

What Does the Church Teach?

Pope John Paul II:

“Sexuality... is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the *innermost being* of the human person.”

“The *gift of the body* in the sexual relationship is a real symbol of the giving of the *whole person*.”

“The total physical self-giving [of sexual intercourse] *would be a lie* if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: *if the person were to withhold something ... by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally*.”

U.S. Catholic Bishops:

“*Suppressing fertility by using contraception* denies part of the inherent meaning of married sexuality and does harm to the couple’s unity.”

“*The Church’s teaching is not only about observing a rule*, but about *preserving that total, mutual gift of two persons in its integrity*.”

What Do Couples Using NFP Say?

“Taking that class not only helped us to space our children as we wanted to, but also **strengthened our marriage**. NFP takes the selfishness out of lovemaking.”

- Ron and Daria W.

“They say contraception brings with it freedom and life; however, we have found that it is in openness to God, to each other, and to new life that **true freedom** is obtained.”

- Michael and Alysha C.

“NFP has opened up many new things for me. I feel like I **understand my body** so much better now, something that I never knew before.”

- Paige D.

Common Myths and the Truth

MYTH: Catholics are free to use any means of birth control recommended by their doctors.

THE TRUTH IS the Catholic Church teaches that using contraception and sterilization *for the purposes of preventing pregnancy* are gravely immoral and are contrary to God’s will. The Catholic Church recognizes that couples may, for serious reasons, postpone pregnancy (see below), but they must use methods in accord with moral principles. Contraception and sterilization do not respect the human body or God’s design for sex. Natural Family Planning, however, works *with* God’s design by respecting the natural fertility cycles of women.

MYTH: NFP is just the Rhythm Method.

THE TRUTH IS modern methods of NFP are based on the latest scientific evidence about fertility. The Rhythm Method was a calendar approach that assumed that every woman had regular cycles, and did not account for the normal variations each woman experiences.

MYTH: NFP doesn’t work.

THE TRUTH IS modern methods of NFP are up to 99% successful in postponing pregnancy for couples who are trained in the method and are committed to following it. On the other hand, thousands of couples have also used NFP successfully to **achieve** pregnancy.

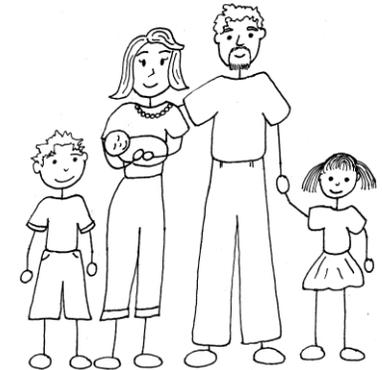
MYTH: The Catholic Church requires women to have as many babies as possible.

THE TRUTH IS the Church encourages husbands and wives to be responsible with their decisions to conceive children, and recognizes that there may be times, for serious reasons, when couples choose to postpone getting pregnant. Openness to children is, however, one of the fundamental qualities of marriage, as declared in the marriage ceremony itself. Couples wishing to postpone pregnancy need to be sure that they are not motivated by selfishness, and that they use only morally acceptable means.

Adapted from the NFP Program of the US Bishops’ Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life & Youth, online at USCCB.org.



DIOCESE OF STEUBENVILLE
Office of Marriage, Family and Respect Life



Natural Family Planning

**Sharing God’s Vision
for your
Marriage and Family**

UPDATED JULY 2017

What is Natural Family Planning?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) refers to a scientific system of fertility awareness utilized by married couples to achieve pregnancy, or, in a time of discernment, to postpone it. By monitoring the natural signs of a woman's body throughout her menstrual cycle, NFP aids couples in conceiving a child, and can be helpful in determining the cause of difficulties in conceiving. When a couple is discerning whether to have a child at a particular time in their marriage, NFP helps them to postpone conception by their abstaining from sexual contact during the woman's fertile time.

NFP offers many benefits for couples, including a deeper appreciation for their bodies; shared responsibility in planning their families; and strengthening their marital bond.

Couples practicing NFP tend to communicate more - not just about when to have sex and when to avoid it. NFP provides the opportunity for couples to be more attuned to each other's health and well-being. NFP practicing couples necessarily re-evaluate their priorities (work, finances, family commitments, etc.) on a consistent basis, and they tend to develop strong prayer lives, as they discern God's will for their family together.

With NFP, the burden of planning their families does NOT fall on one person (usually the woman), nor is anyone subjected to the harmful side effects of contraceptives. NFP respects the truth of the person, and is more than simply a "method." NFP is a way of living that helps couples to give themselves to each other more fully, live their family lives more joyfully, and cooperate with the loving God's plan for their marriage.

*Adapted from the Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.
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OFFICE OF

Marriage, Family and Respect Life

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Local NFP Instructors

Athens, Meigs, Gallia, and Lawrence Counties

Bob and Sharon Colvin
Method: Sympto-Thermal (Couple to Couple League)
Contact: 740-593-5713 or colvin.sl@gmail.com

Eileen Sirois, CNM, CFCP/MC
Method: Creighton Model FertilityCare™
Contact: 910-545-8783 or freedomfertilitycare@gmail.com

Guernsey, Washington, Noble, Monroe, and Morgan Counties

Dan and Melissa Corcoran
Method: Sympto-Thermal (Northwestern Family Services)
Contact: 740-703-7294 or corcoran05@suddenlink.net

Jefferson, Belmont, Harrison, and Carroll Counties

Steve and Ann Craig
Method: Sympto-Thermal/Eco-Breastfeeding (NFPI)
Contact: (740) 457-9663 or jubilee@catholicexchange.com

Dr. Paul and Suzanne Macdonald
Method: Sympto-Thermal (Couple to Couple League)
Contact: 740-346-4082 or mac8@pacific.net

Susan McInnis
Method: Billings Ovulation Method
Contact: 740-275-4299 or billings.nfp@gmail.com

Ronald and Beatriz McNamara
Method: Sympto-Thermal (Couple to Couple League)
Contact: naturalfamilyplanning@comcast.net

Mary Nelson, CFCP
Method: Creighton Model FertilityCare™
Contact: 740-944-1337

Stephanie L.S. Rivers, CFCP
Method: Creighton Model FertilityCare™
Contact: 740-317-5703 or holyfamilyfcp@gmail.com

Rhett and Tosha Young
Method: Sympto-Thermal (Couple to Couple League)
Contact: 740-284-5007 or ryoung@franciscan.edu

Resources for Learning More

Billings Ovulation Method:

Web: thebillingsovulationmethod.org or boma-usa.org
Based on comprehensive scientific research over many years, the Billings Method is easy to learn and gives the woman confidence in understanding her patterns of fertility and infertility. This self-knowledge that comes to a woman from keeping a daily chart can be valuable in planning a family, or as a diagnostic tool for her doctor.

Couple to Couple League International:

Web: www.ccli.org
CCL is a clearinghouse for information on the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP, the benefits of breast-feeding, and information about both the efficacy and harmful effects of artificial birth control methods/devices.

Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System:

Web: www.creightonmodel.com
This is a fertility-care based medical approach rather than a fertility-control approach to family planning and gynecological health. A woman can know her cycles and use this information for the maintenance of her health, and couples can use this knowledge to plan their family and build their future as a couple!

NFP International (NFPI)

Web: www.nfpandmore.org
A Catholic *Humanae Vitae* apostolate; explains the acceptability of systematic NFP in face of sufficiently serious reason plus the call to generosity; teaches marital chastity. Students learn Dr. Ronald Prem's highly effective cross-checking Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP, Ecological Breastfeeding for natural child spacing, and the easily understood renewal-of-the-marriage-covenant theology of sexuality. Available in a live classroom setting, or through online distance learning.

Northwest Family Services:

Web: www.nwfs.org/nfp.htm
A non-profit, non-sectarian corporation dedicated to providing excellent educational materials, resources, and services that enhance and protect the dignity of the human person and successful family life.