

## Using BELOVED as the Prelude to Marriage Preparation



***“BELOVED helps couples today really consider what the Catholic Church believes marriage to be.”***

**Edward Trendowski, Ph.D.**

Director of the Office of Faith Formation, Diocese of Providence, RI

With nearly 700,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, the diocese’s 131 churches celebrate their fair share of weddings. Each year, Providence’s Office of Marriage Preparation and Enrichment runs 20 marriage preparation weekends, with between 15 and 30 couples attending each session. The Office of Faith Formation oversees these diocesan marriage preparation programs.

Before couples arrive for the opening talk on Friday evening, they are expected to have logged in to [formed.org](http://formed.org) and watched the first six episodes of the Augustine Institute’s video series on the Sacrament of Matrimony: *BELOVED: Finding Happiness in Marriage*.

Edward Trendowski, the Diocese of Providence’s director of the Office of Faith Formation, estimated that both partners are Catholic in more than 80 percent of the of the couples that come for diocesan marriage preparation. Even so, the Church’s teaching on marriage—especially the total gift of self—is now so radically



**“BELOVED is about how to flourish in your marriage.”**



Ed Trendowski

countercultural that young people might not fully understand how they are called to love through the sacrament.

BELOVED “sets the tone” and helps prepare couples for “the message they’re going to hear from us,” Trendowski said.

While part of the weekend is devoted to practical topics, such as communication and finances, couples hear that “marriage is a vocation, a calling from God, a pathway to holiness, and a pathway to Heaven,” he said.

Prior to the weekend session, the diocese asks couples for feedback about BELOVED.

“They like hearing from the married couples [in the videos] and the advice they give,” Trendowski said.

Trendowski calls BELOVED “a contemporary observation of the primordial sacrament,” told in a visually and auditorily appealing way.

In BELOVED, Trendowski said, couples “hear the language, hear how marriage fits into God’s plan, and hear how marriage mirrors Christ’s love for the Church.”

As one couple expressed in their feedback on BELOVED, “This is helpful to get us thinking about what the Church calls us to be.”



To learn more, contact **Brian Truckenbrod**  
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