

"Building A House and Home"
Premarital Counseling Overview

Session I: "Introduction and Orientation To Marriage"

- The Five P's Of Premarital Counseling
- Premarriage Awareness Inventory

Session II: "The Foundation & Pillars In A Marriage"

- Sound Beginnings & Expectations Section
- Lifestyle Section
- The Honeymoon

Session III: "Religion & Integrity In A Marriage"

- Religion Section
- The Wedding Ceremony

Session IV: "Personality, Family, & Friends In A Marriage"

- Personality/Relating Style Section
- Family/Friends Section
- Personality Inventory
- The Reception

Session V: "Communication In A Marriage"

- Communication Section
- Sharing Feelings Section
- Conflict Resolution/Problem-solving Section
- Housing

Session VI: "Finances & Intimacy In A Marriage"

- Finances & Legal Issues Section
- Sexuality Section
- The Rehearsal

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INTRODUCTION

"As you prepare for marriage, you are embarking on one of the most exciting journeys of your lifetime. Marriage is also one of the most challenging endeavors a person can undertake and, as statistics tell us, an endeavor which by no means carries with it a guarantee of success.

Looking forward to marriage, your most prominent feeling at this moment may be excitement. You are excited about the potential depth and fulfillment of your marriage relationship. Perhaps you are excited about plans to have children. You are excited because you feel warm and wonderful emotions toward the person you are proposing to spend a lifetime with.

The excitement, enthusiasm, and positive attitude you have about your partner, soon to be spouse, are all good. But these highly motivating feelings also carry with them one drawback. Some research suggests that the "least teachable" time in the life of a couple is the period spanning from six months before the marriage to six months after the marriage. For some this period may be shorter, but in the majority of cases you would expect a couple to be somewhere in the midst of it when they come to their pastor to prepare for the event of marriage and plan all the particulars concerning the ceremony itself. This period of time is labeled "least teachable" because couples are so enthused about their coming marriage, and so positive about their relationship partner, that they are often unable to take a clear realistic look at that relationship in an effort to plan adequately for the challenges that marriage will bring.

So what's the point? No one wants to diminish the ecstasy of your love relationship, however as you prepare for marriage you will serve the durability of that relationship best by working hard to look realistically at the challenges which marriage offers. You will want to be honest and open about your concerns as well as your enthusiasm. You will want to make every effort to plan for the practical challenges of marriage like money management. You will want to work hard at developing communications skills that will enhance this relationship over the long term. You will want to discuss issues of sex, religion, problem solving, parenting, and in-laws frankly and forthrightly.

Since taking this kind of thorough look at your relationship is in direct contrast to the "wow, isn't it great to be in love" feelings that you are probably experiencing right now, it is important for you each to make a deliberate commitment to do so. Let that commitment be one of your first to the quality of your coming marriage."

A Good Beginning: Crossing The Bridge To Married Life
Peter L. Velandar, M.S.