



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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A Guideline for Writing the Story of Your Marriage (Please submit typed copies only)

**Please note: this is an outline prepared to assist you in writing the story of your marriage.
Do not use it as a questionnaire.**

I. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

A. You

1. Your present name, address and telephone numbers (please include work phone number).
(Give maiden name for woman.)
2. Date and place of your birth.
3. Your baptismal status and religion.
4. Your parents' names (mother's maiden name).

B. Former Spouse

1. The present name, address and telephone numbers (please include work phone number; Give maiden name for woman). **If this information is not available to you, please provide the name, address and telephone number of a relative of your former spouse or your former spouse's last known name and address. If you provide the last known address, please make sure to indicate this.**
2. Date and place of his/her birth.
3. His/her baptismal status and religion.
4. His/her parents' names (mother's maiden name).

C. Marriage

1. Date and place of marriage.
2. If Church wedding, name of Church (**If this marriage involves a Catholic who married a Protestant in a Protestant Church with a dispensation from the Chancery, indicate the Catholic Church where these arrangements were made.**)

II. THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE BEFORE THE MARRIAGE:

A. Your Family Background

1. What were your parents like and how did they get along?
2. Which parent was the dominant person in the family?
3. How did you get along with your mother? With your father?
4. Did you have any emotional illness or serious physical illness while you were growing up?

B. Your School Years

1. How far did you go in school and how well did you do? How did you get along with your fellow students, teachers, people in general?

2. Describe your attitudes toward sex, alcohol, drugs, breaking the law. Describe your dating habits: when did you begin to date; how frequently?

C. Your Personality and Character

1. Write a brief sketch of your character, what type of person you are as a whole, describing your strong and weak points. In presenting this profile, please consider the following; unusual fears in childhood; selfishness; self-confidence, suspiciousness of others, misinterpretation of others' thoughts, words or actions; nervousness; moodiness; inclination towards anger or tantrums; stubbornness; ability to make and maintain friends; inappropriate silliness or outbreaks of crying; weakness of character such as lying, stealing, etc.

III. THE STORY OF YOUR SPOUSE'S LIFE BEFORE MARRIAGE:

A. Spouse's Family Background

1. What were his/her parents like and how did they get along?
2. Which parent was the dominant person in the family?
3. How did he/she get along with his/her mother? With his/her father?
4. Did he/she have any emotional illness or serious physical illness while he/she was growing up?

B. Spouse's School Years

1. How far did he/she go in school and how well did he/she do? How did he/she get along with his/her fellow students, teachers, people in general?
2. Describe his/her attitudes about sex, alcohol, drugs, breaking the law. Describe his/her dating habits: when did he/she begin to date; how frequently?

C. Spouse's Personality and Character

1. Write a brief sketch of his/her character, what type of person he/she is as a whole, describing his/her strong and weak points. In presenting this profile, please consider the following: unusual fears in childhood; selfishness, self-confidence; suspiciousness of others; misinterpretation of other people's thoughts, words or actions; nervousness; moodiness; inclination towards anger or tantrums; stubbornness; ability to make and maintain friends; inappropriate silliness or outbreaks of crying; weakness of character such as lying, stealing, etc.

IV. THE MARRIAGE

A. Your Courtship or Engagement Period

1. How did you meet? Describe your dating habits.
2. How did you get along together? How affectionate were you and what part did sex play?
3. How did the subject of marriage come up?
4. Was there a formal engagement and how long was this before the marriage?
5. What were the attitudes of each toward having children?
6. Were either you or your former spouse adamant about when you would or would not have children? If so, please explain.
7. What were your attitudes about getting a divorce if the marriage did not work out? Did the two of you ever talk about this? Did you view marriage as a life-long commitment?
8. Even though you wanted your marriage to last for life, what would have had to occur for either you or your former spouse to end the marriage? Please explain.

9. Did either you or your former spouse deliberately conceal something that had you or your former spouse known about it, the marriage would not have taken place? Please explain.
10. What part did each play in the wedding preparations?
11. What were the attitudes of your two families toward the marriage? What did your friends think of it?

B. The Wedding Day

1. What did you think and how did you feel:
 - a. As you were dressing for the wedding?
 - b. At the Church and during the ceremony?
 - c. At the wedding reception?

C. The Honeymoon

1. Did you go on a honeymoon? Describe your feelings about it.
2. Was there any difficulty with regard to sexual relations while on the honeymoon?

D. Your Married Life Together

1. Describe your mutual love, sexuality and affection during your marriage.
2. What was the attitude of each toward work and the responsibility of married life?
3. What were your spouse and your attitudes and behavior about having children?
4. Describe your marital problems. Did you ever seek professional help?
5. Tell what brought about any temporary separations.

E. Final Separation and Divorce

1. What was the real reason for the separation?
2. When (date and year) did the final separation occur?
3. When and where was the final divorce granted? On what grounds?
4. What is each doing since the separation? Remarried? (How many times?)

V. WITNESSES

Submit a list of the names and addresses (telephone numbers, if possible) of potential witnesses. These would be people who were knowledgeable about the courtship, marriage and contracting parties. Family members often make good witnesses.

VI. PETITION:

Submit your completed petition (see next page), narrative statement (story of the marriage), along with a copy of the Marriage Certificate and Decree of Divorce for the marriage to:

Archdiocesan Tribunal
P.O. Box 29260
Washington, DC 20017-0260

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

PLEASE NOTE:

1. **Keep a copy** of this narrative statement for your files.
2. A \$40 filing fee should accompany submission of this material.
3. Please be advised that an offering will be requested by the tribunal to defray its expenses in the processing of your petition when this case comes up for formal consideration.

PETITION

(Libellus)

I, _____, residing in the (Arch)diocese of _____¹,
(if female, use maiden name) (Arch)diocese

hereby petition the Archdiocese of Washington for an ecclesiastical declaration of nullity of my marriage to
_____, residing in the (Arch)diocese of _____².
(if male, former spouse’s maiden name) (Arch)diocese

I will be represented by a Procurator-Advocate who can be reached through the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Washington at 5001 Eastern Avenue, Hyattsville, MD, 20782 (mailing address: P.O. Box 29260, Washington, DC, 20017-0260).

I understand that the matrimonial covenant is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring and that the essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility.

In accord with the provisions of Canon 1513.1, I understand the Judge will determine the grounds upon which this case is to be adjudicated.

In support of this petition I have provided more detailed information about the history of this marriage and the names of witnesses who can give testimony about my relationship with my former spouse.

Signature (if female, use maiden name)

Date

¹ **Archdiocese of Washington:** District of Columbia, Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George’s and St. Mary’s Counties in Maryland.

Archdiocese of Baltimore: the rest of the State of Maryland with the *exception* of the Eastern Shore.

Diocese of Wilmington: the Eastern Shore.

Diocese of Arlington: the following counties in Northern Virginia: Arlington, Clarke, Culpepper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren and Westmoreland and the seven independent cities of Alexandria, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park and Winchester.

Diocese of Richmond: the rest of the State of Virginia.

If you do not know the diocese, please leave blank.

² See above.