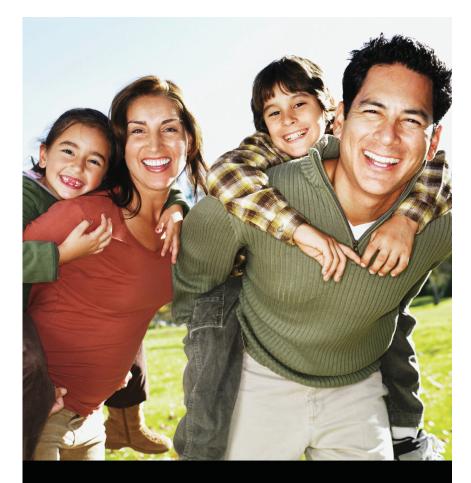


DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

50 N. Park Avenue, P.O. Box 9023 Rockville Centre, NY 11570 phone: 516-678-5800 website: www.drvc-faith.org





DVD STUDY GUIDE

OCTOBER 2010

Plan Your Family Naturally

Plan Your Family Naturally

Resources

For more information, Church teachings on NFP, and how to find an NFP class near you, contact:

Natural Family Planning Program Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life & Youth 3211 4th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017

Email: nfp@usccb.org Telephone: (202) 541-3040 Website: http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/index.shtml

Other links

The Couple to Couple League www.ccli.org/

Billings Ovulation Method Association – USA (BOMA-USA) www.boma-usa.org

Marquette University College of Nursing Institute for NFP (MINFP) www.marquette.edu/nursing/NFP/

Northwest Family Services (NWFS) www.nwfs.org

Family of the Americas Foundation (FAM) www.familyplanning.net/

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1. Most people do not know Church teaching about the moral regulation of births or even the nature of conjugal relations as God intended them.

Before viewing this film, write down briefly how you understand the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding marriage, sexuality, and family planning.

► Where did you acquire your understanding of these teachings (family, friends, priests, TV, magazines, newspapers, the Catechism, theological books, papal documents)?

- 2. Have you heard about the methods of Natural Family Planning?
 - What do you know about them?

► What questions, concerns or comments do you have after listening to the couples in the introduction?



trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die."

The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So the Lord God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said:

> "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.

Plan Your Family Naturally

Genesis 2:4-25

At the time when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens — while as yet there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, but a stream was welling up out of the earth and was watering all the surface of the ground — the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is excellent; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there. The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. The Lord God gave man this order: "You are free to eat from any of the

Chapter 2

THE VOLPE'S STORY: Why we switched to NFP



1. Have you ever discussed the issue of family planning with anyone?

2. If you are engaged or married, have you as a couple discussed how you will live out the Church's teaching on sexuality, married love, and responsible parenthood?

► Is this an important subject for you to discuss as a couple?

3. How are you making your decision as a couple about family planning?

► What factors are influencing your decision?

4. Chris Volpe says that "fertility is a healthy thing..." and therefore it is a contradiction to take something that would interfere with the natural, healthy functioning of her body.

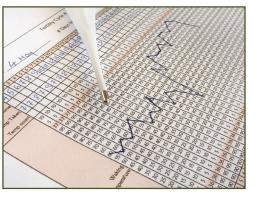
► As a woman, what does that mean for you? As a man, what does that say to you?

Chapter 10

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- **1.** Discuss your reaction to what the couples shared about their experience with NFP.
 - ► What did you find most surprising, helpful, or hard to believe in their testimonies? Why?
 - ► Discuss your own questions and concerns about trying and practicing NFP.

- 5. Dan Volpe commented that for him it was also a contradiction to say that "he believed in God but did not trust Him."
 - ► Do you see the connection between your own relationship as a married couple and your relationship with God?
- 6. Does the Volpe's story help clarify the connection between God and married life?
- 7. Some people find the Volpe's statement that "the only unplanned pregnancy was the first, while using artificial methods of birth control" surprising.
 - ► Do you believe this? Why or why not?





Plan Your Family Naturally

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Chapter 9

HOW CAN NFP HELP US SPIRITUALLY?



1. If you are engaged or married, do you believe that God has a plan for your marriage?

- ► If so, how would you describe it?
- 2. Many couples say that practicing NFP as part of God's plan for their marriage and family leads them to a deeper, more trusting, and life-giving relationship with God.
 - ► In what ways is your relationship with your spouse, and how you plan your family, related to your relationship with God?



Chapter 3

WHAT EXACTLY IS NFP?

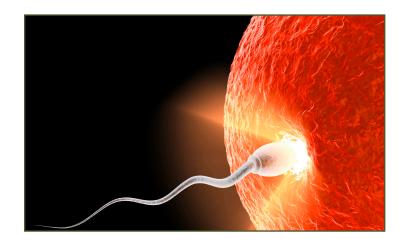
- 1. Natural Family Planning is an umbrella term for those natural methods used to achieve or postpone pregnancy by reading the signs of a woman's fertility.
 - ► Have you considered NFP as a means to plan the size and the spacing of your family?
- 2. Dr. Jennifer DeMarco says that the beauty of NFP is that you are giving freely to your spouse and inviting God into your marriage.
 - ► Do you feel that God is present in your relationship? Why or why not? If yes, in what ways is He present?
- 3. Matthew DeMarco says that the Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality is a "return to Eden" and that each and every act of sexual union is the two of you joining together with God.
 - ► Read Genesis 2:4-25 (p. 14) and discuss the DeMarco's comments. What are the implications for your own relationship?
 - ► Discuss how sexuality is connected to the sacrament of marriage.

Chapter 8

How will using NFP affect our relationship?

Using NFP means that as a couple you must re-evaluate on a monthly basis your reasons (related to finances, work situation, health, etc.) for being open to, or for postponing, pregnancy.

► Discuss how this would encourage and improve the communication and intimacy in your marriage over the years.



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2

Chapter 7 WON'T USING NFP RUIN OUR SEX LIFE?

- 1. What is your view of periodic sexual abstinence in marriage?
 - ► Do you think it could have a positive influence on your relationship? Why or why not?
- What is your reaction to the statement: "NFP enhanced the romance in our marriage."
 - ► Discuss the ways in which you can express your love for each other during periods of abstinence.

Chapter 4

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT NFP DOESN'T WORK

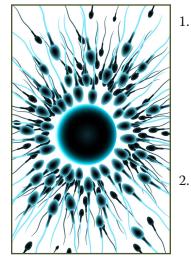
- 1. How does the popular media and culture shape your understanding of sexuality?
 - ► What do you think about these cultural messages?
- 2. The DVD emphasizes that today's scientific NFP is not the "Rhythm Method".
 - ► Do you understand the difference between the two methods?
- 3. Natural Family Planning can be used by couples throughout their married life.

► Describe how NFP can be a gift that couples give to each other.

- 4. When used correctly, NFP is as effective as the birth control pill.
 - ► Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
 - ► Does the effectiveness of NFP make you more open to learn how to practice it?

Chapter 5

NFP IS TOO COMPLICATED



The couples on the DVD discuss their challenges in learning and practicing NFP, such as learning to trust the method, not feeling like they are in control, and so on.

► What do you think your own challenges would be in using NFP?

. Can you understand how a couple would deepen their intimacy by asking the question, "What is God asking us to do in the presence of fertility each month?"

Chapter 6

2.

WHY ARE NATURAL METHODS BETTER?

1. "Fertility is not an illness. It is a sign of a woman's body doing what God and nature intends it to do."

▶ *Reflect on this statement and write down your thoughts.*

► Do you have any concerns about hormonal contraception? Why or why not?

Has your health care professional ever discussed the side effects and potential *abortifacient consequences of hormonal contraception?

* "Abortafacient consequences" refers to when a hormonal contraceptive results in an abortion very shortly after conception has occurred, as for example is possible with the "morning-after pill".



AN INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING