Diocese of Lincoln

Hybrid & Virtual Marriage Preparation Retreats

Approved Online & Hybrid Options for Convalidations & Special Circumstances:

1. ***Virtual – Live, Self-Paced, Instructor-Led (with Certificate)***

- **Engaged Encounter Hybrid:** live quarterly weekend retreat, Fri evening – Sunday afternoon on Zoom. **$285. (***English*)

- **Catholic Marriage Fellowship:** *ideal for urgent cases (less than 4 wks before),* live two-weeknights, **$110**, or self-paced, **$150**. *(English)*

- **Joy-Filled Marriage:** *Self-paced with live 2.5-hour discussion on Zoom – created by Christopher West,* **$210.** *(Spanish & English)*

- **Agape Catholic Marriage Prep:** *Self-led, instructor guided via written reflections;* can be tailored for convalidations, military, bilingual, or second marriages; duration: 4-6 weeks (or 2 weeks in urgent cases). **$239-$289.** *(French, Spanish, & English)*

2. ***Virtual - Self-Paced Video (with Certificate) – FREE***

- **Witness to Love: Be More Marriage Formation Retreat: free for anyone in the Diocese of Lincoln;** *(Spanish & English)*

  How to Access:
  1. **Register** and click on **"Registration for Be More Retreat"**
  2. Under Select Your Diocese, choose **Diocese of Lincoln.**
  3. Log in to the **Learning Platform** anytime under "Courses," or use the quick link below:

  Witness to Love Be More: **courses.witnesstolove.org/lincoln-be-more**

3. ***Virtual - Self-Paced Video (No Certificate)***

- **FORMED Beloved Series (Parts 1 & 2) Free with a parish FORMED subscription.** Part 1: *Catechesis*, (Sessions 1-6), Part 2: *Life Skills* (Sessions 1-6). Use the **Leader's Guide** for accountability. (*Spanish & English)*

4. ***Hard-Copy (No Technology Required and No Certificate)***

- **TOBET4Engaged:** Hardcopy booklet and journal; Accountability through homework. **$19.99,** bulk discounts available. (*Vietnamese, Spanish, & English)*

Formation Requirements for Convalidations & Special Circumstances:

Engaged Encounter remains the standard retreat option under our policy. Please use the following guidelines for those seeking an alternative:

- **Couples married two years or less civilly,** or if **either spouse has never been married**→ Attend **Engaged Encounter** (if possible).
- **Couples married two years or more civilly,** or with valid exceptions (e.g., long distance over 150 miles from OLGC Retreat Center, work conflict, illness, childcare needs, elderly, or low-income) → May select any **approved hybrid or virtual options**.
- For a convalidation, lay-couple accompaniment and a pre-marital inventory are *still required*. We recommend one or both options:
    - **Witness to Love Civil Marriage Initiative (mentoring)** *or*
    - **FOCCUS Convalidations Inventory** *with a facilitator-trained couple*
- **Any of the approved retreat options may be used for a convalidation**.
- **An NFP Intro Course** is still required for all couples of fertility age.
- The **pastor** may select whichever retreat option best fits for his parish.

Minimum Formation Option:
Private instruction by the priest on the **Theology of Marriage** is **no longer required** under diocesan policy, since all approved retreats include this component. However, clergy are asked to do a brief **Theology of Marriage "check-in"** after the couple completes the retreat to address any remaining questions and affirm readiness.

For couples seeking an alternative to Engaged Encounter, the following **free lessons from Witness to Love: Be More** meet the **minimum formation requirement for convalidations and special circumstances** (as long as mentoring and a pre-marital inventory are included).

Theology Lessons 1-6: (*from Be More Retreat)*
Life Skills Lesson 5: *Marriage and Sexuality: What is the Church Doing in the Bedroom?*

Recommended but Optional Life Skills Lessons:
● Self Knowledge
● Communication in marriage
● Grace and Conflict
● Finances
✓ **(Required) Marriage and Sexuality**
● Parenting Expectations
● The Temperaments
● Interfaith and Ecumenical Marriages

For questions or clarifications, please contact **familylifeoffice@lincolndiocese.org**
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