



## Natural Family Planning

From the beginning, God's plan for marriage is inscribed in the nature of the human person as created, in the image of God, male and female. The call to marriage is the call for a man and a woman to join in a permanent, faithful, and fruitful union of life-giving love.

Love and life go together, and husband and wife say "yes" to this sacred call and mission of fruitful love from the beginning of their marriage. This is why, in the vocation of Holy Matrimony, the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children are inextricably linked.

Within this understanding of God's beautiful plan for marriage, Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the general term used for married couples to discern, on a continual basis, God's call for them to be fruitful and multiply.

In learning a method of NFP, one gains in-depth knowledge of a woman's menstrual cycle. That knowledge can be used to help a couple achieve a pregnancy, or avoid one, if they have prayerfully discerned that prudence demands a pause on receiving the gift of life, given that the natural state of marriage is for a couple to be open to the gift of life.

Please explore the NFP FAQs, methods available in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, and contact us or an NFP instructor for more information.

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## FAQs About Natural Family Planning

### **Q: Why does the Church teach that contraception is a sin?**

A: Because contraception contradicts God's plan for human love. Man and woman are made for each other, and those called to marriage as husband and wife are called to give themselves completely to each other and to receive each other as a gift.

Sex is made for marriage, and it only speaks the full truth when reserved to marriage and when its meaning as a life-giving union is not deliberately thwarted. Contraception contradicts the meaning of sexual love in marriage by hindering the unitive and procreative dimensions of conjugal love inscribed by God himself.

When we look at the reality of sin and contemplate Original Sin and the Fall of Adam and Eve, sin can be described as an illusion: our way will obtain more freedom in life than God's ways (Gn 3:1-7). The sad truth of this illusion is that, rather than obtaining the freedom sought, we become enslaved to sin (Jn 8:34; Rom 6:16).

Like a loving mother, the Church understands humanity's deep desire for love, life, freedom, and happiness, and she wants us to obtain those elements of human flourishing (CCC, no. 2030). She defines that which is in communion with God's ways as the virtues, and that which is not in communion with God's ways as sins.

Defining the difference between virtue and sin is a great act of mercy since, after the Fall, countless counterfeits to authentic human flourishing have multiplied with the help of the father of lies, Satan. With this understanding, contraception objectively is an illusion promising a false euphoric bliss of union between two people through the redefinition of God's plan for sexuality.

Yet because this redefinition of sexuality does not bring the union and happiness hoped for, but rather much pain and division in the end, the Church, in fidelity to God's plan and the truth inscribed in the nature of the human person, defines that all deliberately sterilized sexual acts are a sin (CCC, no. 2370).



**Q: If NFP and contraception can both be used to regulate births, are they not the same?**

A: NFP is not contraception—it does not frustrate, change, and sterilize the sexual (conjugal) act. Nor does it alter one’s body and hormones. Rather, NFP respects the dignity of each spouse and the dignity of the conjugal act, involving periodic abstinence and the virtue of self-control (regular aspects of any healthy marriage).

In contrast to contraception, the benefits to practicing NFP are powerful and convincing: greater communication, tenderness, and long-term desire between the spouses, and greater self-mastery, generosity, and respect for God’s design for love and life overall. Naturally these virtues work together to decrease vastly the risk of divorce and preserve the permanency and indissolubility of marriage. Conversely, since the widespread use of contraception, the divorce rate has vastly increased and the marriage rate has dramatically decreased. Interestingly, this kind of moral decline was predicted by Pope St. Paul VI in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 (HV, no. 17).

**Q: Is NFP effective in spacing children?**

A: Regarding the regulation of being gifted with a child, a number of studies have shown that a disciplined practice of Natural Family Planning has the same effectiveness rate as the typical use of many contraceptives.\*

However, since using NFP to avoid children is not a natural state of marriage and should only be used when serious reasons arise to avoid the blessing of life, NFP comparisons to contraceptive use are not adequate. NFP proves to be most effective in making spouses more loving and generous people as they deepen their understanding of the mystery of God’s design for love, life, and eternal joy. This will more than likely mean having more children than what is considered “normal” by current standards (or remaining open to other life-giving and nurturing service through adoption, foster care, and other forms of service), as NFP helps couples understand that the family is an icon of the eternal exchange of love found in the Trinity and that the nature of love is to create (CCC, no. 221).

While contraception enables the radical individualism fostered by the current culture and destabilizes family life (even when many couples are unaware of its deleterious effects), practicing NFP enables the true understanding of freedom fostered by the Church and promotes true communion in this life and the next.

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\*See for example: Kambic, R – The Effectiveness of Natural Family Planning, Current Medical Research; Vol 11; Winter/Spring, 2000. Based on meta-analysis of 23 ovulation methods studies and 15 STM studies.

**Q: How does NFP promote health and physical well-being?**

A: Since NFP works with the natural functions of the human body, there are no health risks in seeking to avoid or achieve a pregnancy. Additionally, advancements in medical science are revealing the physical benefits of observing the woman's menstrual cycle as a vital sign. As a woman becomes aware of her normal fertility pattern, changes in this pattern alert her to potential medical problems. The health benefits associated with NFP are so advantageous that some women learn an NFP method purely for this reason.

In contrast, the high doses of hormones needed to produce sterility in a woman are unnatural and result in many negative side effects hazardous to her health. From weight gain and loss of libido to an increased risk for migraines, blood clots, and cancer, the human cost of artificial birth control is high. Also, high doses of hormones can act as an early abortion agent by affecting the lining of the uterus, preventing implantation of a newly conceived life.

**Q: Is NFP the Rhythm Method?**

A: No. Many methods of NFP have developed by leading OB/GYNs from around the world for over the past 80 years to create some of the best fertility information in women's health science.

**Q: How does NFP help build a marriage?**

A: In faithful obedience to God's plan and to the natural moral law, NFP allows a couple to experience "The Great Mystery" St. Paul mentions in the book of Ephesians: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.' This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:31-32, referencing Gen 2:24).

In the same way the Church experiences deeper intimacy and unity with Christ in obedience to Him, a husband and wife gain a deeper intimacy and unity with one another if – and only if – their conjugal life respects God's laws, which always have our best interest in mind, since God is Love.

In practical daily life, through the necessary discussions of fertility, periodic abstinence, welcoming new life, and praying through these challenges, couples

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will experience not only the desire Christ has to be joined to His Bride, the Church, but also the bountiful positive fruits that accompany this intimacy.

Naturally, NFP practicing couples experience greater communication, tenderness, and a virtually non-existent\* divorce rate. This does not mean any couple will avoid the mystery of the Cross, but Jesus invites all of us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him, and He gives us the grace to do so.

\*See for example: Elizabeta Wojcik. "Natural Regulation of Conception and Contraception," International Review of NFP 9:4. Divorce rate of 0% in 1400 NFP using couples tracked over a 20 year period by Austrian doctor Josef Rotzer.



## **Natural Family Planning Instructors**

To properly learn NFP with a desired 97-98% effectiveness rate, couples need adequate training in one of the many methods of NFP available nationwide and in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

The following is a summary of the most popular methods and how you can access more information and instruction.

### **Creighton Model Fertility Care System**

The Creighton Model of Fertility Care teaches standardized mucus observations with an introductory session, followed by individual follow-ups in person or on-line every two weeks for two months, 1 month later and then every 3-6 months as needed.

Through this understanding of their fertility, the couple can make decisions regarding the achievement or avoidance of pregnancy. In addition, it provides women the added benefit of being able to monitor and maintain their procreative and gynecologic health over a lifetime, through NaPro Technology.

To inquire about classes or for any other questions, contact a local certified instructor:

#### **Atlanta**

Ann LaBar Hall PA-C  
404-915-1685  
[annlabar@hotmail.com](mailto:annlabar@hotmail.com)

#### **Atlanta & Distance Instruction**

Felicia Brown, CFCP  
251-421-3581  
[gracefertility@gmail.com](mailto:gracefertility@gmail.com)  
[gracefertility.com](http://gracefertility.com)

#### **Atlanta & Birmingham**

Jean Pier Cortes, FCPI  
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#### **Canton & Distance Instruction**

Carrie Huebner, MPT, CFCP PA-C  
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## **Dunwoody & Distance Instruction**

Kelly Castleberry, BBA, FCP  
Dunwoody Fertility Care  
678-438-5431  
[kellycastleberry.fertilitycare@gmail.com](mailto:kellycastleberry.fertilitycare@gmail.com)

## **Marquette Method**

The Marquette Method of Natural Family Planning is a fertility awareness program developed in 2000 at the Institute of Natural Family Planning at the Marquette University College of Nursing.

It is taught by health care professionals, certified in the program, in a series of three-monthly classes of small groups of couples, with additional follow-ups over a year. The program teaches cervical mucus observations, basal body temperature, and hormonal observations with a fertility monitor.

There have been numerous scientific studies on the method published in peer-reviewed medical journals and it has an online teacher training program as well as an [online program](#) for couples in Spanish and English.

To inquire about classes or for any other questions, contact a local certified instructor:

## **Dunwoody & Distance Instruction**

Sara Flood, R.N.  
404-313-7519  
[SaraFloodRN@nfpcoach.com](mailto:SaraFloodRN@nfpcoach.com)  
[nfpcoach.com](http://nfpcoach.com)

## **Decatur**

Katie Edelstein, FNP/CNM  
404-909-6682  
[Katie@imaginefp.org](mailto:Katie@imaginefp.org)  
[imaginefp.org](http://imaginefp.org)

## **Roswell & Distance Instruction**

Sarah Tramonte, BSN, RN, CPN  
404-798-9686  
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[youmeandnfp.com](http://youmeandnfp.com)

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## **Kennesaw and Distance Instruction**

Amanda Morley BSN, RN

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[sites.google.com/morley-nfp-ministry/contact](https://sites.google.com/morley-nfp-ministry/contact)

## **Sympto-Thermal Method**

Couple to Couple League's Sympto-Thermal Method teaches you how to observe and interpret the woman's fertility signs of cervical mucus and basal body temperature which occur naturally during her monthly cycle. As these signs are observed and recorded, her fertile and infertile times are determined. The Couple to Couple League has been providing NFP instruction for over 55 years.

For in-person and live on-line courses, the method is taught in a series of three classes, each spaced one month apart. Instruction by a certified teaching couple ensures each participant couple is confident in applying rules and interpreting their personal charts. Hybrid on-line classes are spaced out one week apart. Registration is available [online](#). The cost is \$170 and includes all materials and fees.

To inquire about classes or for any other questions, contact our local certified couple:

Naomi and Michael Karrels

(678) 423-0227

## **Georgetown Methods**

Natural family planning methods, also called Fertility Awareness Based (FAB) Methods can help couples to achieve their reproductive goals for preventing or achieving a pregnancy by observing the signs and symptoms to identify the fertile days in the menstrual cycle.

Two simple, modern and effective natural methods are the Standard Days Method® and the TwoDay Method®. Both methods were tested in clinical trials, demonstrating efficacy rates comparable to other user-directed methods. The Standard Days Method is 95% effective when used correctly, and the TwoDay Method is 96% effective when used correctly.

To inquire about classes or for any other questions, contact a local certified instructor:

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## **Lilburn**

Christine Roman  
678-778-0687

## **Acworth**

Deacon Igor Ponce  
404-476-9427  
[igor.ponce@outlook.com](mailto:igor.ponce@outlook.com)

## **Billings Ovulation Method**

The Billings Ovulation Method™ teaches fertility management through the recognition of the female body's natural signal of fertility – cervical mucus.

The Billings Ovulation Method™ has been subjected to more scientific research than any other method of regulating fertility. It has been independently examined by the World Health Organization and other reputable bodies and found to be as successful for avoiding pregnancy as any method of family planning available today.

To inquire about classes or for any other questions, contact the local teacher-in-practicum below:

Maria Ines Girault M.D.  
[Marinesg@me.com](mailto:Marinesg@me.com)

## **Fertility Education and Medical Management (FEMM)**

FEMM is a comprehensive women's health program that teaches women how to monitor their hormonal activity to manage both their health and fertility.

In three sessions spaced 3-4 weeks apart, FEMM classes and coaching sessions teach women to understand the details of their hormones and cycles; to identify their biomarkers (such as cervical mucus); to recognize any abnormalities; and to use this knowledge to avoid or achieve pregnancy.

In addition, FEMM provides accurate medical testing and treatment, aiming at the root cause of any health conditions. FEMM emphasizes the central role of reproductive endocrinology in the management of women's health. Our goal is to empower women to achieve their health and reproductive goals by helping them gain a better understanding of their biology and monthly cycles.

Live FEMM classes are available for individuals or couples as in-person or online meetings, as well as in-person group classes. Working with her

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instructor, FEMM's beautiful, free app allows a woman to easily track her health, chart her cycles, and manage her fertility, no matter her reproductive goals.

To inquire about classes or one-on-one coaching or for any other questions, contact a local certified instructor:

**Dunwoody & Distance Instruction**

Kelly Castleberry, BBA, FCP

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