

Congrats on your engagement! Below is a list of required items to be completed before your marriage in the Church. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions:

JLinkenheld@rockforddiocese.org

1. Diocesan Marriage Preparation Courses
 - a. **What?** These are two required marriage preparation courses run through the Diocese of Rockford; one is specifically marriage preparation focused and the other is a course on Natural Family Planning. Both must be completed. There are two options for each course: in-person (which I recommend) or online.
 - b. **How?** Go to the website found below and scroll down to select your options for both required courses:
<https://www.rockforddiocese.org/life/marriage-prep/#MarriagePrepDetails>
 - c. **When?** Register and complete as soon as possible. The dates are limited and spots can fill up. Once completed, make sure both the parish and the diocese has a copy of the certificates.
2. Obtain Baptismal Certificates
 - a. **What?** Baptismal Certificates are needed to complete the necessary paperwork. These must be official and “fresh” certificates, issued within six months of your proposed marriage date.
 - b. **How?** Whether you are Catholic or Protestant/Non-Denominational Christian:
 - i. Find out where you were baptized.
 - ii. Call the church, tell them you’re getting married soon and need your “official baptismal certificate with any notations”.
 - iii. Have them send the official hard copy to:
Fr. James Linkenheld
St. Mary Church
322 Waterman St.
Sycamore, IL 60178
 - c. **When?** No immediate rush but should have it done within a month of your wedding date. Very easy to complete.
3. Find witnesses for Witness Affidavits
 - a. **What?** As part of the Church’s process, witnesses are needed to testify to your being free to marry. You will each need two people who know you extremely well and over many years (often these are parents or a sibling).
 - b. **How?** Each ask two people (four total) to be a witness for you. Have them contact their local parish, requesting to meet with a priest to complete a “marriage witness affidavit”. If they are in the Sycamore area, they are welcome to contact me (jlinkenheld@rockforddiocese.org). The meetings, which can be scheduled together or individually, take no more than 10 minutes. You are not present at these meetings.
 - c. **When?** Start scheduling after our first meeting.
4. Choose wedding readings and music
 - a. Work with our wedding coordinator, Kathy Cebulski, to pick reading and music. Kathy will then relay the information to me and the Music Director, Lisa.
 - i. Kathy’s email and cell phone: kathycebulski@gmail.com / 815-895-4552

- b. Take some time over the next weeks and months to think and pray about what Biblical readings and music you would like. A list of readings can be found here:
<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/readings/>
5. Marriage License
 - a. Please be aware of the county's (DeKalb) current process on marriage licenses. Couples usually can only get them a few weeks in advance.
 - b. Further information about the civil license can be found at the website found below:
<https://dekalbcountyclerkil.gov/marriage-or-civil-union-licenses/>

Looking for some good books on living the vocation to marriage?

- Three to Get Married – Most Rev. Fulton Sheen: one of the most famous speakers of the Faith, Archbishop Sheen presents the Church's understanding of the sacrament of matrimony in a frank, clear way. Uses real-life stories to bring up problems and solutions that can come up in married life.
- Marriage Insurance: 12 Rules to Live By – Rev. Francis J. Hoffman: a very practical, short, fun read on how getting little things right can make a huge difference in living the vocation of marriage.
- Be Devoted: Restoring Friendship, Passion, and Communion in Your Marriage – Dr. Bob Schuchts: focuses deeply on forming authentic intimacy and healing based on a beautiful Catholic understanding.