

## Pre Marriage Talking Points (for priests and sponsor couples) (Cohabitation Guidelines)

Do you want a mediocre marriage, or a great marriage?

Here are some of the blessings of a great marriage:

Good communication  
Great friendship  
Teamwork  
Spiritual growth  
Fulfilling physical relationship  
Deep Trust

These are what God offers you through the Church in the Sacrament of Matrimony, and every couple can enjoy them. But marriage will require work and sacrifice at times. There are behaviors that restrict and reduce the amazing blessings of marriage, because they are simply not compatible.

Cohabitation could be one of those behaviors. Cohabitation promises better results in marriage, but it delivers worse results. In study after study couples who live together before marriage have higher divorce rates, less marital satisfaction, higher abuse rates, higher alcohol and chemical issues, higher depression rates, and their children suffer in several ways. God, through the ministry of the Church, wants the best for you.

Are you living together now? Tell me about your situation. How did you decide to live together? What are some of your reasons?

We are encouraging you to live apart, because this will offer you the best opportunity for a great marriage. We are not trying to control you, but we wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't tell you the truth. Living together gives a false psychological sense of commitment, when in reality the relationship lacks the true commitment of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Living together tells the other that, "I'm here as long as it suits me, as long as it works out." Matrimony expresses to the other, "I'm here no matter what."

6 practices for great marriage:

- Pray together (Mass and other times)
- Listen (really listen to one another)
- Date (go out on regular dates together, make meaningful time for one another)
- Forgiveness (continuously forgive one another)
- Serve together (find a way to serve together outside of your family)
- NFP (Natural Family Planning)

Statistically, each of these practices are positive predictors of lasting marriages. Practiced together, they are a very powerful combination.