



Reports and Recommendations October 2012



Let's recap

- 2010 survey of providers and couples
- 2011 national conference

- 116 couple responses @ 23 questions
- 242 provider responses @ 22 questions
- 300 post-it responses from conference
- 105 recommendations from conference



Reports commissioned

One Plus One (Dr Lester Coleman)

- To provide scrutiny of initial analysis
- To offer evidence of effective practice
- To identify contradictions between provider and couple feedback
- To make independent recommendations and priorities for action

INTAMS (Dr Thomas Knieps-Porte Le Roi)

- To review the draft OPO report and the specific data relating to religious, theological, canonical practices and experiences of marriage preparation
- To make independent recommendations from a theological perspective specifically with regard to:
 - Religious profile of couples and its implications
 - Providers perceptions of their role in the life and mission of the Church
 - Contradictions between provider and couple feedback
 - Integration of religious component within courses and possible future options



Coleman Recommendations



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an Independent Analysis

Provider Recruitment Recommendations

- Recruit more providers through examining recruitment and training strategies
- Develop a standardised recruitment strategy
- Learn from Marriage Care experience
- Improve and increase training opportunities
- Strengthen continuing professional development
- Recruit with respect for diversity of couple population



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an independent analysis

Couple Recruitment Recommendations

- Increase support from clergy
- Create variety of delivery formats and ongoing support
- Prayers for engaged couples and newly-weds
- Develop a broader 'offer'
- Raise expectations beforehand
- Consider making the courses mandatory



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an independent analysis

Course Delivery Recommendations

- Ensure a team delivery approach – lay/clerical model
- Consider longer programmes
- Standardise length of course
- Offer marriage preparation earlier
- Develop school-based programmes to support spousal choice
- Share the responses about the role of marriage preparation within life and mission of Church



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an independent analysis

Course Content Recommendations

- Substantial overhaul unnecessary
- Develop guidance for core content
- Retain flexibility within design of core content
- Consider increasing content around:
 - acknowledgment of cohabitation; transition to parenthood, understanding of sacrament and marital spirituality, inter-faith marriage, future relationship support options, relational capability
- Ensure opportunities for practising skills (ref to BMT)
- However, focus more energy on delivery and recruitment



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an independent analysis

High-level policy recommendations

- Develop a 'national directive' for marriage preparation
- Enhance channels of communication between lay providers and clergy
- Ensure Bishops can have confidence in marriage preparation
- Provide additional conference events
- Designated diocesan posts
- Enhance evaluation of courses and communicate findings



Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church: an independent analysis

Research Recommendations

- Boost survey numbers & improve survey questions
- Attempt data collection from non-participants
- Collate evaluation data centrally
- Improve evaluation design (adopt single tool)
- Conduct longitudinal survey
- Design more specific study to identify good practices
- Consult with couples
- Conduct more systematic literature review



Knieps-Porte le Roi Recommendations



Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives

Recommendations (1)

- Consider giving inter-church issue more prominent, independent and regular place (would help to increase religious content)
- Acknowledge pre-marital cohabitation – but decide on theological, pastoral approach
- Build on providers commitment to MP as service to Church
- Develop core guidelines with view to MP within Life/Mission of the Church (as expressed by providers)



Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives

Recommendations (2)

- Caveat on negative couple comments
- Acknowledge diverse expectations on religious content - develop pragmatic responses to ensure diverse needs met (range of fundamentalist to nominal Catholics)
- Develop and adopt a theological-pastoral rationale which integrates relational and religious components



Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives

Life & Mission of the Church analysis

- Church-related motive
- Faith/Spirituality-related motive
- Relationship-related motive
- Society-related motive

*“Plurality of views reflects a broad scope **all of which** can be linked to the mission and life of the Church.”*

“Theologically legitimate ... indispensable”



Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives

Theological-Pastoral Rationale

- Form providers in religious and relational expertise
- Systematically incorporate inter-church issues
- Discuss sacrament starting from personal experience
- Centralise meaning of the promise and the vows
- Give equal priority to talking about the rite
- Create awareness that sacramental, spiritual and liturgical aspects are integral



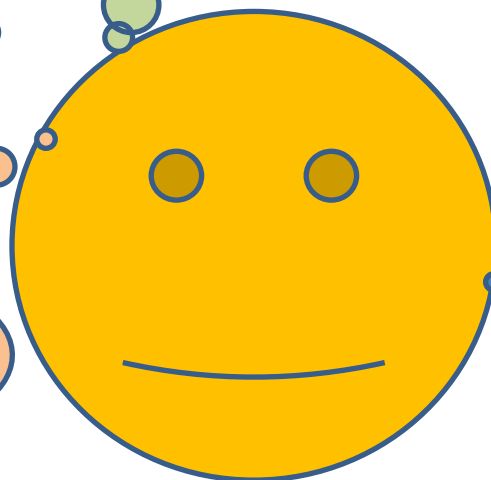
For reflection

What do they mean for my role?

What do they mean for the way we do marriage prep in my diocese?

What additional resources would I need to implement them?

Do I agree with these recommendations?



My next steps?