



ARE YOU READY?

YOUR WEDDING,

YOUR VOWS,

YOUR LIFE TOGETHER.

The preparation for your wedding and married life together will involve a number of different sessions and the discussion of various different topics. We hope that as the preparation unfolds you will see how these different sessions come together and form one single programme aimed at helping you both to prepare thoughtfully and prayerfully for your life long marriage and your wedding day

This particular resource is for the two of you to use together throughout the time of your preparation and it is designed to help you understand more clearly exactly what you are doing and saying when you stand side by side before the priest and say your "I am"s and "I do"s.

It is vitally important that you understand what you are saying "I am" and "I do" to because this, your act of consent to marriage, is what creates the bond of marriage between you.

There are lots of things happening in your wedding ceremony, but the absolutely essential thing that happens is that you make an act of consent to marry each other - that's what makes you married; husband and wife.

The purpose of this resource, and indeed the whole programme of preparation, is to make sure that you make a proper act of consent, one that will create a bond of marriage between you. For you to make a proper act of consent four things are necessary:

- you have a right understanding of marriage as the Church understands it;
- you must have given the decision to marry the person next to you the kind of careful, reasoned, considered, critical, balanced reflection that a decision as important as that requires;
- you must intend and mean what you say;
- you must be able to do, to carry out, that to which you consent.

If your act of consent embraces all four elements it creates the bond of marriage between you.

So, the act of consent is at the heart of what you do on your wedding day and we hope that you will use this particular resource to help you discern whether you are ready to make that act of consent in such a way that it brings about your marriage.

On your wedding day the priest or deacon will ask you four questions to which you are asked to respond either, "I am" or "I do":

ARE YOU READY, FREELY AND WITHOUT RESERVATION, TO GIVE YOURSELVES TO EACH OTHER IN MARRIAGE?

ARE YOU READY TO LOVE AND HONOUR EACH OTHER AS MAN AND WIFE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES?

ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT CHILDREN LOVINGLY FROM GOD AND BRING THEM UP ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH?

WILL YOU TAKE 'SO-AND-SO' HERE PRESENT FOR YOU LAWFUL WEDDED HUSBAND/WIFE ACCORDING TO THE RITES OF OUR HOLY MOTHER THE CHURCH?

As you see, three of the questions begin with the words, "Are you ready.....". The last question begins, "Will you....." Well, during your preparation you must honestly ask yourselves the question, *are* you ready, *will* you?

The answer to the question, "Are you ready?" might at first glance be rather obvious. Of course you are ready or you would not be standing in front of the priest doing what you are doing. It is a sad fact, however, that many marriages end in tears because the couple involved had not honestly asked themselves this question and so entered their marriage not ready, not properly understanding what they were consenting to, without having given their decision to marry the necessary thought, without asking themselves "can I do it"?

We want to make sure that you are ready and this resource is offered to you both for you to use together so that when your Big Day comes you will know that you are ready and that the person you are marrying is ready - really as ready as you can be.

Every word, every phrase in the questions that the priest or deacon will ask you has been chosen carefully, deliberately, and we suggest that you use this resource to help you reflect on and talk through each of them. During your engagement and the time leading up to your wedding you will share many things together, perhaps give each other gifts. The most important gift you can share and give to each other is the time and space to sit quietly and together reflect on and talk through your thoughts, reactions and feelings about those questions you will be asked on your wedding day.

Now is the time for you to share your deepest thoughts with each other, time to be open and honest with each other about your ideas, hopes, dreams, concerns, reservations. Now is the time for you to be **totally** honest with each other, 'opening up', as they say. You may not have taken time in your relationship recently to spend time, just the two of you, without any distractions or interruptions, and talk through the really serious things in your lives, your love and your future.

If you use this opportunity to give yourselves the time and space to reflect on and honestly talk about your "I am"s and "I do"s, the more they will mean to you on the day. If you use this time well you will be clear about what you are saying "I am" and "I do" to and, just as importantly, you will know that the person next you is just as clear and that you are one in heart and mind when you make your acts of consent.

So, use what follows in this resource - take time to ask yourself the questions posed, write down your feelings, responses and reactions and then share them with each other in all honesty and love. This is *your* time for you to share with each other, you will not be asked to share anything you have said with anyone else, though those leading your preparation will be happy to discuss any issues that you might wish to raise with them.

We hope that you will enjoy using this resource and that you will enjoy discovering things about yourselves and each other that you had never realised or that had never occurred to you.

How to use this resource.

- Don't use it all at once! Take it up and use it throughout the whole programme of preparation. You will have at least 6 months and can revisit it often.
- Give yourself and the one you are marrying, time. When you decide to use this resource, make sure you have set aside time together, plenty of time during which you won't be disturbed and have the chance to talk openly and honestly.
- Before you discuss the questions raised in the resource together, give yourself time to reflect on them yourself. If you find it helpful - and you probably will - put your thoughts in writing first.
- When you have given yourself time, sit with the one you are marrying and talk through the thoughts and observations you have noted. Be prepared to talk openly and honestly, to listen to what you are each saying, to hear what you do not always expect.
- Be gentle with each other and let these be times when you grow in love and understanding for each other.
- There may be issues that you want to raise with whoever it is that is running the programme of preparation of which you are a part. Feel free to talk to them or to your priest in confidence.
- Enjoy your times of quiet and reflection together - they are precious!

ARE YOU READY TO CONSENT TO MARRIAGE?

This is how the Church understands, describes marriage:

“A PARTNERSHIP OF THE WHOLE LIFE, FOR THE GOOD OF THE SPOUSES AND THE PROCREATION AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN”

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF MARRIAGE?

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS, HOPES?

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL BEING MARRIED MAKE TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

HOW ABOUT THE ONE YOU ARE MARRYING? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEIR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS ARE ABOUT MARRIAGE?

HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED AT OTHER PEOPLES' MARRIAGE AND SAID, “OURS WILL BE DIFFERENT”? HOW WILL IT BE DIFFERENT, WHY DO YOU WANT IT TO BE DIFFERENT?

QUESTION 1

ARE YOU READY FREELY AND WITHOUT RESERVATION, TO GIVE YOURSELVES TO EACH OTHER IN MARRIAGE?

GO BEYOND MATERIAL THINGS, YOU ARE GIVING YOURSELVES TO EACH OTHER, THE PERSON YOU ARE.

HONESTLY, WHO ARE YOU GIVING?

WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF, HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF? WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT YOU? WHAT'S NOT SO GOOD ABOUT YOU? WHAT IS YOUR HISTORY? ARE THERE PARTS OF YOU THAT YOU CANNOT SHARE?

IS THAT HOW THE PERSON YOU ARE MARRYING SEES YOU?

HONESTLY WHO ARE YOU RECEIVING?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PERSON YOU ARE MARRYING, THEIR CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY?

IS THIS HOW THEY SEE THEMSELVES?

HOW WELL, HOW DEEPLY DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAT AND TALKED ABOUT YOUR DEEPEST THOUGHTS, HOPES AND DESIRES ABOUT THE THINGS THAT ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU BOTH?

DARE YOU DO THAT NOW?

QUESTION 2 (a)
**ARE YOU READY TO LOVE AND HONOUR
EACH OTHER AS MAN AND WIFE?**

WHAT IS LOVE?
HOW DO YOU DEFINE 'LOVE'?

HOW DOES THE ONE YOU ARE MARRYING DEFINE 'LOVE'?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP?

HOW DO YOU KNOW THE ONE YOU ARE MARRYING LOVES
YOU?

HOW DO YOU LOVE EACH OTHER?

DO YOU FEEL LOVED?

WHAT IS HONOUR?

HOW DO YOU HONOUR EACH OTHER?

DO YOU FEEL HONOURED?

QUESTION 2 (b)

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES?

HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE REST OF YOUR LIVES WILL BRING?

*WHAT PLANS HAVE YOU MADE FOR YOUR FUTURE
TOGETHER?*

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF THINGS GET TOUGH?

QUESTION 3(a)

**ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT
CHILDREN LOVINGLY FROM GOD?**

WHERE DO CHILDREN COME IN YOUR PLANS, YOUR IDEA
OF MARRIAGE?

MARRIAGE IS AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP OF LIFE AND
LOVE -

ARE YOU INTIMATE?..... HOW?

HOW DO YOU AND THE ONE YOU ARE MARRYING MANAGE
INTIMACY?

THE SEXUAL SIDE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP...

HOW DO YOU MANAGE IT?

IS IT SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE BOTH COMFORTABLE
WITH?

IS IT SOMETHING YOU CAN DISCUSS TOGETHER OPENLY?

IS IT A SATISFACTORY SIDE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

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**QUESTION 3(b)**

**AND BRING THEM UP ACCORDING TO THE LAW  
OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH?**

*WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE LAW OF THE CHURCH?*

*WHAT ABOUT THE LAW OF CHRIST?*

*HOW WILL THIS IMPACT ON YOUR FAMILY LIFE?*

*HOW WILL YOU SUPPORT EACH OTHER TO FULFIL THIS VOW?*

## QUESTION 4

WILL YOU TAKE "SO-AND SO" HERE PRESENT FOR YOUR  
LAWFUL WEDDED HUSBAND/WIFE ACCORDING TO THE RITES  
OF OUR HOLY MOTHER THE CHURCH?

ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT THE GIFT OF THEMSELVES  
THAT YOUR FUTURE HUSBAND/WIFE IS OFFERING YOU?

DO YOU KNOW ALL THAT THIS GIFT CONTAINS?

DO YOU EACH UNDERSTAND WHAT THE ACT OF CONSENT  
HAS MEANT?

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