

FAQ's about Natural Family Planning

What is Natural Family Planning?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is a term for certain methods used to achieve and postpone pregnancy based on the awareness of a woman's fertility. These scientific methods, 98% effective when practiced faithfully, are based on the reality that a woman's fertility varies through the course of her menstrual cycle in ways that can be determined through the observation of certain physical symptoms.

For example, in the days surrounding ovulation, a woman's cervix ascends and softens, her body secretes cervical mucus (to facilitate the sperm's movement), and her temperature rises slightly. Through the observation of natural signs like these, a couple can determine the fertile phase of a woman's cycle. Different NFP methods—there are several—focus on different symptoms. Couples using NFP to achieve pregnancy engage in intercourse during the woman's fertile phase. Couples wishing to postpone pregnancy simply abstain from sexual relations during the time of fertility.

No hormones, drugs, devices or surgical procedures are used in the practice of NFP. Furthermore, the practice of NFP increases couple communication and thereby strengthens marriage.

Is this another name for the Rhythm Method?

No, but this is a common misconception. The Rhythm Method tries to predict ovulation by using a calendar exclusively. If a woman has irregular cycles, then, the accuracy of the Rhythm Method is limited. No wonder the Rhythm Method inspired several jokes! Understandably, couples who falsely equate NFP with the Rhythm Method are hesitant to entrust their family planning to NFP.

The truth is that NFP assumes that every woman is irregular at least some of the time. In general, if her fertile time comes earlier or later than usual, she knows about it because of certain physical signs she has learned to identify. NFP can be used at any stage of a woman's reproductive life and can be used by women with irregular cycles, women who are breast feeding, and women in pre-menopausal years.

Why is the Church against birth control?

This is another misconception. The Church is not against controlling births, per se. In fact, the Catholic Church advocates responsible family planning. Indeed, each couple may have serious reasons to postpone or avoid a pregnancy. At the same time, the Church is definitely "pro-child," believing that each child is a gift that enriches both their family and the world. This is in contrast to the increasingly popular view that children are a burden to be avoided, severely limited, or at least postponed as long as possible.

Some falsely believe that the Catholic Church is against artificial contraception because it's "artificial," as if the Church is against medical technology! Actually, the Church considers artificial contraception immoral not because it's artificial, but because it's contra-ception (literally "against conception"). In fact, "natural" methods of contraception—e.g. early withdrawal—are immoral as well.

Then why is the Church against contraception?

Contraception—i.e. the intentional sterilization of the sexual union—changes the meaning of sex. In Catholic understanding, sexual union is a marital act, the embodiment of a couple's wedding vows to love one another freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully. In fact, every time a husband and wife share the marital embrace, they are meant to renew the promises they made on their wedding day. Contraception keeps a couple from giving themselves totally (fertility and all) to one another, and renders the sexual embrace fruitless. Contraception, therefore, contradicts and violates a couple's wedding vows.

Is there really a difference between the periodic abstinence of NFP and contraception? After all, the motive is the same—avoiding a pregnancy.

The difference is clear—contraception changes the meaning of the sexual union and periodic abstinence does not. It's like asking, "What's the difference between eating a healthy diet and purging, in which people gorge themselves and then induce vomiting? After all, the motive is the same—avoiding weight gain." Yet we clearly know the difference; choosing a healthy diet respects the nature of eating, which is designed for nutrition, whereas purging distorts eating, making pleasure its sole purpose. Contraception has the same distorting effect on the sexual union, which is designed for both unity and openness to life.

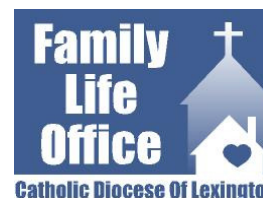


2010 Natural Family Planning Schedule



**The Catholic Diocese
of Lexington**

***For fulfilling component #3
of the Marriage Preparation
Process***



Mike Allen, Director
1310 West Main Street
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 253-1993 ext. 212
mallen@cdlex.org

First Meeting(s)
w/ Your Priest or Deacon
6 months before wedding date
Get scheduled for FOCCUS



Final Meeting(s)
w/ Your Priest or Deacon
A few weeks before wedding date
Plan the wedding liturgy



Natural Family Planning (NFP)

All couples seeking marriage in the Lexington Diocese must take a full course of Natural Family Planning.

2010 In-person Classes (Central KY)

Cost: \$135/couple (includes textbook, basal thermometer, charts, etc.) These classes, led by married couples, teach the "sympto-thermal" method, which observes symptoms like body temperature, cervical mucus, position, and softness.

Registration for these classes is done ON-LINE at www.ccli.org (click on "Register for Class" button)

Series 1: Dec. 6(09), Jan. 3 & Jan. 31 (Sundays) 7-9:30pm
Church of the Annunciation Parish Center
1007 Main St. Paris, KY
Brett & Julie Ervin: (859) 294-8636 (Paris, KY)
Email: ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Series 2: Jan. 15, Feb. 12 and Mar. 12 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
St. Joe's Office Pk (Lex) 1401 Harrodsburg Rd.
Bldg. D, Keeneland Health Ed. Room (4th flr.)
Tom/Kathy Fister: (502)863-3437 (Georgetown)
Email: tkfister@att.net

Series 3: Feb. 7, Mar. 7 and Mar. 28 (Sundays) 7-9:30pm
Church of the Annunciation Parish Center
1007 Main St. Paris, KY
Brett & Julie Ervin: (859) 294-8636 (Paris, KY)
Email: ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Series 4: Mar. 13, Apr. 17, & May 22 (Sat AM:9:30am-12)
St. Luke Catholic Church Parish Hall
304 South Main St., Nicholasville, KY
Richard/Jan Shofner: (859)879-1835 (Versailles)
Email: seabees@windstream.net

Series 5: Apr. 25, May 23 and June 27 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
Church of the Annunciation Parish Center
1007 Main St. Paris, KY
Brett & Julie Ervin: (859) 294-8636 (Paris, KY)
Email: ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Series 6: May 14, June 11, and July 16 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
St. Joe's Office Pk (Lex) 1401 Harrodsburg Rd.
Bldg. D, Keeneland Health Ed. Room (4th flr.)
Tom and Molly Hubbell: (859) 523-4765
Email: mollyhubbell@yahoo.com

Series 7: July 9, Aug. 20, Sept. 17 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
St. Joe's Office Pk (Lex) 1401 Harrodsburg Rd.
Bldg. D, Keeneland Health Ed. Room (4th flr.)
Tom/Kathy Fister: (502)863-3437 (Georgetown)
Email: tkfister@att.net

Series 8: Aug. 21, Sept. 18, & Oct. 16 (Sat AM:9:30am-12)
St. Luke Catholic Church Parish Hall
304 South Main St., Nicholasville, KY
Richard/Jan Shofner: (859)879-1835 (Versailles)
Email: seabees@windstream.net

Series 9: Sept. 10, Oct. 15, & Nov. 12 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
St. Joe's Office Pk (Lex) 1401 Harrodsburg Rd.
Bldg. D, Keeneland Health Ed. Room (4th flr.)
Tom and Molly Hubbell: (859) 523-4765
Email: mollyhubbell@yahoo.com

Series 10: Oct. 8, Nov. 5 and Dec. 10 (Fridays) 7-9:30pm
St. Joe's Office Pk (Lex) 1401 Harrodsburg Rd.
Bldg. D, Keeneland Health Ed. Room (4th flr.)
Tom/Kathy Fister: (502)863-3437 (Georgetown)
Email: tkfister@att.net

Class Options for those in NE Kentucky

Cost: \$60 for classes (Intro session plus at least two personalized follow-up sessions), \$35 for supplies

*These classes, led by Tracy Comer, RPh, CFCP, uses the Creighton Model, which involves charting biological markers related to cervical mucus, position, and softness.

Contact: Tracy Comer, RPh, CFCP
46 Hickory Drive; Barboursville, WV 25504
(304) 733-3704 comerteam@comcast.net

HOME-STUDY AND ON-LINE OPTIONS

Home-Study (Through Couple to Couple League)

Cost: \$135/couple. Classes teach sympto-thermal method.

Contact: Couple to Couple League (www.ccli.org)
(800) 745-8252

Tell them you're from the Diocese of Lexington, KY

On-Line (Through Northwest Family Services)

Cost: \$95.00 per couple. Uses sympto-thermal method.

Contact: Northwest Family Services
www.nwfs.org/classes.htm