

# WITNESS TO LOVE ROADMAP

INTRODUCING THE MARRIAGE CATECHUMENATE  
AND THE WAY OF EVANGELIZING SPOUSES



**WITNESSTO LOVE**

A MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

[witnessstolove.org](http://witnessstolove.org)



MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDERS

Most people today desire a good marriage, but the problem is that many do not really know how to be married and stay married! Many young people have never seen what intact families look like and are formed in generational examples of divorce and social instability. The reception of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Church is down 50+ percent since 1990 with no signs of reversal. Fewer marriages in the Church mean fewer baptisms, fewer first Communions, and even fewer Confirmations. Of those sacred truths of our faith to this generation of couples. Perhaps no other generation has lived with a poorer foundation on which to build their marriage, since couples today have either never experienced family life or have accepted a distorted image of what it means to live out a Sacramental Marriage. Witness to Love offers an apostolic response to a culture that does not know Christ and an evangelical “emphatic challenge” to approach, engage, accompany, form, and disciple couples in our present age. Do we continue on with the same results (outcomes) or try another way?

Mary-Rose & Ryan Verret

THE MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

“Without a doubt, Witness to Love is THE most effective pre-marital resource that exists today. It works so well, because their entire model is built upon the creation of a transformative relationship... If the future of the church is going to pass through the family, I think future families should first pass through Witness to Love.”



John Paul DeGance  
President and CEO  
of Communio



Justin Reyes  
Director of Family Evangelization  
Diocese of Victoria

“Witness to Love is changing the face of marriage in the United States and beyond by helping married couples share from their own marriages and thus parish communities are being strengthened.”

“We at OSV are working to support innovative, creative projects and programs that can make a transformational impact in the lives of others - and this program is exactly that. We’re thrilled to be a part of this project and we encourage parishes and families to participate.”



Jason Shanks  
President of the Our  
Sunday Visitor Institute



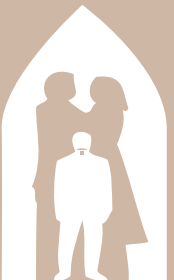
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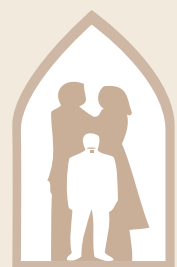
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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to build and sustain communities of Evangelizing Spouses to Be Light in our world. We believe in building communities and not just creating content.

RENEWING THE CHURCH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS





## MISSION OF WITNESS TO LOVE

### OUR COMMITMENT TO DIOCESES & PARISHES:

Witness to Love is committed to providing local churches with the tools to transform existing programs of marriage preparation and formation into wellsprings of dynamic marriage discipleship, fostering both parish connection and authentic accompaniment before and after the wedding day. This is a two-for-one evangelization process that not only renews the outcomes of marriage preparation but also challenges the standard approach to marriage formation offered by the Church.

### A MARRIAGE DECLINE, LEADS TO A PARISH DECLINE

In 2014 there were 17,755 Catholic parishes in the United States and since that time there have been hundreds of closures and mergers. Unfortunately, research indicates only 18% of these remaining parishes adequately invests in marriage preparation, formation, or support. This is an issue that is not only affecting marriages but also our parishes!

### REBUILDING GENERATIONS OF LIFE-LONG MARRIAGES

“

Witness to Love’s innovative approach to marriage preparation is an important resource to help our parishes in their formation of missionary disciples.”

Archbishop William E. Lori  
Archdiocese of Baltimore

## THE OUTCOMES OF WITNESS

### 1. GROWING IN AUTHENTIC FRIENDSHIP:

WTL supports marriages and families by fostering authentic relationships that last beyond the wedding day.

### 2. FORMING VIRTUE THROUGH MENTORSHIP:

Evangelizing Spouses provide not only life skills and virtue formation but also serve as a means of rebuilding trust in the Church and in God.

### 3. INCREASING THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE PARISH & FORM THE DOMESTIC CHURCH:

WTL builds community through friendship, which increases Mass attendance and participation in parish life.

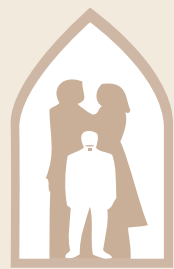
### 4. REBUILDING GENERATIONS OF LIFE-LONG MARRIAGES THROUGH ACCOMPANIMENT:

Authentic accompaniment continues beyond the wedding day and lowers the divorce rate by supporting couples during the first five years when statistics show they need it the most.



**ONLY 18% OF  
PARISHES  
IN THE US OFFER  
ANY MARRIAGE  
FORMATION**

*Statistics provided by Communio- Barna Study*



# OUR STORY & Sharing A New Way

WITNESS TO LOVE IS RENEWING THE CHURCH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

WE BEGAN BY ASKING OURSELVES THESE QUESTIONS

1 WHERE ARE ALL THE COUPLES THAT WE PREPARED FOR MARRIAGE?

2 WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP DYNAMIC WITH COUPLES?

3 HOW WOULD WE EVEN KNOW IF THEY WERE HAVING PROBLEMS IN THEIR MARRIAGES?

**BACKSTORY:** As newlyweds themselves, Ryan and Mary-Rose Verret noticed other newly married couples were absent from most Catholic parishes. Beginning in 2008, they began an eight-year process of interviewing over 400 engaged couples through their work at their diocese and later at their parish. During their encounters with couples the Verrets realized that even the best of published programs, marriage conferences, theology retreats, natural family planning classes, and their own parish's extensive marriage prep course, which included trained mentors, were not sufficient for success. Most sobering of all was that in the majority of cases an engaged couple could go through the entire marriage formation process without ever going to Mass or encountering their parish community even once. What was missing? TRUST and relationships.



Founders of Witness to Love - Mary-Rose & Ryan Verret on their Wedding Day

**DISCOVERY:** Trust and existing relationships were missing in the standard marriage prep and assigned mentor format. In creating Witness to Love, the Verrets discovered a process that speaks to the everyday struggles and joys of newlyweds, while giving them Sacramental "lifelines" of connection that last beyond their wedding day. What began as an experiment fueled by desperation and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in their local parish in 2011, has spread to hundreds of parishes in 80+ dioceses and is now in four languages.



Mary-Rose & Ryan Verret are internationally recognized speakers, authors, television hosts, and the co-founders of Witness to Love. Together Ryan and Mary-Rose speak on issues regarding evangelization, marriage, and discipleship. In June 2021 the Verret's were invited by the Vatican to present at the International Forum: Where do we stand with Amoris Laetitia? – on the impact of mentor couples in evangelization. They have been interviewed by: Rome Reports, The National Catholic Register, EWTN, The Catholic World Report, Catholic News Agency, The Gus Lloyd Show, Aletheia, and secular media outlets. They are the authors of Witness to Love: How to Help the Next Generation Build Marriages that Survive and Thrive, published in 2015. In 2021, they co-hosted the 12 episode TV show 'Family' with Shalom World. Their passion is teaching couples to share their marriage with others and to understand that their home is a missionary outpost of the local parish.

*Mary-Rose and Ryan Verret have a passion for teaching couples to share their marriage with others and to understand that their home is a missionary outpost of the local parish.*

DEEPENING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHRIST AND THE CHURCH TO SUPPORT MARRIAGES IS THE GOAL OF THE WITNESS TO LOVE MODEL



# Forming the Next Generation of Marriages and Families

WITNESS TO LOVE IS A VIRTUES-BASED, CATECHUMENATE MODEL OF MARRIAGE RENEWAL AND FORMATION, INTEGRATED WITH MODERN PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY.

“

“The family... is founded and given life by love, in a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives... only with love the family forms a community of persons and, in the same way, only within love the family can grow and perfect itself as a community of persons”

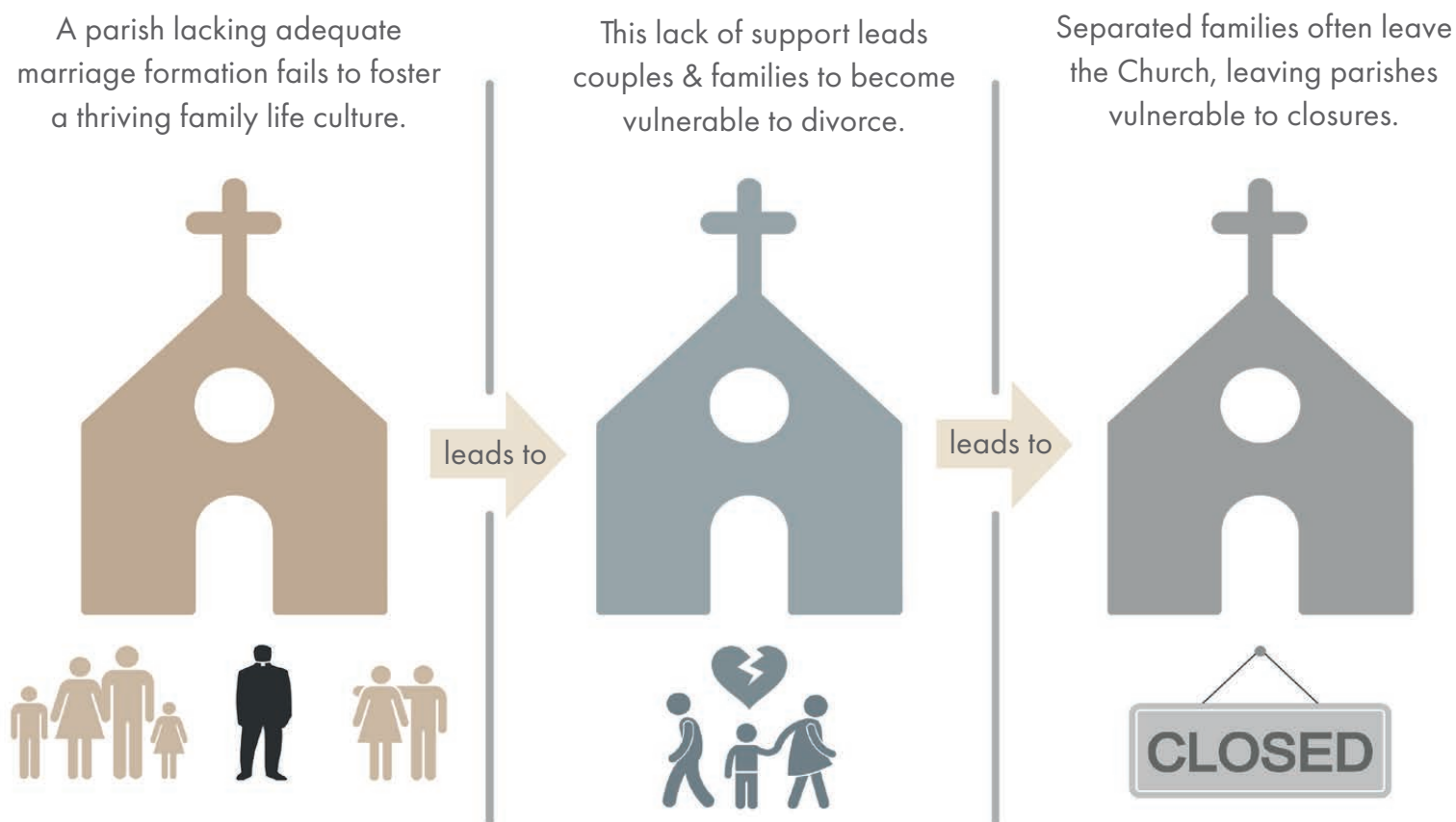
St. Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 18



# Marriage Matters for the Future of Society & the Church

WHEN MARRIAGE DECLINES, PARISHES DECLINE TOO

INVESTING IN MARRIAGE FORMATION TO PRESERVE THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH



“The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church.”

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 31

## HOW IS WITNESS TO LOVE UNIQUELY SUITED TO SOLVE THE CHALLENGES FACING MARRIAGE

1



50% of marriages end in divorce and Catholics are no different than the general population.

2



The children of divorced parents are less likely to marry and less likely to stay married.

3



After decades of traditional marriage preparation, little progress has been made to support marriages after the preparatory program.

4

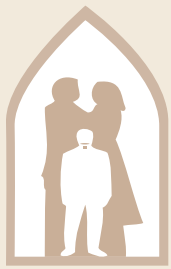


Pastors and Diocesan staff are stretched to capacity, and WTL has a successful, 10-year track record and is an answer to this situation.

5



Currently, history is not on our side. Let's not let this history define the future for Catholic marriages, the cornerstone of families, communities and the nation.

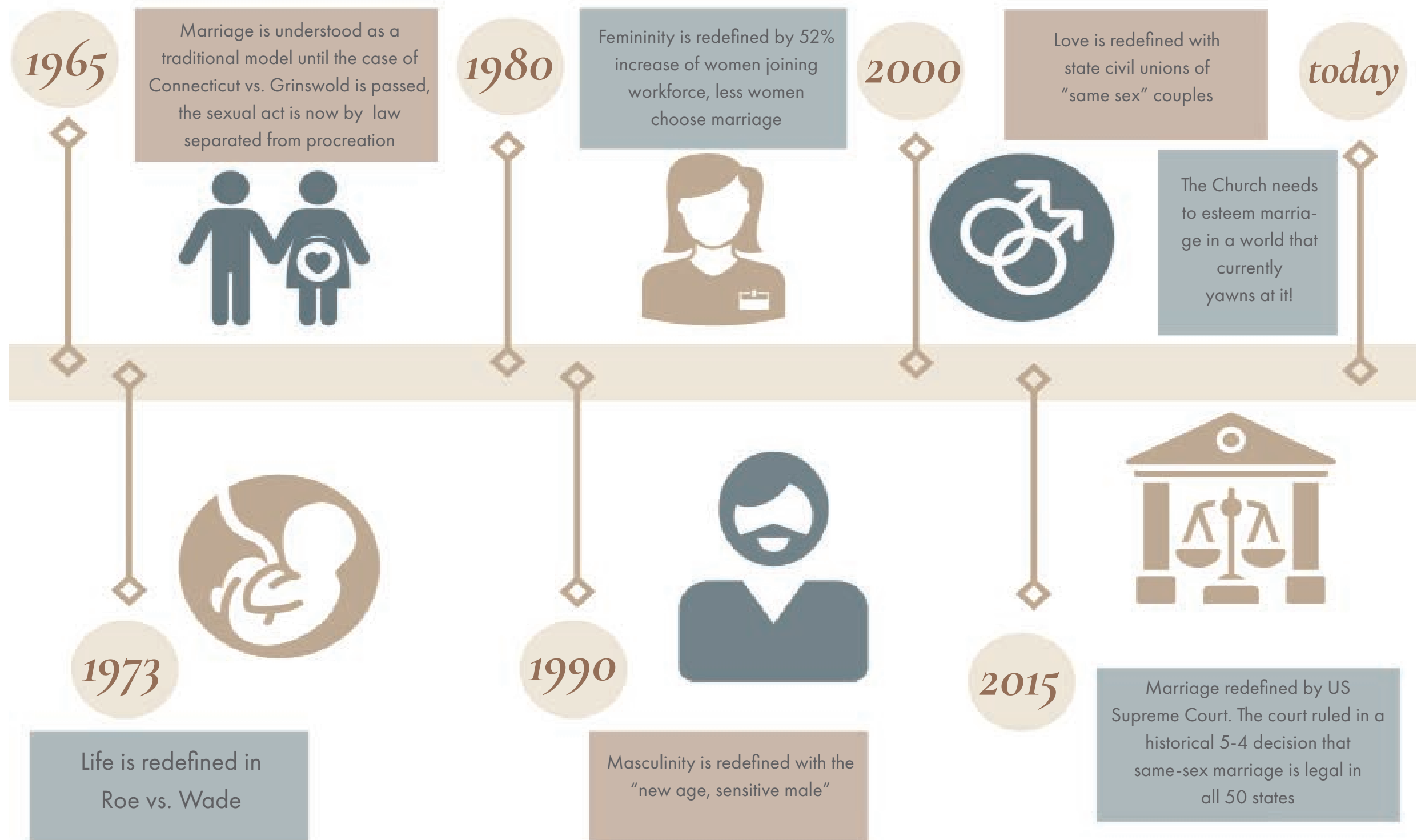
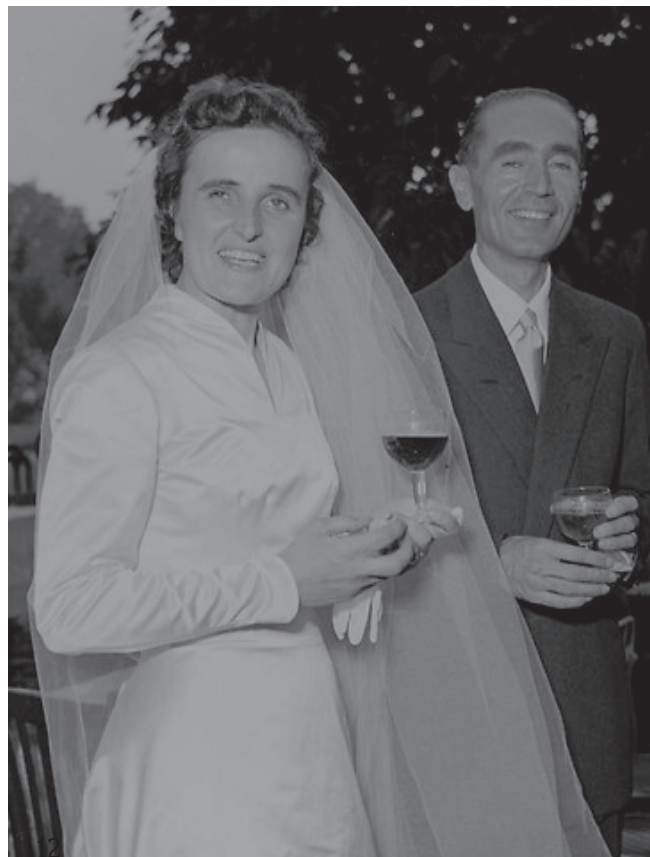


# HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MARRIAGE

*What is the world & cultural context of marriage preparation today?*

Witness to Love steps into the historical timeline of marriage within our communities with an emerging new model. Witness to Love forms a community where marriage is invested in. Young people will find a spouse in a place where marriage is esteemed.

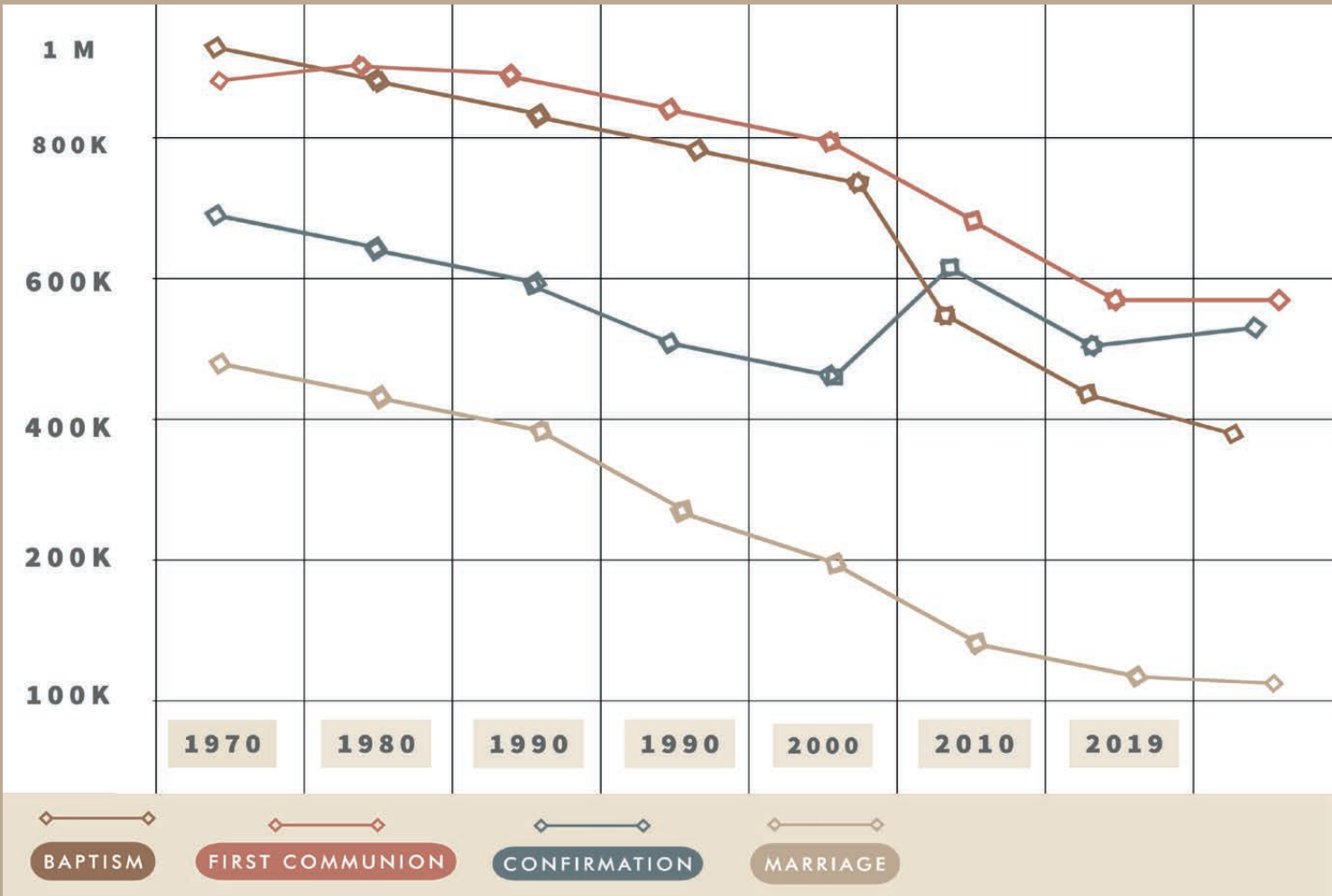
If your parish is a place where marriage is held up as an accessible good then you will see an increase in marriages in your community. Creating a culture where marriage and family life permeates every aspect of the parish life will ultimately renew the Church for generations to come.



# Historical Decline of Sacramental Marriages

Statistics Provided by the Cara Institute of Georgetown University

Number of People



Statistics in chart are Provided by the Cara Institute of Georgetown University

# Why is there a decline in Sacramental Marriage?

As seen in the ongoing downturn in the sacramental life of the Church, institutional responses to come up with the right quick fix for the large number of disaffiliated Catholics in our communities is no longer adequate. A culture of personal autonomy in our nation’s era of New Atheism and non-denominational Christianity have driven many people (young and old) to label themselves as disaffiliated Catholics. Many studies and leaders seem to lack a clear way forward while others are content with a much smaller Church. Church scandals particularly have communicated to many Catholics that faith practice is not something needed to live a life of happiness and purpose.



“However, we should not be content with simply managing the decline of the Catholic Church in our Nation. Rather, let us begin to take the risk of allowing the Holy Spirit to renew the Church through a rediscovery of Jesus’ presence in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.”

Ryan Verret, Co-Founder of Witness to Love

# *Witness to Love's Unique Approach to Evangelization*

FORMING EVANGELIZING SPOUSES AND FAMILY  
MISSIONARY DISCIPLES THROUGH MENTORSHIP

“

“The Christian family and the whole of the ecclesial community should feel involved in the different phases of the preparation for marriage... in such a way that those preparing for marriage will not only receive an intellectual training but will also feel a desire to enter actively into the ecclesial community.”

St. Pope John Paul II  
Familiaris Consortio, no. 66

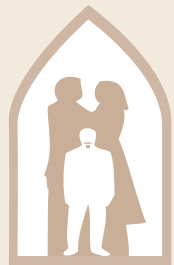




# TWO-FOR-ONE MARRIAGE EVANGELIZATION

## THE WITNESS TO LOVE APPROACH

What makes Witness to Love unique is the mentor couple format, in which the engaged couple chooses their own mentor couple- one that they admire and see as a source of faith formation. Extending and deepening constructive relationships with Christ and the Church to support marriages is the goal of this initiative. The married couple is coached to mentor the engaged couple. Unlike other mentor models, there is no need to establish trust in order for the marriage prep process to work – the foundation of trust already exists. This is the unique two-for-one evangelization and catechesis opportunity provided to parishes through Witness to Love.



## UNDERSTANDING THE WITNESS TO LOVE MODEL

Witness to Love is a virtue-based, catechumenate model of marriage renewal and formation, integrated with modern principles of relational psychology. In particular, the Witness to Love model helps couples facilitate an authentic dialogue about their relationships with God and provides an attraction to the Church through the gift of mentoring. Witness to Love helps mentor couples guide and encourage engaged couples to integrate and connect them with their parish, while reaping fruits of renewal and growth within their own marriage. This unique approach nurtures and sustains the unique two-for-one evangelization process that is rarely achieved by most parish-based programs:

### ASSIGNED MENTOR MODEL

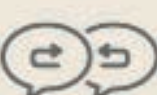
The older assigned model of mentoring uses the same couples repeatedly without involving the greater parish community or allowing for multiplication through discipleship.

### WITNESS TO LOVE MODEL

Witness to Love offers an entire generation of married couples the marriage formation needed in order to be a light to other younger couples through the gift of mentoring.

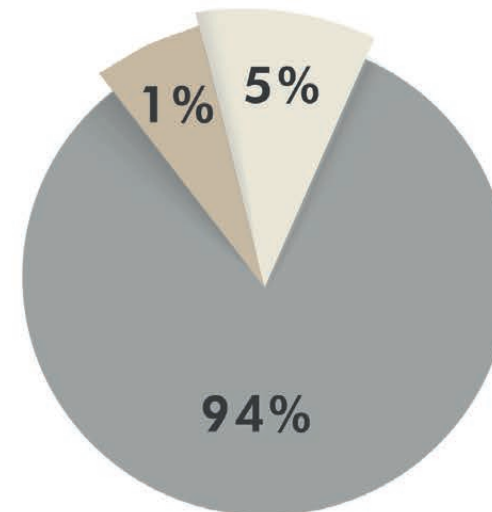


WITNESS TO LOVE CHALLENGES EXISTING MODELS OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION & FORMATION

|                                                                                    |               |                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | DEMONSTRATING | Demonstrating that today's engaged couples are not responding to traditional models for preparation and formation and proposing a new approach |
|    | REDESIGNING   | Redesigning the marriage preparation process as a tool for evangelization, a two-for-one method of evangelization based on mentorship          |
|    | FORMING       | Forming existing married couples as authentic witnesses to the engaged couple they already know and trust to be mentors                        |
|    | CHALLENGING   | Challenging and confronting the worldview of engaged couples who fear marriage and commitment                                                  |
|  | ANSWERING     | Answering the needs addressed by the Holy See, the USCCB, and NACFLM for a renewal in marriage formation in the Catholic Church                |
|  | COMPLEMENTING | Complementing current parish and diocesan programs and resources in marriage formation                                                         |
|  | TRAINING      | Training marriage preparation staff and volunteers in the Witness to Love model of marriage formation                                          |
|  | INTEGRATING   | Integrating engaged couples into parish life through relationships and mentorship                                                              |
|  | ACCOMPANYING  | Accompanying couples after the wedding day and journeying with them as newlyweds forming a marriage movement within parish life                |

WHAT IS WITNESS TO LOVE'S IMPACT ON PARISH LIFE?  
WITNESS TO LOVE VS. TRADITIONAL MODEL

AVERAGE MARRIAGE FORMATION MODEL

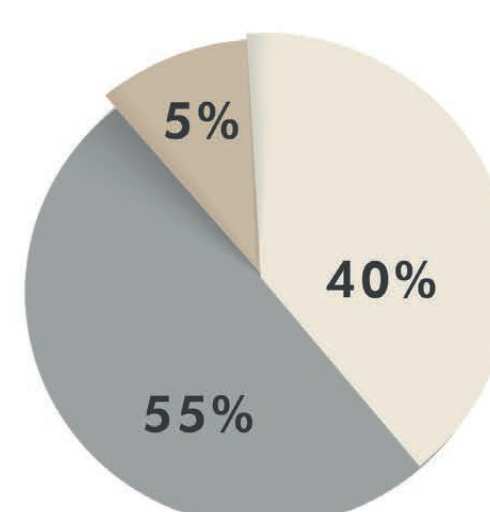


- 1% PARISH PRIEST INVOLVEMENT
- 5% EVANGELIZING MARRIED SPOUSES
- 94% NON-INVOLVED MARRIED COUPLES

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PARISH LIFE

- ONLY ONE-WAY EVANGELIZATION
- MENTORS ARE ASSIGNED TO COUPLE
- MARRIAGE FORMATION IS INFORMATION AND CONTENT-FOCUSED
- LACK OF PARISH COMMUNITY
- ASSIGNED MENTORS ARE SEEN AS EXCLUSIVE, AND DISTANT EXPERTS
- PASTORS ARE OVERWHELMED DUE TO LACK OF VOLUNTEERS
- ASSIGNED MENTORS ARE TIRED & OVERLOADED
- PARISH MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE CULTURE IS WEAK AND IN SURVIVAL MODE
- DECREASE IN NUMBER OF PARISH WEDDINGS
- COUPLES LACK INVOLVEMENT WITHIN PARISH & ARE NOT EVANGELIZED PROPERLY
- COUPLES ARE LEAST LIKELY TO BE PARISH MEMBERS, THUS LACK A DOMESTIC CHURCH

WITNESS TO LOVE MARRIAGE FORMATION



- 5% PARISH PRIEST INVOLVEMENT
- 40% EVANGELIZING MARRIED SPOUSES
- 55% NON-INVOLVED MARRIED COUPLES

POSITIVE IMPACT ON PARISH LIFE

- TWO FOR ONE EVANGELIZATION
- MENTORS ARE CHOSEN BY COUPLE
- MARRIAGE FORMATION IS RELATIONSHIP AND MENTORSHIP-FOCUSED
- AUTHENTIC PARISH COMMUNITY IS FORMED
- CHOSEN MENTORS ARE TRUSTED AND ALLOW COUPLES FREEDOM TO BE VULNERABLE
- PASTORS ARE WELL ASSISTED IN PARISH MARRIAGE MINISTRY
- CHOSEN MENTORS ARE EXCITED & INVIGORATED
- PARISH MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE CULTURE IS RENEWED AND VIBRANT
- INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PARISH WEDDINGS
- COUPLES ARE HIGHLY INVOLVED WITHIN PARISH & BECOME EVANGELIZED SPOUSES
- COUPLES ARE VERY LIKELY TO BE PARISH MEMBERS, THUS FOSTER A DOMESTIC CHURCH

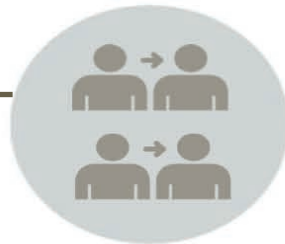
# JOURNEY THROUGH AVERAGE MARRIAGE PREP

VS.



**INFORMATION DRIVEN** — Couples go to a conference or a retreat where they are given information about the Sacrament of Marriage through a series of intellectual talks delivered by someone they usually do not know.

**ASSIGNED MENTOR COUPLE** — Couples are assigned a mentor couple. The vast majority of these assigned relationships do not blossom into authentic friendships. As a result, these couples part paths after the wedding day, and the newly wedded couple is not shown what it means to live out a virtuous, holy marriage when they need it the most.



**LACK OF PARISH INVOLVEMENT** — Since the vast majority of couples do not grow in their trust of the Church or their assigned mentors, they often do not increase their Church involvement. In fact, statistics show that the majority of newly wedded couples do not attend Mass regularly.

**LACK OF SUPPORT** — Without someone to turn to, couples do not have support and marriage enrichment throughout their marriage. Couples who do reach out for help often do so after they are separated.



## Results

Traditional marriage preparation is not significantly impacting the divorce rate.

23%

Divorce Rate for  
Catholic Couples  
5-Year Mark

VS.

25%

Divorce Rate  
for General Population  
5-Year Mark



**MENTORSHIP** — Through a mentorship model, couples preparing for marriage choose a mentor couple to grow in relationship with who attends Mass regularly and is active in their parish. Couples meet with their mentor couple monthly to read and discuss the Sacrament of Marriage, friendship, and virtue using the Witness to Love workbook and videos.

**RELATIONSHIP** — Trusting, authentic, and chosen relationships deepen with the chosen mentor couple. The couples often go out on double dates and attend Mass together. Through relationship, the mentor couple models what it means to live a virtuous, holy marriage.



**INCREASED PARISH INVOLVEMENT** — Because a trusting relationship deepens, the couple openly receives invitations from the mentor couple to be involved in the Church parish by attending Mass or joining small groups. The couple is naturally integrated into parish life pre- and post-wedding day.

**CONTINUED SUPPORT** — As a result of having a trusting relationship with their chosen mentor couple, couples have the support and marriage enrichment needed early on and throughout the journey of marriage.



## Results

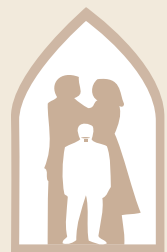
Witness to Love marriage preparation lowers the chances of divorce and increases the chances of parish involvement. Witness to Love renews the parish through relationship.

5.8%

Divorce Rate for  
Witness to Love Couples  
5-Year Mark

70 - 90%

Increase in Church  
attendance among  
Witness to Love newlyweds.



# CHOSEN MENTORS

## THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

Witness to Love mentor couples allow the engaged to have a unique look into the gift of marriage. They welcome today's engaged couples who may have a deep seated fear of commitment to essentially "wonder and poke around" the world of marriage in a way that develops in them a deep hunger themselves to live in marriage.

They see first hand in everyday settings how to respond when things get "hard" and when there is temptation to "push the eject button." It is our desire and responsibility to create and nurture a culture that will help form these young men and women. The relationships of existing marriages in your parish is that culture.



# THE ROLE OF MENTORS

Through God's grace, as mentor and secure attachment figures, you provide security and safety necessary for the couple's growth as they blossom into a family. As an instrument of God, you allow God's grace to work beautifully through you to the couple you are mentoring.



### MENTOR GUIDELINES

Guidelines are given to engaged and civilly married couples to discern their choice of a mentor couple from the married couples that they already know and trust or they can choose from a "pool" of couples at the parish. Additional guidelines can be given depending on the couple's situation. In general, there are three key guidelines for discernment of a mentor:

**1. MENTORS ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY**

**2. MENTORS HAVE BEEN MARRIED IN THE CHURCH FOR FIVE YEARS OR MORE**

**3. MENTORS HAVE A MARRIAGE THE ENGAGED COUPLE BOTH ADMIRE**

Church leaders must approach today's couples by balancing a level of control (influence) with a crucial level of involvement (desire).

“Kindness has converted more people than zeal, science, or eloquence.”

Mother Teresa

# Witness to Love forms couples to use two very important methods for marriage formation

## VIRTUE:

“Virtue is best taught, acquired, developed, and sustained in an attached relationship with a trusted friend and mentor.” Drawing from a classical understanding of virtue and authentic human growth, we present relational and moral truths for a contemporary audience. The virtues-based life skills component contained in the Witness to Love workbook is an integral piece where the engaged are working on themselves individually, and as a couple. This tool equips couples with the necessary skills to prevent them from falling into unhealthy coping styles in their relationships.

## MENTOR COUPLES:

Our mentorship program forms a mentor couple to be a Christ-like, secure attachment base during the transition from engagement to married life. The mentorship program itself facilitates security and formation through and with these couples, who are able to accompany the engaged couples in their growth in virtue.



“The virtue-based life skills component contained in the Witness to Love workbook is an integral piece where the engaged are working on themselves individually, and as a couple.”

Ryan Verret , Co-Founder of Witness to Love

## RELATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Witness to Love diligently integrates interpersonal psychotherapy, attachment theory, and motivational interviewing to address factors that can lead to depression, marital struggles, and divorce. Witness to Love forms couples to use two very important (preventative) intervention methods.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH:

Studies have shown that it is within an attached relationship that moral virtues are best understood, acquired, and lived. Virtue is caught, not simply taught. Our virtues-based life skills material is focused on character formation, which is beneficial to any relationship, but especially for one’s particular spouse and marriage. Virtue is generally nurtured through one’s own effort in authentic personal introspection and interiority – striving to be the best version that one can be. We can focus on self-growth (within the content of our relationships) and virtue, and the byproduct is improved relationship satisfaction. All of this is done within the safety of a relationship with a mentor couple that the engaged couple already trusts. The chosen mentors are coached and formed to walk with the engaged in a fashion that an assigned mentor cannot.

**ATTACHMENT THEORY:** Integrated with modern principles of relational psychology, Witness to Love provides a well-researched model that is commonly used in effective marital therapy as well as for understanding some features of religious and/or spiritual conversion, experience of God, and aspects of unbelief; it offers a rationale for why the Witness to Love methodology works.

## A VIRTUE-BASED APPROACH:

Witness to Love seeks to support in character development suitable to a wide range of couples approaching the Church for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Regardless of an individual’s developmental history, the mentor couples who have been formed in the Witness to Love model can offer themselves as a valuable witness and a secure guide. As witnesses to love, they can make the challenging, but commendable goal of a virtuous marriage seem much more attainable, and give the engaged couple a dynamic lifeline to hold onto throughout their engagement and marriage.

*Applied correctly, Witness to Love’s methodology successfully creates marriage formation where moral and theological virtue become united in evangelization.*



“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”

Pope Paul VI  
Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 41

## HOW DOES WITNESS TO LOVE EVANGELIZE TODAY’S COUPLES?

A REDISCOVERED ETHOS AND A NEW APPROACH FOR TODAY

The core of Witness to Love’s evangelization model is based on three essential components – attraction, relationship, and trust (ART). Each of these three are critical and integral to the work of evangelization. They take into account how we come to understand, accept, and live faith in Jesus Christ as well as moral truths.

### ATTRACTION

A

When leading someone to a deeper understanding and acceptance of faith in Jesus Christ, people are more likely to be open if they see and experience something they don’t already have, but desire to have. For example, if they are attracted to the joy, the kindness, and the passion they experience from another, they are likely to desire the same. Evangelization begins when one experiences Christ and Christian virtue in someone else.

### RELATIONSHIP

R

In looking at the role that human friendships play in evangelization, most often it’s a friend who brings another friend to meet Christ. It is through relationships that disciples are born. Relationships cannot be created, they can only be born; a great friendship can be born from the smallest seed of attraction. True friendships and relationships are established on truth and on the one who is Truth incarnate, Jesus Christ. When one considers the people in their life whose opinion matters the most to them, it is typically those with whom one has deep and lasting relationships. There is a hunger today for authentic friendship!

### TRUST

T

This is one of the most important aspects of evangelization. A significant challenge to evangelization is that young people today (Millennials and Generation Z) do not trust the Church. They do not trust institutions, experts, theologians, or anyone with whom they do not already have a relationship or at least are attracted to.

# The Vital Role of Attachment Theory Within the Witness to Love Model

Mentors form healthy attachments and secure friendships with engaged couples



## ATTACHMENT THEORY: (Definition)

The parent-child attachment bond shapes a child’s brain, which influences his self-esteem, expectations of others, and ability to attract and maintain successful adult relationships.



## ATTACHMENT THEORY

(in child development)



### SECURE

Securely attached children are more empathetic during later stages of childhood.

### AVOIDANT

Children are described as displaying dazed behavior, sometimes seeming either confused or apprehensive in the presence of a parent.

### AMBIVALENT

These children are very suspicious of strangers and are very stressed when separated from a parent and do not feel safe even after reunited with a parent.

## ATTACHMENT THEORY

(in Witness to Love)



### SECURE

Engaged couples with a close relationship with their mentor couple are more vulnerable to sharing their lives with one another with empathy.

### AVOIDANT

Couples when paired with an unfamiliar couple do not easily open up to them, and may show signs of being uncomfortable with vulnerability.

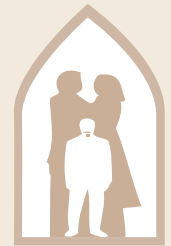
### AMBIVALENT

These couples are very suspicious of strangers and do not feel safe in sharing their lives with their mentor couple, therefore making vulnerability, friendship, or any sort of connection with this couple difficult.



Our mentorship program forms a mentor couple to be a Christ-like, secure attachment base during the transition from engagement to married life. The mentorship program itself facilitates security and formatting through and with these couples, who are able to accompany the engaged couples in their growth in virtue.





## OUR STRATEGY & INITIATIVES

### COMMITTED TO FORMING LIFE-LONG MARRIAGES

Witness to Love is committed to creating and sustaining an international marriage movement dedicated to forming evangelizing spouses. We believe that marriage is the solution! Forming evangelizing spouses is the vital ingredient utilized by Witness to Love in our commitment to renew the Church through relationships. Through Witness to Love the Church is rediscovering how new and existing marriages can welcome back generations of families separated from our faith communities because of secularization as well as a crisis of faith within the Church.



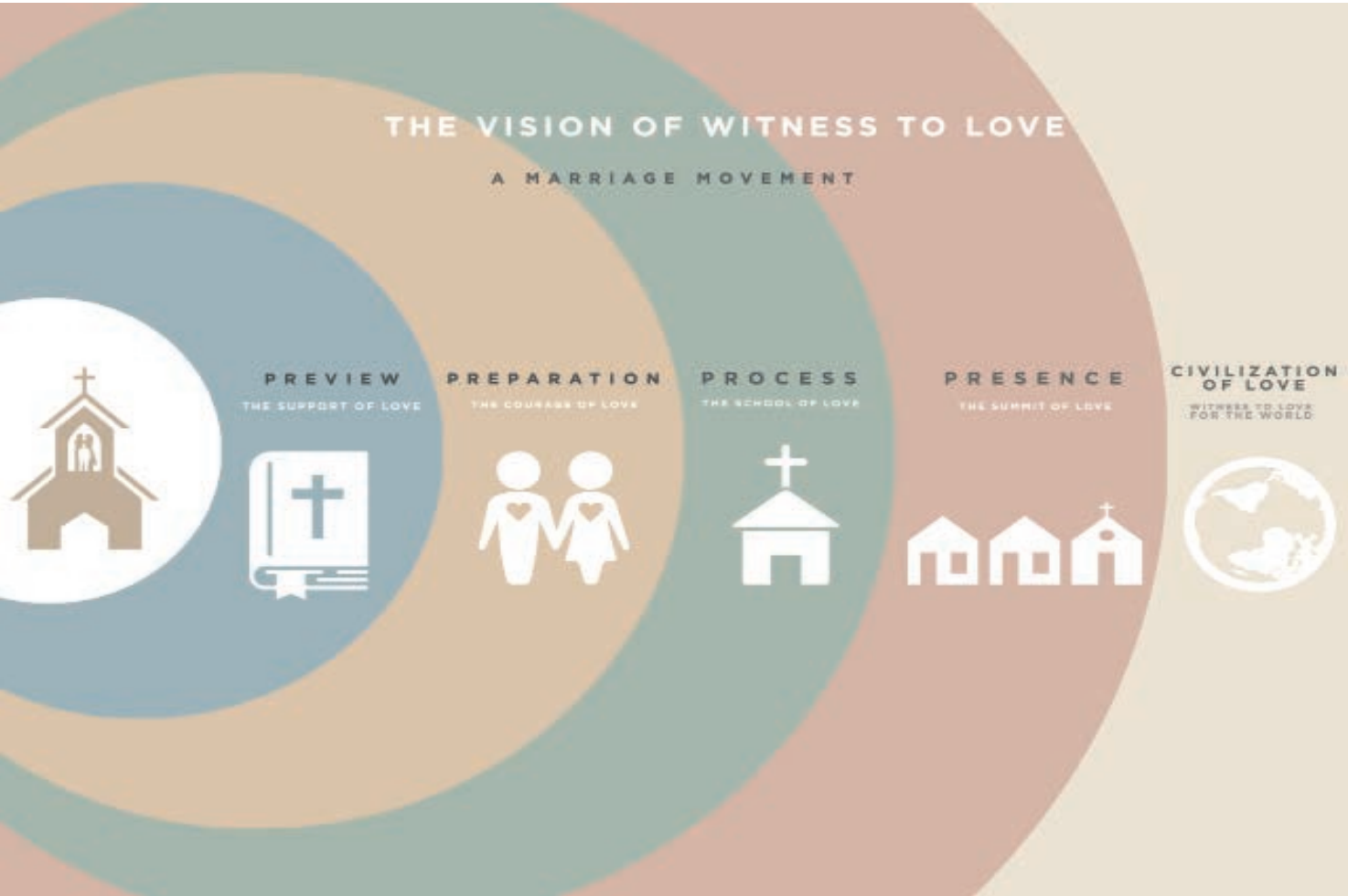
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“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.”

St. John Paul II

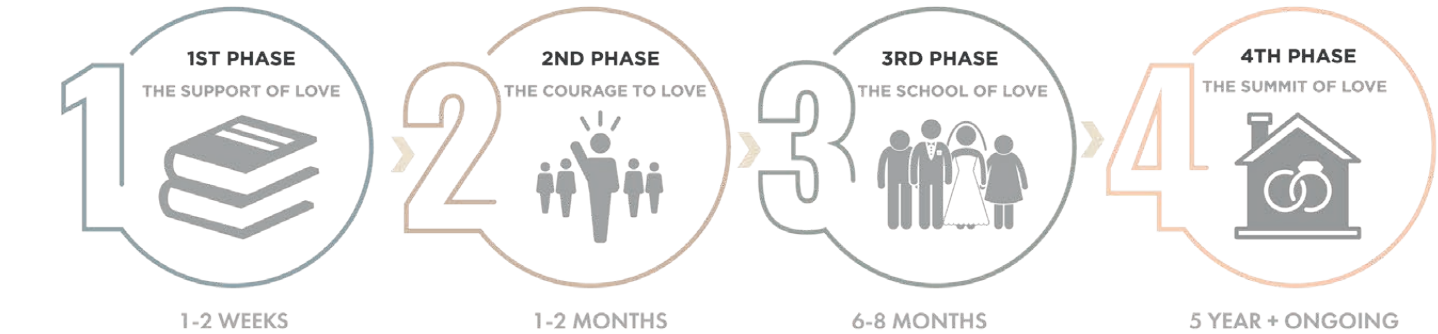
WITNESS TO LOVE IS A HOPEFUL INVESTMENT  
FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

*We seek to invite wandering couples  
back to our parish communities through  
the gift of mentorship.*



“If your marriage preparation process does not integrate couples into the life of the Church then it is a missed opportunity of evangelization.”  
Mary-Rose Verret , Co-Founder of Witness to Love

Steps to Implement  
Witness to Love in Your Parish

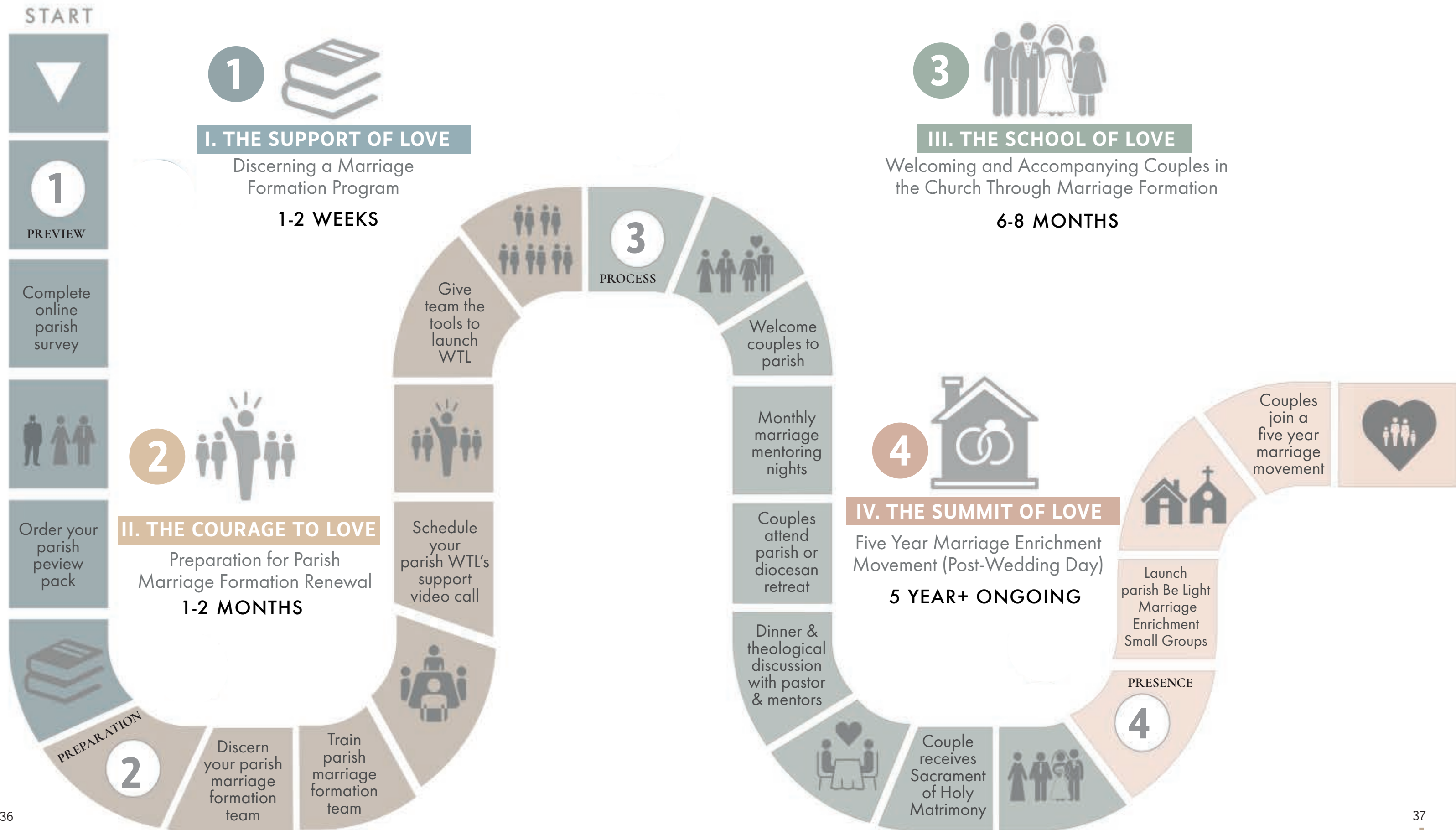


| PREVIEW                                                                                                                                                                                                          | PREPARATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | PROCESS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | PRESENCE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>THE SUPPORT OF LOVE</b><br>                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>THE COURAGE TO LOVE</b><br>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>THE SCHOOL OF LOVE</b><br>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>THE SUMMIT OF LOVE</b><br>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| In this phase, your parish is discerning a marriage formation program with clergy and parish ministry leaders. In this phase, it is necessary to complete the parish survey and review/order Parish Review Pack. | In this phase, your parish team will complete the WTL certification training and equip your team to lay the foundations for launching the Witness to Love marriage formation model within your parish. Choose and announce a launch date. | In this phase, your parish has launched the WTL marriage formation model, and engaged couples, civilly married couples, alongside their marriage mentors are meeting monthly, sharing meals, cultivating authentic relationships and growing in Christian virtue. | In this phase, your parish will reap the fruits of the Witness to Love's marriage formation stronger Domestic Churches, see a thriving marriage and family culture that make up your parish community. Newly married couples will join a Be Light marriage community. Couple's will embark on a five year marriage movement with their mentors and other couples. |



# Witness to Love Parish Roadmap

Phases Towards Forming a Witness to Love Parish





# OUR PROGRAMS

MARRIAGE FORMATION & ENRICHMENT

## ENGLISH PROGRAMS



Witness to Love Couples Marriage Prep Program is a virtues-based, Catechumenate model of marriage renewal and preparation that integrates modern principles of psychology and the virtues to help couples facilitate an authentic dialogue about their relationship.



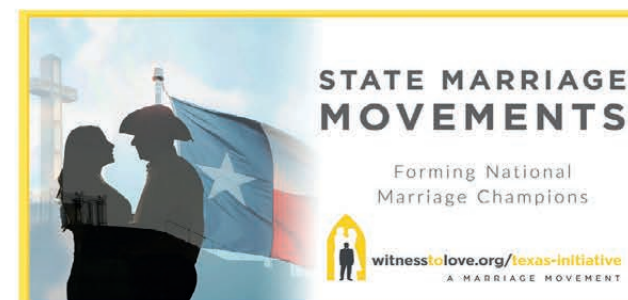
Be More: A Marriage Formation Retreat by Witness to Love was developed to provide couples a pathway to grow in community, identity and understanding their mission. To each and every couple preparing to receive and live out the Sacrament of Matrimony in today's world – you were born for a time such as this and the grace of the sacrament is real!



The Civil Marriage Initiative by Witness to Love is a comprehensive, revolutionary, nationally-researched and collaborative project. This project equips parishes and dioceses who desire to seek out, support, and inspire couples in civil unions to pursue transformative sacramental marriage formation.



Be Light Date Night Mini Series by Witness to Love is a 5 part marriage enrichment and renewal series. Together we will explore various topics including belonging, expectations, the need for community, couples works of mercy and living as missionary disciples.



Witness to Love launching "State Marriage Movements" across the entire US. Our mentor-led model encourages relationship, ongoing support and an integration into the life of the parish. Does your parish see marriage prep as an opportunity for evangelization? Do the couples getting married at your parish come back after the wedding, or is your parish (and the Church) just a necessary stop for the wedding? We want your pews to be full of young married couples raising solid Catholic families.



Be Light: Year of Belonging by Witness to Love is the first year of a five year movement to draw married couples closer together in Christ while being transformed into family missionary disciples. The Year of Belonging highlights twelve Witness Couples from around the country exploring various topics that unpack the Sacrament of Matrimony. Belonging (the first of five years for the Be Light Series) will be released on the first Thursday of each month.



# NUESTROS PROGRAMAS

FORMACIÓN Y ENRIQUECIMIENTO DEL MATRIMONIO

## SPANISH PROGRAMS



Un modelo de cateumenado que integra principios de la psicología moderna y las virtudes para lograr que las parejas tengan un diálogo honesto sobre su relación. La pareja comprometida elige su propia pareja de mentores que le acompañen durante y más allá del proceso de preparación.



Desarrollado con el propósito de proveer a las parejas una vía para crecer en comunidad, identidad, y en su entendimiento de su misión como matrimonio. Se puede usar como retiro de preparación matrimonial o formación para líderes y parejas casadas.



El Camino de Convalidación es una colaboración revolucionaria que ha sido investigada ampliamente con el fin de equipar a las diócesis y parroquias que desean alcanzar, apoyar e inspirar a las parejas en uniones civiles. Este programa provee a las parejas una formación para el Sacramento del matrimonio que transformará sus vidas.



Presenta cinco parejas de todo el mundo que comparten el testimonio de su amor al igual que temas necesarios para entender la importancia del matrimonio y la familia católica. Lanzamos esta serie en medio de la pandemia para fortalecer la iglesia doméstica.

## OTHER PROGRAMS



Short-Course and Continuing Education opportunity for Clergy and Parish Leaders. This course responds to the challenge that many encounter in confidently communicating the beauty of the Church's teaching regarding Fertility Awareness. Couples desperately need to hear the truth and beauty upheld by Humanae Vitae but in a way that is evangelical as well as founded upon best practices for human growth and moral formation.



Interdenominational Witness to Love Formation. Please send us an email to learn more about this program. [info@witnessstolove.org](mailto:info@witnessstolove.org)

# Join the Witness to Love Marriage Movement

BE AN AMBASSADOR AND ALLOW YOUR HOME TO BECOME  
A MISSIONARY OUTPOST OF THE LOCAL PARISH.

“

“In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part of.”

Pope Paul VI  
*Evangelii nuntiandi*, no 70



## Join us in becoming a Witness to Love Ambassador

## Our Ambassadors reflect the voice and vision of Witness to Love



### A WITNESS TO LOVE AMBASSADOR

Witness to Love is in need of incarnational couples to invite others to be more in their marriage and find a sense of belonging in community with other couples. Witness to Love Ambassadors serve Christ and the Church by spearheading local Witness to Love initiatives and by being a spokesperson for WTL within their own community/diocese/region. This can be accomplished by inviting couples into the WTL experience either as engaged (WTL marriage prep) or as married in “Be Light/Be More.” small group.

This service provides an innovative, personal invitation to other new or well established domestic Churches to be renewed in their living out of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Ambassadors are not primarily liaisons with the diocese or parish, but meant to advance WTL culture of “renewal through relationships” by one Catholic home supporting a new (or renewing) Catholic home. By modeling mentoring and discipleship through invitation, together we are transforming marriages and building strong communities through relationships.



### HOW DOES THE WTL AMBASSADOR SERVE?

The WTL Ambassador offers resources, support, and tools to reach, invite, and gather couples in their community. The Ambassador reflects the voice and vision of Witness to Love, offers feedback, and requests new content. The WTL Ambassador also assists with coordinating and supporting WTL Regional Host Couples. Host Couples should be marriage champions in parishes and communities who are inviting, natural evangelists and are willing to be a missionary outpost of the local church. These couples will be tasked with hosting small group gatherings and date nights for newly married and mentor couples to continue building relationships and community.

### REGIONAL HOST COUPLE ASSISTANT

- Recruit Host Couples
- Manage Host Couples
- Train Host Couples
- Multiplying and identifying Host Couples
- WTL will provide the formation for Host Couples & the content for the activities that they will be doing

# FORMING EVANGELIZING SPOUSES

Forming evangelizing spouses is the primary initiative of Witness to Love as we continue to renew the Church through relationships. Witness to Love is committed to creating and sustaining an international marriage movement dedicated to forming Evangelizing Spouses that are opening the doors to the Domestic Church around our nation and beyond. During these uncertain times of social isolation, our Domestic Church is in even greater need of witnessing to our relationship with God and others. This is our time as married couples to shine and be the light to those in our communities that desperately need to see Sacramental Love that is always a free, total, faithful and fruitful covenant and gift to all!

## WITNESS TO LOVE IN THE WORLD



## WITNESS TO LOVE IN THE USA



Communities in 24 Countries and 48 States impacted by Witness to Love including – United States, Canada, France, Guam, Philippines, Indonesia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, España, Guatemala

“

“Evangelizing spouses, are what our parishes need... Christian spouses, should learn to fall in love with Christ and become neighbors to families deprived of the light of faith. We must be convinced that in the Church such married couples already are a gift of God and not because of our merit, but because they are a fruit of the work of the Spirit who never abandons the Church”

**Pope Francis, Roman Rota, A Vatican Tribunal Audience**





# COUPLE TESTIMONIES

## What couples are saying about Witness to Love...

“Witness to Love was exactly what our relationship needed before entering into the Sacrament of Matrimony. Our marriage prep couple was so perfect for us- the husbands were similar and the wives were the same! Being able to walk so closely with another couple that we could relate to was a game changer! The sessions quickly turned into time hanging out with amazing friends and gaining insights that were incredibly healing to our relationship. The best part of Witness to Love is that we are still friends with our Mentor Couple today and love that we get to share life with them always!”



**Jake and Katie**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS

“Through Witness to Love, our relationship with our mentor couple has gotten so much closer. We have always loved them but now we love them in a deeper way. We have openly discussed things with them that we wouldn’t discuss with just anyone. We opened our hearts to them. That made us stronger. We have prayed with them, prayed for them and we will continue to do so. This was the best decision we made in our marriage prep process. We couldn’t have asked for a better mentor couple..”



**Claudia and Caleb**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Diocese of Lafayette, LA



**Patrick and Ines**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Diocese of Tyler, TX

“There was something beautiful that happened for me personally, going through Witness to Love. I felt connected to the people at Church. For once, I would “hang around” after Mass and talk to our mentors, priests, or other people my fiancé knew through Catholic school. Felt like a family.”



**Arthur and Sharifa**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Archdiocese of Vancouver, Canada

“We had an extremely fruitful mentorship experience with our mentor couple. The advice, the conversations, the planned date, and the mentor led discussions all lead to even more appreciation of the Witness to Love process and the journey we are heading into. We are much closer to our mentors, and now have very candid, vulnerable and open conversations that we’ve never had. They feel like family more than anything now! The process helped us have deeper conversations, dialogue on things we may not have spoken about had we not done Witness to Love, and also made us think with a completely different lens and new found appreciation.”

“Before and after every Witness to Love session, we would reflect and pray on what steps we took and prepare for the next steps ahead of us. We saw the intimacy unfold before us every time and that would carry on with us for the next few weeks. We could feel the grace bestowed on us. And once it started fading away and we got caught up with the tasks of the world, we would have another meeting - where we would reflect again. And it started all over. So we know that we need to take the time to pray and reflect on our actions and what we want to change or make stronger. We can’t let the world’s problems get before our duty to love one another as Christ loves us..”



**Julie and Cody**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Diocese of San Diego, CA

“Before the Witness to Love program, we did not have a full understanding of how Christ and a marriage worked hand in hand. Now through the readings in the workbook and discussions with our mentors, we understand that the love that Christ has for His Church (the Bride) should imitate the love a husband and wife have for their marriage and for Christ.”



**Guiseppe and Katelyn**  
Witness to Love Couple  
Archdiocese of Detroit, MI



# MENTOR TESTIMONIES

## What mentors are saying about Witness to Love...

“The Witness to Love process deepened our faith and helped us gain a better understanding of the vocation of marriage and how truly special it is. It encouraged us to both learn more about our faith and the sacraments and increased our desire to evaluate our marriage and where we could grow. Witness to Love will bear fruit for your marriage too! What a blessing to be able to use your experience and gift of marriage to help/inspire others. This is truly participation in Christ.”



**Jim and Lucia**  
Witness to Love Mentors  
Diocese of Madison, WI

“We would definitely recommend Witness to Love to other couples who are trying to live out their faith, that it is worthwhile to do and rewarding.”



**Will and Judith**  
Witness to Love Mentors  
Diocese of Austin, TX

“Through sharing instances of sacramental grace that have lifted us up, comforted us, and helped us resolve complex issues, we became keenly aware of God’s presence in our marriage of 49 years. It was a fulfilling experience we may never have had if not for the Witness to Love program..”



**Kasey and Brock**  
Witness to Love Mentors  
Diocese of San Diego, CA



**Don and Lourdes**  
Witness to Love Mentors  
Diocese of Venice, FL

“When working through the Witness to Love program, there was a different belief regarding a deep moral teaching of the Church. This brought up a great deal of emotion. Listening to the engaged couple and letting them express their opposing ideas finally led to a better and more clear understanding. We all grew from the discussions shared..”

## Annual Growth and Impact in 2020

71

active dioceses offering Witness to Love marriage formation for their parishes



329

active parishes using Witness to Love as their main marriage formation program



8,000

new Witness to Love app users to our online marriage formation and enrichment Programs



24

countries where couples benefited from our “be light” mini date night series



49

U.S states where couples grew in their marriage through the support of Witness to Love



2,150

engaged couples and 2,150 mentor couples began their walk together



11,255

11,255 individuals (engaged and married), marriage champions, parish leaders, and clergy directly served by the Witness to Love Team



## A SPECIAL WORD OF GRATITUDE TO OUR CURRENT AND FORMER BOARD MEMBERS

# Thank you for your support!

### A SPECIAL WORD OF GRATITUDE

We thank the Lord daily for the countless blessings bestowed upon Witness to Love these past ten years. The prayerful and financial support of clergy, married and engaged couples, and even widows and widowers is contributing to a marriage movement that is renewing the experience of marriage formation, parish life and families throughout our nation and beyond.

We are particularly grateful to the generosity of mentor couples whose voluntary kindness is transforming the lives of the next generation of Catholic families in our communities. Their homes are authentic “missionary outposts” of our local parishes welcoming back a generation that had become tragically disaffiliated from the Catholic faith and a relationship with Jesus Christ. Without mentor couples, serving as the “Witnesses of Love,” our apostolate would not exist.

### WTL BOARD MEMBERS

Archbishop Gregory Aymond  
Mr. David Lukinovich, Esq.  
Mr. Taylor Davis  
Fr. Eric Cadin  
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Fr. Jaime Salvador Paniagua  
Jake Samour  
Joel De Loera

“I will give thanks to you, Lord.  
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.”  
Psalm 9:1



We encourage and ask for your spiritual and financial support as we continue our service of renewing the Church through relationships! (Scan QR code above to view our site)

**Witness to Love**  
**1039 Rue Maline**  
**Saint Martinville, LA 70582**  
**Witness to Love is a 501(c)(3)**  
**tax-exempt organization**

**Email: [info@witness to love.org](mailto:info@witness to love.org)**  
**Phone: (337) 282-0446**

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the  
Father in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 5:20



## BRING WITNESS TO LOVE TO YOUR COMMUNITY!

“

“If you are married and want to fight evil, die to your pride and love your spouse in every little way. There is nothing the devil can’t stand more than a happy married couple that is growing holy together. The reason is that marriage is a sacrament and is holy. Christ is present in a sacramental marriage. Be one. Love each other. Pray together. Be each other’s best friend.”

- Fr. Victor Perez | *Witness to Love Pastor*



### WITNESSTO LOVE

A MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

## NEXT STEPS

Scan QR Code & fill out the questionnaire to receive a free marriage review kit.

• [witnessstolove.org/nextsteps](https://witnessstolove.org/nextsteps)



## CONNECT WITH US

Scan the QR Code to connect with a Witness to Love team member.

• [witnessstolove.org/contactus](https://witnessstolove.org/contactus)



[parishsupport@witnessstolove.org](mailto:parishsupport@witnessstolove.org)  
(337) 282-0446



## MEET THE WITNESS TO LOVE TEAM

