



When a man and a woman enter into the sacrament of Holy Matrimony, they are asked three questions to affirm their intention to enter into a free, total, faithful, and fruitful covenant. One of these questions is:

*Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God  
and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?*

Since openness to life is an integral part of the marriage vows, it is important to understand how the Church invites couples to “Responsible Parenthood” while remaining faithful to the promises they have made to one another.

## What is Natural Family Planning?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is an umbrella term for approved methods used to help couples achieve or postpone pregnancy naturally and effectively, by observing and charting a woman’s fertility biomarkers.

## How Does it Work?

Couples looking to achieve pregnancy take advantage of a woman’s fertile period to have intercourse, while couples looking to postpone pregnancy abstain from intercourse on fertile days. When used correctly, NFP is 99.9% effective in helping couples avoid pregnancy. Careful charting also helps couples identify and address underlying reasons for infertility.

## When Should I Take an NFP Course?

Women can benefit from learning an NFP method at any point in their adulthood, but it is recommended that couples study an NFP method well before the wedding day, in order to allow ample time to learn to read the woman’s signs of fertility.

## Who Can Use NFP?

Anyone! A woman’s irregular cycle or other health conditions DOES NOT disqualify a couple from being able to use NFP. In fact, NFP benefits a woman’s overall health by making couples more attuned to hormonal shifts in her cycle.

## Methods

Most methods use cervical mucus as the primary marker of fertility. Some methods also include monitoring basal temperature and/or urinary hormones. Some popular methods include:

- Creighton Model
- Billings Ovulation Method
- Couple to Couple League (Symptothermal)
- Marquette Method
- FEMM

Please contact your local (arch)diocesan Marriage and Family office to be referred to an NFP Practitioner or visit [witnesstolove.org/nfponline/](http://witnesstolove.org/nfponline/).