

# Fertility Awareness & Natural Family Planning (NFP)

Fertility Awareness & Natural Family Planning (NFP) is provided by The Family Life Office to help couples understand the gift of their own fertility when planning their family.

## **Love & Chastity**

Love is the sincere and unconditional gift of ourselves to another. We learn to love by receiving the gift of love from others, particularly our family and from God who is love itself. Love is necessary for human fulfillment for it is through **true** love we learn who we are and love gives our life meaning.

Chastity is right ordered sexual behavior. Love between married people is expressed genitally. Sexual relations is for marriage alone. Of course, love is expressed in many other ways too. Affection and friendship are forms of love which **are not** expressed genitally

Conjugal love is both unitive and procreative.. It is the union of two people spiritually, emotionally and physically. To be truly open to the gift of love we must also be open to the gift of life. There should be no barrier to union or to procreation.

## **Barriers to union are**

- Sexual thoughts or acts with someone other than your spouse (adultery)
- Sexual thoughts or acts for your own pleasure (lust)
- Sexual act by yourself (masturbation)
- Sexual act outside marriage (fornication)
- The use of “Scientific means of conception (test tube babies or invitro fertilization, cloning destructive embryonic stem cell research).

## **Barriers to procreation are**

- The use of birth control pills or IUD’s which cause abortion
- The use of contraceptives - condoms, diaphragms, gels, foams, sponges and douches
- All forms of surgical sterilization – tie fallopian tubes, hysterectomy or remove womb in women; vasectomy in men.
- Coitus interruptus (withdrawl) sodomy,(anal sex) fallatio, cunnalinguis (oral sex) ect..

NFP is an umbrella term for certain methods used to achieve and avoid pregnancies. These methods are based on observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s menstrual cycle. Couples using NFP to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman’s cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, it promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of every child. By respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.

**As a method of family planning, NFP:**

- Calls for mutual responsibility by husband and wife
- Requires the couple to communicate
- Is based on scientific research
- Treats each menstrual cycle as unique and teaches a couple to observe their signs of fertility on a day-to-day basis
- Has no harmful side effects
- Is effective for those wanting to achieve or avoid pregnancy
- Can be used in special circumstances – such as, post-partum, during breastfeeding, and premenopause
- Is virtually cost free

**The Billings Method** is very simple to learn and use. Mom's fertile time is observed by testing the consistency of cervical mucus.

**The Couple to Couple League** promotes the sympto-thermal method where Mom's body temperature is measured each morning. Cervical mucus is also monitored. It is easy to use and is also a lay movement with spiritual and human support for parents and children.

**The Creighton Model** is excellent for couples with fertility problems, helping them to learn about their combined fertility. In addition, it will assist Mom in recognizing hormone problems and maintain gynecological health. It is a more complicated method, requiring medical consultation. It is not for routine use.

**See brochures or call Joe DeVet, NFP Counselor, at 713-741-8710.**

