



Formation Guidelines for Convalidations & Special Circumstances:

- A. Standard Policy: Engaged Encounter** remains the standard retreat option.
- B. Exceptions to the Standard Policy** (choose from the options on page 2):
- **Couples who should attend Engaged Encounter (if possible)**
 - Those married two years or less civilly
 - First-time sacramental marriage (i.e., if at least one spouse has never been married in the Catholic Church)
 - **Couples who may select a virtual or hybrid retreat option**
 - Those married two years or more civilly
 - Valid exceptions such as:
 - Those living over 150 miles from OLGCC Retreat Center
 - Legitimate work conflict, illness, or childcare needs
 - Mature or elderly couple
 - Low-income circumstances
- C. All convalidations and special circumstances still require:**
- **Lay couple accompaniment** (*Witness to Love Civil Marriage Initiative mentoring, or pre-marital inventory facilitator couples*)
 - **A premarital inventory** (*FOCCUS Convalidations or another approved inventory*) normally required, may be waived for elderly couples or long-standing civil marriages at pastor discretion
 - **An NFP Intro Course** (for all couples of fertility age)
 - Completion of an approved retreat or formation option
 - A brief Theology of Marriage “check-in” with the priest after completion of retreat

(Private instruction alone is no longer required, since all approved retreats include Theology of Marriage.)

Minimum Formation Option (Free Pathway)

Minimum formation requirement may be met through watching free lessons from Witness to Love: Be More if mentoring and a pre-marital inventory are included.

Required from the Witness to Love: Be More Marriage Formation Retreat:

- **Theology Lessons 1-6:**
- **Life Skills Lesson 5: Marriage and Sexuality: What is the Church Doing in the Bedroom?**

Recommended but Optional Life Skills Lessons:

- Self Knowledge
- Communication in marriage
- Grace and Conflict
- Parenting Expectations
- Temperaments
- Finances
- Interfaith and Ecumenical Marriages

Approved Online & Hybrid Retreats for Convalidations & Special Circumstances:

1. Virtual - Self-Paced Video (with Certificate) - FREE

- [Witness to Love: Be More Marriage Formation Retreat](#): free for anyone in the Diocese of Lincoln; *(Spanish & English)*

How to Access:

- [Register](#) and click on “Registration for Be More Retreat” □□
Under Select Your Diocese, choose **Diocese of Lincoln**.
- Log in to the [Learning Platform](#) anytime under “Courses,” or use the quick link below:

Witness to Love Be More: courses.witnesstolove.org/lincoln-be-more

2. Virtual - Live, Self-Paced, Instructor-Led (with Certificate)

- [Engaged Encounter Hybrid](#): live quarterly weekend retreat, Fri evening - Sunday afternoon on Zoom. **\$285.** *(English)*
- [Catholic Marriage Fellowship](#): *ideal for urgent cases (less than 4 wks before)*, live two-weeknights, **\$110**, or self-paced, **\$150.** *(English)*
- [Joy-Filled Marriage](#): *Self-paced with live 2.5-hour discussion on Zoom - created by Christopher West*, **\$210.** *(Spanish & English)*
- [Agape Catholic Marriage Prep](#): *Self-led, instructor guided via written reflections; can be tailored for convalidations, military, bilingual, or second marriages; duration: 4-6 weeks (or 2 weeks in urgent cases).* **\$239-\$289.** *(French, Spanish, & English)*

3. Virtual - Self-Paced Video (No Certificate)

- [FORMED Beloved Series \(Parts 1 & 2\)](#) Free with a parish FORMED subscription. Part 1: *Catechesis*, (Sessions 1-6), Part 2: *Life Skills* (Sessions 1-6). Use the *Leader’s Guide* for accountability. *(Spanish & English)*

4. Hard-Copy (No Technology Required and No Certificate)

- [TOBET4Engaged](#): Hardcopy booklet and journal; Accountability through homework. **\$19.99**, bulk discounts available. *(Vietnamese, Spanish, English)*