

PARISH LEADER KIT: IVF & Other Assisted Reproductive Technologies



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Many married couples experience the pain of infertility, and while children are among the greatest blessings, not all methods of expanding one's family are morally good. The following resources are available to help Catholics understand the Church's teaching on marriage and the procreation of children and to provide support and guidance for married couples who are experiencing difficulty having children. These materials can be shared piecemeal in many ways, for example in parish bulletins and newsletters, on websites and social media, incorporated into talks, or used for personal prayer and reflection.

SPECIAL FEATURES

[A Catholic Primer on In Vitro Fertilization](#)

This three-page handout addresses common questions about IVF from the Catholic perspective.

[Notes for Clergy: Addressing IVF with the Flock](#)

This short set of talking points gives homilists a starting point for sharing the Church's teaching on IVF and hope for married couples who are experiencing difficulty having children.

VATICAN DOCUMENTS

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), nos. 2373 – 2379
- [Compendium of the Catholic Church](#), nos. 499-501
- [Donum vitae \(Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation\)](#), Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987
- [Dignitas personae \(The Dignity of a Person\)](#), Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2008

USCCB DOCUMENTS

- [Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology](#)
In a question-and-answer format, the U.S. Catholic bishops provide guidance on what the Church teaches regarding assisted reproductive technology. Some methods of pursuing parenthood are wrong, but others are ethical and offer great hope. [Printable Version](#)
- [Ethical Directives for Catholic Health Care Services \(Sixth Edition\)](#)
The bishops provide authoritative guidance on Catholic health care standards and specific moral dilemmas, including some that pertain to human fertility and life. Although written especially for those in Catholic health care services, the information is helpful for Catholics in general.

ARTICLES

Pastoral and educational articles on infertility and assisted reproductive technology.

- [“Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility,”](#) USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities ([Order](#))
 - [“Children as Commodities?”](#) USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities ([Order](#))
 - [“Life Matters: Reproductive Technologies,”](#) USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities ([Order](#))
 - [“Hope for Married Couples Who Want to Have a Child,”](#) USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities ([Order](#))
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PRAYERS & PRAYER GUIDES

Prayers and prayer guides related to infertility and assisted reproductive technology.

- [Novena of Faith and Perseverance](#) (Saints Anne & Joachim)
 - [Assisted Reproductive Technology](#): May couples seeking to grow their family respect God’s design for the creation of new life.
 - [Infertility](#): May couples struggling with infertility experience Christ’s closeness in their suffering and receive the grace to trust in his perfect will.
 - [Infertility](#): May the Lord comfort and guide married couples who long to welcome a child.
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SCRIPTURE EXCERPTS

These Scripture verses are related to infertility and can be used for personal prayer, integrated into homilies, and shared online and in parish newsletters and bulletins.

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-8, 25:21 | Judges 13:2-24 | 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11, 18-21 | Psalm 34:19 | Psalm 61:2-5 | Isaiah 55:8-9 | Luke 1:5-25, 36-37 | Romans 12:12-13, 15

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please be advised that links to non-USCCB websites and resources are provided solely for the user’s convenience. Reference to these sites and resources does not imply USCCB’s review or endorsement.

- USCCB Webpages - [Reproductive Technology](#) | [Infertility](#): These webpages contains links to related resources such as prayers, Church documents, podcast episodes, articles, books, media, commentary, letters to Congress, news releases
- [Learn How to Use NFP](#)
- [“The Christian Family, In Vitro Fertilization, and Heroic Witness to True Love,”](#) A Pastoral Letter from Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington
- [Our Fruitful Love](#) - The Catholic Diocese of Arlington’s accompaniment for spouses experiencing infertility or pregnancy or infant loss. This website contains videos, podcasts, and spiritual and practical support resources.
- [Springs in the Desert](#) - This Catholic ministry is devoted to helping married couples struggling with infertility.

INTERCESSIONS FOR LIFE

These intentions are appropriate for inclusion in the Prayer of the Faithful at Sunday Mass. They can also be printed in the weekly bulletin, included in parish Holy Hours or Rosaries, featured in email newsletters, shared on social media platforms, or prayed during personal or family prayer.

For married couples struggling with infertility:

May the Lord help them trust in his love
and sustain them with his peace;

Let us pray to the Lord:

May couples seeking to grow their family
respect God's design for the creation of new life;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For couples longing for a child:

May God strengthen and comfort them
as they strive to follow his plan;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For those who are unable to conceive:

That through the intercession of the Blessed Mother,
they will have the courage to entrust their lives to
God's will and be given peace in their suffering;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For those suffering the pain of infertility:

May the Lord place his healing hand upon them
and give them strength to follow his will without
anxiety;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For married couples experiencing
difficulty having children:

May God comfort them in their suffering;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For those whose hearts ache
to welcome a child into their family:

May they experience the Lord's presence
and be filled with his peace;

Let us pray to the Lord:

For those who struggle with infertility:

That faith will open their hearts
to ever greater trust in God's love;

Let us pray to the Lord:

BULLETIN QUOTES

These quotes can be printed in weekly bulletins, featured in email newsletters, and shared on websites and social media platforms. Each quote comes from a full-length resource that can be shared digitally, or in most cases, as printed materials that are available to purchase.

Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

“The Church has compassion for couples suffering from infertility and wants to be of real help to them. At the same time, some ‘reproductive technologies’ are not morally legitimate ways to solve those problems. We bishops of the United States offer this reflection to explain why. We also offer it to provide hope—real hope that couples can ‘accept children lovingly from God’ and build a family while fully respecting God’s design for their marriage and for the gift of children.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

[Read Online](#) | [Printable](#)



Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

“Children have a right to be conceived by the act that expresses and embodies their parents’ self-giving love; morally responsible medicine can assist this act but should never substitute for it.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

[Read Online](#) | [Printable](#)



Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

“Children are not parents’ possessions to manufacture, manipulate, or design; rather, they are fellow persons with full human dignity, and parents are called to accept, care for, and raise them to be new members of God’s family and his Kingdom. Children deserve to be ‘begotten, not made.’”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

[Read Online](#) | [Printable](#)



A Catholic Primer on *In Vitro* Fertilization

“Today, for a wide range of possible reasons, more and more couples are experiencing the pain of infertility. Many ... deeply desire to have biological children and turn to biomedical technologies like *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) to try to fulfill their dreams. As Catholics, however, our faith teaches that these popular procedures are not the answer. In fact, they are harmful and wrong, and even tragically result in the deaths of many innocent children while they are young embryos. ... [However,] there are ethical fertility treatments of which the Catholic Church approves. These can take many forms but are collectively referred to as ‘restorative reproductive medicine.’ Restorative reproductive medicine investigates and seeks to heal the root causes of the couple’s infertility... In fact, restorative reproductive medicine is often more successful than IVF. ... A number of national Natural Family Planning (NFP) education organizations can assist married couples with a list of medical professionals who provide Restorative Reproductive Medicine (RRM); please see <https://bit.ly/nfp-providers>.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities
“A Catholic Primer on *In Vitro* Fertilization”

[Read Online](#) | [Printable](#)



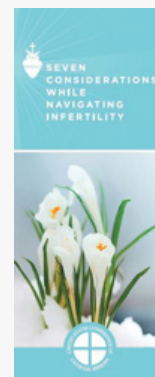
Navigating Infertility

“If you experience difficulty bringing a child into your family, know that you are not alone. God is with you, and his Church desires to walk with you.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility”

[Read Online](#) | [Order](#)



God’s Plan for Married Love and the Gift of Life

“Suppressing the possibility of conception (i.e., contraceptive use) and creating life outside the marital sexual act (i.e., use of some reproductive technologies) both work against God’s plan for married love and the gift of life. Pope Francis explains that ‘a child deserves to be born of that love’ expressed between a husband and wife in intercourse, ‘and not by any other means, for “he or she is not something owed ... but is a gift.”’”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility” quoting Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (quoting *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2378). © 2015, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

[Read Online](#) | [Order](#)



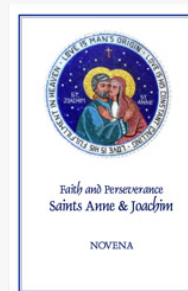
Novena of Faith and Perseverance

“Good parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grandparents of our Savior, Jesus Christ ... You who suffered without children, intercede for all infertile couples.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Novena of Faith and Perseverance to Saints Anne and Joachim”

[Download](#)



Fruitful Married Love

“To couples who cannot have children of their own I say: you are no less loved by God; your love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others, to the needs of the apostolate, to the needs of the poor, to the needs of orphans, to the needs of the world.”

Pope John Paul II, “Homily at the Mass for the Families on February 13, 1982”

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[Read Online](#)

