsibilities:

2 couples – coordinate communications

2 couples – coordinate small groups

2 couples – coordinate events

Plan the CCME Marriage Ministry Launch Event: Promote w/ postcards given to school parents and PSR parents at pickup, plus Fish Fry, pulpit, bulletin, eblasts, etc.

CCME (Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience) Launch Event - May 30

Location in Liguori Hall

Coordinate flow: Social time + CCME Content + Social Time

Majella club to help with beer/wine + heavy appetizers donated

Parish assist \$\$ to provide a discount for the first 25 couples who sign up

Babysitting important to get younger couples

Introduce couple small groups - with the Marriage & More Format

“Journey to Joy” - June, July, August

- Seven Step Marriage Enrichment follow up included with each CCME reservation.
- Options for couples meet in person on Sunday evenings, or at home one-on-one.

September - Marriage Mass (to repeat yearly in early Fall)

- Homilies + prayers on marriage (like in Feb)
- Jubilant Marriages information available in vestibule with coffee/treats.

Marriage and More Couple Small Groups

Officially begin Marriage & More (M&M) Small Groups in Fall. Simple format to grow in solidarity and spiritually. Meet for 9 months + break for summer

Jubilant Marriages Case Study #2

Incarnate Word Parish

Successful growth of Marriage Ministry at Incarnate Word Parish, Chesterfield, MO

Pastor insights from Father Schroeder:

- Spend time in prayer before asking your core couples to lead your marriage enrichment ministry. Ask God to bring some names to mind who have a heart for bringing others together and offering a joyful witness to the grace of matrimony.
- Ask parish staff and ministry leaders who they admire in the parish as examples of joy-filled marriages. I was given names of couples I recognized but hadn't heard their full story and it was inspiring.
- Spend time in the first year (or longer) building the marriage ministry by encouraging and forming your core couples. It is hard work to get something like this off the ground and expand it beyond the people who will come to anything the parish offers. Spending time with the ministry couples and hearing their ideas, debriefing after events, and planning for the next ones will all pay off down the line.

"Pro Tips" from the Lead Couple of the Marriage Ministry Core Team

- Set a clear mission. For example, it was very important to our pastor that we offer some type of group enrichment program that meets 6-8 times each season. Babysitting began as a bonus, but soon became extremely important to the ministry in its outreach to young couples.
- Choose team leaders wisely (faith filled couples with solid marriages who are organized, dependable and engaging).
- Start small and manageable, perhaps with just one or two date nights. If you have a large and active parish, consider adding an Adult Small Group (Wednesday or Sunday sessions). Growing slowly and organically is most effective.
- Develop your team gradually, layering in couples that are already active and engaging with the ministry activities. It's important as you build your team to collaborate with the pastor, priests and parish administrator on the team build out and programming.

"Governing Principles" from the Parish Office Administrator

- **CALENDAR** - What events are offered? Are they mission focused?: Over the past 3-4 years, we developed internal processes and systems that provide awareness of programming offered at our parish. The fruit of this intentionality is collaboration between the office, ministries leaders, and with other groups to multiply our efforts.
- **COMMUNICATION** - What is our message? How and where are we proclaiming it?: Communication Coordinator generates beautifully branded tools shared across our various channels (i.e. web, flocknote, social media, etc). Additionally, ministry leaders and parishioners are asked to use the tools to extend personal invitations to friends, neighbors, and colleagues.
- **COMMUNITY** - What is Intentional Discipleship? Who is in our community? We try to practice intentional hospitality and learn who is attending our Mass, events, and programs. We also host annual Ministry Leader Development Workshops so leaders can see how their efforts support the broader Incarnate Word parish mission. The fruit of this has created a wider net of connections. It's fun to watch how God has used seemingly small efforts to minister to people. In fact, we recently had a woman return to the church through a fish fry to-go order and a knitting class.

Jubilant Marriages Case Study #2

Incarnate Word Parish Marriage Ministry Growth Timeline

YEAR ONE: Time to lay groundwork and prepare plans.

Build Marriage Enrichment (ME) Core Team

1. 6-8 months in advance -- Pastor identified one Lead Couple and also other couples to be on the team. Couples who are faith-filled, engaged, stable, with a clear understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage
2. Helpful if at least one of the parties has good administrative and communication skills and at least one is comfortable speaking in front of groups
3. The pastor did the initial outreach to each couple with a high amount of success. The Lead Couple and the parish administrator also collaborated on this effort.

Pastor & Lead Couple

1. Created a mission statement for the ME Ministry
2. With the pastor and parish administrator, we considered and set up an annual plan for the various aspects of the ministry's efforts which took into consideration other parish events occurring throughout the year.

Communications

The parish administrator and Lead Couple collaborated on many ways to let parishioners know about this new and ongoing ministry. Throughout each year, employ the following tools:

1. **Bulletin announcements**
2. **Flocknote announcements**
 - a. Include ME content often in digital parish newsletter
 - b. ME Ministry sends Flocknote out 3-4 times per year, to parishioners whose emails were collected at ministry events or who asked to join to the FN distribution for ME Ministry.
3. **Parish Website**
 - a. Create a Marriage Ministry page on the parish website
 - b. Include detailed descriptions of activities on the parish website (usually updated in July for upcoming year of activities)
 - c. Link on the parish website to sign up to receive ME Ministry flocknotes.
4. **Parish TV** include ME announcements/graphics in the vestibule and school lobby
5. **Parish Ministry Market** table with team leaders, info sheets and sign-up sheets
6. **Pulpit Announcements** – usually once or twice a year to talk about marriage enrichment ministry and/or upcoming event (often in September after Labor Day to discuss the Wednesday and Sunday programs as they begin in October)
7. **Emails from Lead Couple and Team Leaders** inviting couples they know to all of the events! Personal invites go a long way.

Our first year included:

Parish Date Nights

We planned and hosted two parish dates nights, in the spring and in the fall

1. Timing: start after 5:00pm Mass on Saturday. End by 9:30pm, with couples stay till 10pm
2. Location: met in the parish hall with catered dinner, beer/wine, soft drinks etc.
3. Witness: witness couple talk (20-25 minutes)
4. Inspiration: brief religious talk from a visiting priest or other (10-12 minutes)
5. Music: music and fellowship after the program
6. Fee: charged a registration fee per couple + parish supplemented some of the cost as well.

Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series

Coordinated onsite at the parish with a predetermined "curriculum". We explored 2-3 possible programs for couple group formation and with the pastor's approval we chose "Beloved" on the Formed platform.

Jubilant Marriages Case Study #2

Incarnate Word Parish Marriage Ministry Growth Timeline

Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series (YEAR ONE cont.)

1. These group sessions are kept to 6-7 sessions in total
2. Meet for only 1.5 hours each time. Flow: Watch the program video (30min) + one-on-one couple conversations(15min) + groups of 3 couples ea. gather for discussion (15min).
3. Two couple enrichment sessions the first year – Wednesday Evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 and Sunday Mornings from 10:00 – 11:30 (based upon Mass times)
4. Free Childcare - which is critical for young couples to be able to attend.

YEAR TWO

We built off the success of Year One with the repeat of the two Parish Date Nights and the Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series on Wednesday Nights and Sundays.

Parish Date Nights – 2 per year continued as in year one hosted in parish meeting space

Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series

1. Both Wednesday Evening Sessions and the Sunday Morning Sessions did the Witness to Love – Belonging program. We chose this program because our parish priests were beginning the Witness to Love marriage prep program in the parish. This program was really focused on newlywed couples in the first 5-15 years, so it wasn't the best material for a broad array of couples in different stages of marriage.
2. We added 2 additional couples to the Team Leaders of the Sunday Morning Sessions. This enabled flexibility for the Team Leaders leading sessions – even though it is best if all team leaders (now 3 couples) can be at each of the 6-7 sessions.

Added Independent Small Groups

1. This arose from some of the Team Leaders from Year One joining up and either creating their own Independent Small Group with each other Or, a Team Couple beginning their own Independent Small Group with their own friends.
2. They meet on their own in couples' homes and choose their own content/curriculum – sometimes they choose to do the same content as the Sunday Morning Sessions.
3. Two ways to form Small Groups – Option One: Couples/friends create a group that know each other or Option Two: Use a general signup to connect couples in the parish with other couples.

YEAR THREE

The ministry continued to learn and grow. We definitely made strides by adding more layers of leadership to the ministry and trying to be creative while serving some unmet needs of younger couples in the parish.

Parish Date Night

Due to our extremely busy parish calendar, we went from two to one date night this year.

1. Location: We moved our date night offsite to 4 Hands Brewery in Chesterfield in their private event space. We still charged a small registration fee to keep people committed and help to pay for room rental. Otherwise, all food and beverage was paid by each individual couple.

Date Night programming was the same with speakers (total of 35 minutes) and live music.

1. This is a much simpler format for volunteers (we only had a team of 2 couples that coordinated and set up for this date night) and we can see adding a second date night at some point in the future. On-site date nights with caterers required many more volunteers and coordination.

Jubilant Marriages Case Study #2

Incarnate Word Parish Marriage Ministry Growth Timeline

(YEAR THREE) Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series

We were happy to offer two different types of programs this year in marriage enrichment ministry.

1. Wednesday Evening Session program - We Said I Do Forever on chuckneff.com which is a series of witness couple stories which lead into fruitful small group discussions.
2. Sunday Morning Session program - Family: A Guide to Parenting presented by the Messy Family Project. While this program is focused primarily on couples with children, we were able to weave in couples' marriage messaging throughout. We noticed an increase in participant couples and the free babysitters helped as well.

Independent Couple Small Groups

1. These groups continued again into their second year.
2. We asked 2 of the women (that split off in Year Two to form their own independent small groups) to be the Coordinators of the two different types of independent small groups (either with couples/friends that you know Or, with a general signup from other couples in the parish).

Added Young Married & Engaged (YME)

Groups focused on young married and engaged couples

1. Defined this group as engaged and married couples with kids younger than school aged. We wanted to give these couples an opportunity for fellowship and friendship.
2. Asked one of the independent small groups, comprised of 4-5 younger couples in their mid to late 30s, to be the Leaders and Coordinators of this new YME effort.
3. YME team leaders schedule about 6 activities throughout the year such as, cooking classes, wine tastings, St. Peter & Paul volunteering, bowling and other activities.

YEAR FOUR

We continued to layer in additional leadership and programming. This year we asked 2 couples that have been attending Wednesday evening sessions regularly to join the Team Leaders for Wednesday Evenings. Now there are 3 couples leading which offers some flexibility with scheduling when needed.

Parish Date Night – continued on as before

Couple Enrichment - Multi-session Series

Wednesday Evening Session program – We shifted to parishioner couples, in various seasons of life, giving in-person witness talks followed by small group sharing.

Sunday Morning Session program – Renewed: 7 Steps for an Amazing Marriage” from RealLifeCatholic.com

Independent Small Groups

1. To encourage more growth, two coordinators are beginning to invite potential small group couples to their existing Small Groups to give them an idea of what a group is like.
2. We continue to work towards adding more small groups. We are considering finding a couple(s) to be a point couple for starting small groups – this couple would offer to begin a group and work with that group for one year before they go on their own.

Young Married & Engaged (YME)

1. This has proven to be a challenging group to engage, but we are not ready to give up just yet! We are trying to identify 2-3 very young couples (late 20s early 30s) to commit to be team leaders for YME. We are hoping a more youthful presence will help this group.
2. Considering moving to more text communication rather than email communication only, or a blend of both.

Added “Marriage is a Dance”

1. We added a new, fun program this year based loosely on the program Theology of Dance.
2. We identified two couples – one married 40+ and one married 10+ - to lead this new program. We knew both couples love to dance and this was a great fit for their interests.
3. This was held in our parish hall for 3 consecutive Fridays in October
 - a. Began with social time (15 minutes, beer and wine and water)
 - b. 15 minutes of marriage enrichment nuggets about how marriage is like dancing.
 - c. The evening would continue with learning dance steps and dancing for about an hour.