

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM - 2015
St. Patrick Church, Bridge Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio

This program is built on the realization that a wedding is a day - a marriage - a lifetime. This program seeks to raise key issues involved in "walking together for life" as opposed to simply the beginning of the process.

Since it is you two who will walk together - it is you whom must do the planning. Hopefully issues raised will foster the ongoing dialogue so needed if relationships are to deepen.

For a couple with a Catholic worldview, marriage becomes one of the sacraments. Experiencing Christ thru one another, you are invited to make God present in the lives of those you meet.

Again, each of you will experience God's unconditional love for you most profoundly in the love you receive from your spouse. Never take that love for granted and never lose the sense wonder over the fact that the one you love most in all the world thinks enough of you to want to spend the rest of his/her life with you.

With these things in mind, we invite you to prayer and reflection as you plan your new life together.

- 1) Reflect on each Session work sheets individually and record your responses in a notebook
- 2) Come together as a couple and share your reflections with one another.
- 3) Share your reflections with the priest.

SESSIONS

PERSON – CHARACTER

Who you are – Who you think he or she is

HISTORY – BACKGROUND

What made you who you are today

COMMUNICATION

Most essential for the Trip

HUMAN SEXUALITY

Experience of God's unconditional love for you

PARENTING

Pastoring the Home Church - First Place of Worship for your children

PRACTICALITIES

Feet on the Ground but priorities straight

FAITH AND MARRIAGE

"Walking through a passing world with heart set On a world that will never end."

FORMING THE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR NEW HOME

Together compiling from the list of religious traditions, choose those that will be part of your new life together

Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Seasonally, Annually

Secondly, Formulate your own Family's Mission Statement

That tells one and all what you stand for

APPENDICES: 1. Feelings 2. Foundation Stones of Marriage and Commitment

WORKSHEET ONE

THE PERSON

Two facts are of profound importance:

1. Marriage presumes maturity - it does not create it.
2. Marriage is not a goal but a process – a process of walking together for life.

Qualities listed below will enhance or complicate your trip together for life. Please rate yourself and then your fiancé on a scale of 1 - 9 (1 = lowest; 9 = highest) on the presence of each of these qualities within each of you. Share your responses with your fiancée, together with the reasons for your scores. Then share what you have learned with the priest at your next meeting.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Self Acceptance () () | 2. Sensitive () () |
| 3. Dependable () () | 4. Persevering () () |
| 5. Able to do without () () | 6. Good Listener () () |
| 7. Honest () () | 8. Open () () |
| 9. Even-tempered () () | 10. Jealous () () |
| 11. "Goes to excess" () () | 12. Stable () () |
| 13. Bounces back well () () | 14. Handles differences well () () |
| 15. Is possessive () () | 16. Easily Hurt () () |
| 17. Compromises well () () | 18. Needs "my way" () () |
| 19. Hold Grudges () () | 20. Respectful () () |
| 21. Controlling () () | 22. Needy () () |
| 23. Insecure () () | 24. Forgives & Forgets () () |
| 25. Disciplined () () | 26. Compare a lot () () |
| 27. Can move beyond hurts () () | 28. Can admit mistakes () () |
| 29. Easily Distracted () () | 30. Handles change well () () |
| 31. Resolve conflicts well () () | 32. Consistent () () |
| 33. Competitive () () | 34. Affirming of others () () |
| 35. Must be right () () | 36. Many expectations () () |
| 37. Volatile () () | 38. Resentful () () |
| 39. Takes faith seriously () () | 40. Focused on material things () () |

WORKSHEET TWO

MY HISTORY & REFLECTIONS

It is my background and the people who were a part of it that that have made me the person I am. I bring to my journey of life many experiences, joys, and achievements – many successes – many failures. Sharing these will help us in understanding one another. .

- 1. If you viewed your life as a book, into what chapters would you divide it? How would you entitle each chapter? How would you entitle the book? Share your book with your fiancée indicating in each chapter the challenges faced - the failures – those to whom you looked up, those who were threatening to you.**
- 2. Apart from parents, fiancé, three persons whose life has had an impact on my life:**
- 3. Things for which I was most complimented in growing up:**
- 4. Things for which I was most criticized in growing up:**
- 5. Things of which I am proud: The reason I cherish them:**
- 6. Things "worthy of being sought after" that I learned in my home of origin... How were these "taught?"**
- 7. Three negative experiences through which I have had to grow..**
- 8. What challenged me most in:**

**Grade School?
High School?
Post High School?**

- 9. Qualities in me that will be helpful in walking with my fiancé for life: Things that make me shaky:**
- 10. Qualities in my fiancée helpful in walking together: Qualities in my fiancé that make me shaky:**
- 11. Two marriages that seem good role models for me:**
- 12. Family traditions that meant a great deal to me, that I'd like to include in our home:**
- 13. What part did religion play in my growing up years? What does it mean to me at present? What moved me from point "a" to point "b?"**
- 14. Turning points, crossroads that have changed the direction of my life:**
- 15. Our home will include these things from the home I grew up in: It will not include the following:**
- 16. The presence of any of the following will influence how I relate to people. Should any be present, they must be talked about?**

**Drug Usage
Alcoholism
Putdowns**

**Can't share feelings
Physical Abuse
Emotional/Sexual abuse**

**Violence
Unreal expectations
Tension in home**

**Mental illness
Dependency
Domineering parent**

17. **Our life together will move from honeymoon years, to child bearing years, to launching years, to middle years to grand parenting years, to Golden Years. What does this suggest by way of directions, goals, values, and priorities?**
18. **My decision to marry affects every aspect of my life. After we marry what are some of the areas I may have to rethink"...revise"...give up"...spend less time with"?**
19. **How were conflicts resolved in my home of origin? How will conflicts be handled in the home we found?**
20. **How will I teach values to my children in a world in which the media support any way of life as acceptable?**
21. **How would I describe my relationship with my family at the present time? With my father... mother... siblings?**
22. **What kind of "reputation" has my family of origin earned among friends, relatives, the community? How was this reputation earned? Do I realize we will make a statement about what is important to us by the places we go, the things we get involved in, the priorities we set.**
23. **Draw up a list of the values and attitudes you hope to foster in your new home and how you will do this?**
24. **What will be "normal" in your home?**
25. **What role did prayer have in our home in growing up? Church attendance? What are the things religion-wise that will be part of our regular routine we marry?**

WORKSHEET THREE

THE COUPLE...OUR NEW LIFE

Marriage is a commitment of two different people to one another for life. After marriage, we will remain individuals. We cannot presume we will think alike, feel the same way about things. The love we have for one another will support us in being the persons we are. In this Session, we look at our togetherness, our individuality and our communications. The following is input.

The Art of Communication

One of the most challenging things for couples is growth in communication. Some principles will help:

- a. The feelings a person perceives at any given moment MUST be validated (that is accepted).**
- b. The intensity of those feelings often comes from "History" (experiences in the past which trigger the emotional intensity exhibited on this occasion)**
- c. Different persons will have different perceptions of the same situation. We can never assume a spouse will experience things just as we do.**
- d. Feelings must be acknowledged and validated by the other.**
- e. Feelings are validated by such statements as:**
 - I understand that you are angry - I hear you**
 - I can see you are disappointed**
 - It's apparent that you are hurt - hurt deeply.**
- f. Feelings are not validated and the person is put down by statements like:**
 - You shouldn't feel that way...**
 - That's a dumb thing to be upset about...**
 - You're nuts to be worrying about that...**
 - It didn't hurt that much.**

- 1. With the above input statements on communication as background, what are some of the areas in which our communication could improve? In what areas do we function rather well?**

- 2. When we are hurt by those closest to us, we tend to assume it was done knowingly and deliberately. However, when we have unwittingly offended those closest, often we were:**
 - a. Not conscious we had done so**
 - b. Did not intend this in the slightest way**

I need to extend to the other person the courtesy of knowing that he or she probably was not even conscious of hurting me let alone doing so deliberately?

- 3. The following decisions should be made together...**

- 4. The following would be decisions individual spouses might make on their own...**

5. In communication the following formulate are helpful:

I. In topics highly emotional: e.g. sexual, in-laws etc.:

- a. When you do this - say this - act this way -
- b. I feel slighted hurt confused disappointed
- c. Since it seems you're putting me down - preferring others to me - treating me badly

II. When sitting down to talk, putting our expectations out right up front is helpful:

- a. What I need is an ear to listen - a shoulder to lean on - you to be with me...
because I'm hurting... feeling pain... feeling abandoned.
- b. What I need is your advice because this is bothering me but please hear me out.

III. When we've drifted apart and perhaps done something really foolish

- a. When I did this
- b. I was feeling badly over -
- c, Because I thought -

6. Rate yourself on a 1 to 9 on these positive communication skills. Your fiancée will keep you honest:

Verbal Communications _____	Eye Contact _____
Non Verbal Communication _____	Ability to get others to talk _____
Listening _____	Will talk even if tired _____
Can let go of anger _____	Know importance of talking _____
Can hold temper _____	Kind - even when angry _____

7. What does the slogan "These are our children's GOOD OLD DAYS," tell you about parenting?

8. How do we handle as a couple:

- a. Differences of opinion?
- b. Talking about difficult subjects?
- c. Anger?
- d. Disappointment.
- e. Conflict?
- f. Coming together after differing?

Which areas need more work?

9. Traditional roles of husband and wife in a family have had some bad press lately. It would be helpful to recall that traditional roles became traditional because they worked. However, they are not cast in bronze. Again, new models have not added any stability to the strengthening of commitments. Where are each of you on this issue?

10. Do each of us have the same philosophy on spending and saving of money? How improve?

11. Notice that in marrying, you will set up a whole new community. Do things twice and you have a Tradition. List some of the traditions you want to be sure to incorporate into your new family.

12. It has been said "There are no ties stronger than blood ties." Yet the marriage ties you must forge between you must be stronger than blood ties. You must commit daily to be more important to one another than you are to your parents or to your children. And the best gift you give your children "loving one another." Has this been your way of seeing things? Any changes needed?

13. The following are destructive elements in communication. On a scale of 1-9, rate yourself on the presence of each in your make-up. Your fiancé will keep you honest.

Need to get even _____	Need to be in charge - in control _____
Difficulty forgiving past hurts _____	Difficulty in moving beyond emotions _____
Difficulty leaving yesterday in past _____	Compare self - relationship with others _____
Having unspoken expectations _____	Second-guessing decisions made _____

14. **React to the following situation and decide how you would deal with it. In sharing, refine your thinking. And record your revised strategies. Finally, discuss this with the priest.**

NOTE THE FOLLOWING

Into every person's life, there come several individuals - three to five to seven to nine – of the opposite sex who strike deep chords of response within us, to whom we are attracted and who are attracted to us with what seems an overwhelming pull.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

- a. **THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN.**
- b. **IT WILL HAPPEN MANY TIMES**
- c. **IT WILL HAPPEN WHETHER WE ARE COMMITTED TO ANOTHER PERSON OR NOT.**
- d. **WHEN IT HAPPENS - AND EACH TIME IT HAPPENS - IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH IT**
- e. **HOW WILL YOU DEAL WITH IT PERSONALLY? HOW WILL THE TWO OF YOU DEAL WITH IT?**

Share your thoughts with your fiancée and devise a strategy. Share your strategy with the priest walking thru the program with you.

15. **In growing up, I have heard some of the following statements made about marriage: What are your thoughts on each?**

- a. **Marriage is a 50 - 50 proposition**
- b. **The magic need never go out of a marriage**
- c. **There are two lasting gifts we give to our children - one is roots - other is wings.**
- d. **I don't have to share everything with my spouse**
- e. **Marriage is a process which demands recommitment each day**
- f. **The husband is head of the family. This means he has the deciding vote - veto power**
- g. **We may have a few problems now but after we're married it'll all be fine.**
- h. **There are no unsolvable problems in our life together.**

16. **Do I consider "getting help" in our relationship after marriage an indication of failure? Would I be willing to seek help if my spouse felt we needed it and I thought he or she was off the wall?**

WORKSHEET FOUR

HUMAN SEXUALITY

1. **When I was 13 years old, my understanding of sex was... When I was in my last year of high school, my understanding of sex was... As I approach our marriage, my understanding of sex is...**
2. **Can I see that sex can be anything from "ecstatic giving of self" to "means of manipulating a person", a bargaining tool, a depersonalizing experience or even an imposition?**
3. **Do I see that the same kind of discipline that was necessary to help us remain chaste prior to marriage is what is going to enable us to be faithful after marriage? Do I see the connection?**
4. **Comment on the following statement: Our sexual involvement will be as wonderful as is the respect, care and consideration with which we treat one another day in and day out..**
5. **Another issue: While sex is not the essential facet of a life together, problems in the area of sexuality impact the whole of the relationship. They must be taken seriously and talked about.**
6. **From what sources, will our children's appreciation of sex develop? How will this happen?**
7. **How does faith in God bring a different perspective to sexual love in our marriage?**
8. **Nowhere is self esteem more vulnerable than in the sexual dimension of our lives. Do I have an appreciation of the fact that declining sexual involvement, on a feeling level, will always come through as rejection and hence there is need to talk?**
9. **How do I react to: "At times, I best show love for my spouse by foregoing my own needs."**
10. **Do I understand the differing sexual response of man, woman, so that I can deal sensitively with it?**
11. **How would I deal with finding I am strongly (sexually) drawn to another person after we are married?**
12. **What feelings can you see surfacing if one of the spouses in the marriage declines the invitation to sexual involvement? on a given occasion? Rather frequently? How will we address this issue?**
13. **What feelings could cause "static" in our sexual lives together?**
14. **Do I have a sense that my presence to and for my spouse is very important and that it is crucial that we keep communication honest at all times? How will I balance "taking care of the kids" and being present to my spouse? How handle getting overtime work to help the family and being present to the family?**
15. **Give an example of how something can be a serious problem to one and no problem at all to another.**
16. **How will I deal with my spouse's asking for help from me processing an attraction to another person?**
17. **Do I see a need to work on keeping sex "special" in our marriage?**
18. **How would alcohol, drug usage, affect our relationship physically, sexually, mentally, emotionally?**
19. **Would I be free enough to consult someone professional - doctor, counselor - should there be problems which arise in the area of sexuality?**

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

- Natural Family Planning is a general title for the methods of family planning that are science based, accurate, natural, healthy, reliable and moral.
- N.F.P. is based on scientific research about women's cycles of fertility.
- Effectiveness of NFP: Couples following all the Rules: 97% – 99% Effective
 Couples not following all the Rules: 80% – 90% Effective

National Family Planning Methods are different from and better than contraception:

No harmful side effects

Environmentally friendly

Virtually cost free

Cooperate with rather than suppress a couple's fertility

Can be used both to achieve and avoid pregnancy

Call for shared responsibility and cooperation by husband and wife

Require mutual communication

Foster respect for and acceptance of the whole person.

Encourage maturity and the value of chastity

Value the child

Honor and safeguard the unitive and procreative meanings of married love

LEARN ABOUT NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

DIOCESAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY OFFICE

216 334 2978

www.ccdocle.org/marriage-and-family-ministry/natural-family-planning

OTHER RESOURCES

www.NFPaware.com

WORKSHEET FIVE

THE ART OF PARENTING

It has been said that having a child no more indicates expertise in parenting than owning a piano is a sign of an accomplished pianist.. One must learn. Again, children see better than they hear. It is your attitudes in your daily living that will determine, shape the growth and development of your child. The following verse exemplifies how children learn. Having reflected upon it, consider the items that follow.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT YOU LIVE

If a child lives with criticism...it learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility...it learns to fight.
If a child lives with fear...it learns to be apprehensive.
If a child lives with pity...it learns to feel sorry for self.
If a child lives with jealousy...it learns to feel guilty.

BUT

If a child lives with encouragement...it learns to be confident.
If a child lives with tolerance...it learns to be patient.
If a child lives with praise, it learns to be appreciative.
If a child lives with acceptance...it learns to love.
If a child lives with approval...it learns to like self.
If a child lives with recognition...it learns it is good to have a goal.
If a child lives with fairness...it learns what justice is.
If a child lives with honesty...it learns what truth is.
If a child lives with security...it learns to have faith in self and those around it.
If a child lives with friendliness...it learns that the world is a nice place in which to live.

With the above in mind, each is asked to evaluate self on a 1 - 9 basis (1=Low and 10 = High) on the following qualities each of which makes a statement to children. Your fiancée will once more check you out.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Fair, honest _____ | 2. Not cutting corners _____ |
| 3. Interested in opinion of others _____ | 4. Use profanity, cursing _____ |
| 5. Sarcastic _____ | 6. Negative outlook _____ |
| 7. Indulge in racial, ethnic slurs _____ | 8. Humor involving putdowns _____ |
| 9. Critical of others _____ | 10. Material things = super _____ |
| 11. Distrustful _____ | 12. Threatened _____ |
| 13. Take pride in my work _____ | 14. Must be in control _____ |
| 15. Perfectionist _____ | 16. Neatness freak _____ |
| 17. Can delegate comfortably _____ | 18. Trustful of others _____ |
| 19. Secure in my judgments _____ | 20. Super organized _____ |
| 21. Good Team Person _____ | 22. Anxious to please _____ |
| 23. Problem with Temper _____ | 24. Problem moving beyond hurts _____ |

REFLECTIONS ON PARENTING

1. **Studies show that no institution including the Church and the school have more than 10% of the impact on children that parents have. Again, we are told that a child's attitudes towards life are formed between the ages of three to six. Do you understand now why "Catholic Home-schooling of the Faith" is your privilege and responsibility? Only you can give your children a vision of life that sees life as gift of the God who became one of us in Christ to model for us a life to be lived for others and told us it is to last forever. (PS. Google "Catholic Home-schooling the Faith")**
2. **Remember you teach by what you do." In every home, there are certain "non-negotiables" - things that you do "routinely." Among these are getting up in the morning, brushing one's teeth, bathing, going to school etc. Know that if going to church is not among those non-negotiables, you have already taught your child that brushing their teeth is more important than God.**
3. **You will be your child's first religious educator. Observing the way each of you live today, what would a child pick up as your prime concerns, the most valuable things in your life?**
4. **You will be your child's first spiritual director. You will have to help in the formation of your child's conscience You monitor his/her spiritual growth. How will you do this? How will you convey to them the importance of reconciliation? Example is key. How will you show your child the importance of forgiveness by the way the two of you forgive one another?**
5. **From the above, it will be apparent that if you pray, your child will pray. If you pray, your children will know the prayers by heart by the time they get to school. What prayers will you teach them? How will you tell them of God? At what times will you pray with them? Will they be able to see that prayer is a regular part of yours and your spouse's life?**
6. **Reconciliation or confession is God's way of say to us - It's YOU I love, not what you do. I don't expect perfection of you - just honesty. What is my attitude towards confession? How often is it part of my life? My attitude towards confession will be the one my child picks up. What would his attitude be if he observed us today?**
7. **After marriage, make confession a seasonal item. Christmas is Winter – Easter is Spring – Memorial day is Summer - Labor Day is Fall. Mark your calendars and go confession as a family. Immediately after confession, go to McDonald's. Make confession a happy time for your children.**
8. **Among the supports you had in growing up were the example of parents, clergy, religious, school, home etc. What supports do you plan to provide for your children?**
9. **How will our home reflect the fact that we are religious people?**
10. **My involvement with parish will probably say a great deal of how much the faith plays in my life and how much it should play in my children's lives. What will our involvement in the parish be?**
11. **A plaque once read: "We all need people - being with whom is like coming home." How do I demonstrate this to my children?**
12. **People often say, children should respect their parents. How will you as parents "earn the respect of your children?"**

GUIDELINES FOR CONSCIENCE FORMATION

As individuals in our world at the close of the second millennium, we receive data on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of various actions from six distinct sources:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotion/Feelings 3. The Media 5. Civil Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Reason (Wisdom of the World) 4. Peers 6. Faith |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

SOURCE

GUIDELINES

- | SOURCE | GUIDELINES |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Emotion/Feeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If it feels good - it is good b. If it is easier, it's better |
| 2. Reason
(Wisdom of World) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. b. If two or more adults agree on a course of action, and it harms no one, it's OK. |
| 3. The Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If it's possible, it's permissible b. To question this is to be bigoted, un-American. |
| 4. Civil Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is legal is moral b. What the law permits, God permits |
| 5. Peers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is permissible for one is permissible for all b. It's important to do what others are doing c. If you feel it makes sense to you, go for it |
| 6. Faith
(Wisdom of God) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Commandment of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." b. Great Commandment: "Love God above all things and neighbor as self." c. The Beatitudes: Blessed are the: poor in spirit, the gentle, the Peacemakers, d. The Works of Mercy: Matt. 25:31-46. Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless etc. Bodily Works) Counsel the doubtful, teach the ignorant (Spiritual works). e. The Ten Commandments: (as revised by Christ) |

Like sheep in a common sheepfold, we hear the voices of all the shepherds. But each sheep follows only the call of its own shepherd. Who is my Shepherd? Whom do I follow of all the voices?

Worksheet Six Practicalities

INTRO: The following are practical areas of life. How will you address these areas once you come together?

BUDGET LINE ITEMS	MY EXPENSES	OUR BUDGET TOGETHER
Rent	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____
Clothing	_____	_____
Electricity	_____	_____
Gas	_____	_____
Phone	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____
Trans.	_____	_____
Insurance (Auto)	_____	_____
Gas, Repairs(Auto)	_____	_____
Entertainment	_____	_____
Education	_____	_____
Taxes	_____	_____
Child support	_____	_____
Hobbies	_____	_____
Travel	_____	_____
Savings	_____	_____
Hospitalization	_____	_____
Visual, Dental	_____	_____
Retirement	_____	_____
Appliances	_____	_____
Repairs	_____	_____
Repairs (Auto)	_____	_____
Credit Cards	_____	_____
Other (What)	_____	_____
Take Home Pay:	_____	_____
Total of Bills:	_____	_____
Free ("mad") Money	_____	_____

2. WHO WILL HANDLE: (HE, SHE, or WE)

Budget _____	Balancing checkbook _____
School Matters _____	Cook _____
Tax Returns _____	Drive the kids _____
Shop for: Food _____	Do schedules _____
Clothing _____	Clean House _____
Repairs _____	Plain social calendar _____
Savings _____	Watch our spiritual lives _____
Be the Doctor _____	Pay monthly bills _____
Handle in-laws _____	Take out rubbish _____

3. WHAT'S IMPORTANT: Rate the following:

**A. Absolutely essential,
C. Not upsetting,**

**B. Needed
D. Not necessary to be happy.**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Job Security | 10. Neighborhood we live in |
| 2. Savings | 11. Insurance |
| 3. Own a home | 12. Own a boat |
| 4. Credit | 13. Visiting in laws, family |
| 5. New Car | 14. Travel |
| 6. Education | 15. Country Club |
| 7. Job Satisfaction | 16. Advancement |
| 8. Church Attendance | 17. Kids |

4. Give serious consideration to the following:

- a. Your parents' home is something they have worked for the past 20 years. Are you taking where they are as your starting point in determining needs vs. wants?**
- b. We live in a first world country at a time when globalization is a reality you must contend with. You have the task not only of having a job but also of continually acquiring more skills so as to remain increasingly employable. In a changing world. It probably means that you should begin discussing needs vs. luxuries. Perhaps budgeting off only one salary. It may also mean an aim of having in 5 or 10 years a significant portion of your income from non salary sources. It may also mean you might consider living off one salary from the start and banking the other.**
- c. You will have to take a much more active role in planning your future than your parents had to. Social Security may be history. Savings will be important from the start.**
- e. By the time your children reach college, costs will be off the wall. How can you plan now to be of help to them in the future?**
- e. With the economy as volatile, and real estate fluctuating, would it make sense for you to consult a financial planner at this point in your lives?**
- f. A trap to avoid: "It costs me as much as I make to live." How will you determine what is "Need" and "Luxury?"**

5. HOW MUCH IS THIS LIKE ME? (A = Very Much; B = Somewhat; C = Not Much)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Impulse Buyer _____ | Careful Spender _____ |
| Intense person _____ | Reader _____ |
| Couch Potato _____ | Traveler _____ |
| Stay at home _____ | "Arts" Person _____ |
| Party Animal _____ | Physical Fitness Buff _____ |
| Outdoor person _____ | Many interests, hobbies _____ |
| Run on a Schedule _____ | Regular Church-goers _____ |
| Workaholic | Easy going, laid back _____ |
| Can leave work on the job _____ | Worry wart _____ |
| Easily bored _____ | Close to parents/family _____ |
| Independent _____ | Holiday at home - then visit _____ |
| Family meals are important _____ | Control freak _____ |
| Volunteer a lot _____ | Must spend time with kids _____ |

THE WORLD IS FLAT - THOMAS FRIEDMAN

“The World is Flat” as a title is based on the image of the Berlin Wall which erected barriers between peoples. With the collapse of the Wall as a symbol Friedman looks into the issue of Globalization 24/7 which removes barriers between peoples such as distance, transportation, communication etc. and makes for a world where a world wide sense of being is offered as the “order of the day.”

Ten “Flattening Influences as the author sees them are:

- CELL PHONE, PC:** Nov. 9, 1989 Advent of personal computers, fax, and cell phones bring about the collapse of the Berlin Wall - symbol of the Barriers to globalization. These make globalization possible and revolutionize the way people interact.
- INTERNET** August 9, 1995. The Advent of the Internet – low cost global communication possibility made available to all. The advent of the Web where communications can be posted by anyone, and the advent of search engines which make information readily retrievable via personal PC .
- SOFTWARE** Advent of workflow software. The combination of the PC with e mail. The PC gave all the ability to create and manipulate digital content. Now people all over the world can work on the same project at the same time. Geography becomes irrelevant.
- UPLOADING:** Harnessing the power of Communities. Computer geeks in chat rooms design software and improve it, making it available free to all. Now anyone can put stuff on line for all to critique and market.
- OUTSOURCING** Y2K India was possessed of a whole pool of highly trained grads of IIT Schools (Indian Institutes of Technology and ownership of the fiber optic cable network that had been constructed. Y2K Challenge demanding review of every computer found India capable with personnel and training to handle it. The optic cable and Y2K phenomenon precipitated the Indian Outsourcing of computers worldwide for Y2K monitoring and the revolution of outsourcing began.
- OFFSHORING** Outsourcing is the sending out of a line function of a process for manufacturing or handling, and reintegrating with your own line process. Now an entire factory can be re-located overseas and handle manufacturing.
- SUPPLY CHAIN** Information Technology. Computer repair and shipping streamlined by UPS, shipper doing repair.
- INSOURCING** New form of Globalization. Consultants from shipping outfit and manufacturing outfit come together and consult on how to resolve a snag in operations. In effect, UPS and Toshiba with their four consultants, formed a new “Ad Hoc” Company to address a problem facing both.
- INFORMING** Democratization of information sharing. Google, Yahoo, McIntosh – Information at one’s fingertips Without a great deal of effort being expended.
- STEROIDS** A STEROID is a new technology that amplifies and changes all other flatteners.
- Steroid 1: **COMPUTING ITSELF:** 1) Computational capability; 2) Storage Capability; 3) Input-Output capability.
- Steroid 2: Instant messaging and file sharing.
- Steroid 3. Breakthroughs involved in making phone calls over the internet.
- Steroid 4: Video-Conferencing
- Steroid 5, Advances in Computer Graphics
- Steroid 6: New Technology and devices to move to total wireless acquisition/processing information

**GLOBAL VILLAGE - 2010
A VILLAGE OF 100**

If Earth's population was shrunk into a village of just 100 People with all the human ratios existing in the world still remaining - what would this tiny, diverse village look like? That's exactly what Phillip M. Harter, a medical doctor at the Stanford University school of Medicine, attempted to figure out. This is what he found:

- 57 would be Asian
- 21 would be European
- 14 would be from the Western Hemisphere
- 8 would be African
- 52 would be female
- 48 would be male
- 70 would be nonwhite
- 30 would be white
- 70 would be non-Christian
- 30 would be Christian
- 6 people would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth, and all 6 would be from the U.S.
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be pregnant
- 1 would have a college education
- 1 would own a computer

If you live in a good home, have plenty to eat and can read, you are a member of a very select group.

If you have a good house, food, can read and have a computer, you are among the very elite.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness... you are more fortunate than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are fortunate, more than three billion people in the world can't.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are better off than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish some place...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married...you are very rare, even in the United States.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly Thankful you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder you are blessed because you can offer a healing touch.

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Have a good day and count your blessings.

**WORKSHEET SEVEN
FAITH AND MARRIAGE**

Intro.: A faith perspective gives deeper meaning into life, love, and marriage. The fact that we are to live forever has a profound impact on all our values, directions, priorities and choices. This worksheet enables you to share your faith, your relationship with God, and discuss and discern God's place in your life together. The directions are the same: reflect and answer individually; then meet as a couple; lastly share with priest.

- 1. My first memory or impression of God is...**
- 2. As I have grown and matured, my faith has changed:**
 - a. When I was 10 years old, God meant... Church meant...**
 - b. When I was 17, God meant...Church meant...**
 - c. As I am preparing for marriage, God means...Church means...**
- 3. My family's views on God and Church are...**
 - a. Helpful in that they...**
 - b. Counterproductive in that....**
- 4. I felt closest to God when...**

I felt furthest from God when...

If I were God for five minutes, I would...
- 5. The person who had the greatest influence on my faith life and prayer life was... How did she or he bring this about?**
- 6. Where am I with Church/God right now? What are the things that have led me to this point?**
- 7. For me prayer is...**
- 8. What role does the reading of the Bible play in my life?**
- 9. What do I consider a "religious person" to be?**
- 10. Why is it important to me to be married in Church?**
- 11. Do I feel comfortable enough to share my faith with our children? With being their first instructors in the faith? Their first spiritual directors?**
- 12. Do I recognize the importance of so living that my children recognize that going to Church is as regular a part of my life as is getting up in the morning? Are any changes needed?**
- 13. How do I support our church community? How does the community support me - our marriage?**
- 14. My understanding of the marriage commitment in one statement is... How will my life change as a result?**
- 15. What specific helps are we building into our marriage right from the start to ensure the fact that we won't be taking one another for granted in 6 months or five years?**
- 16. How can my fiancée and I help one another in our faith life? In what parish are we going to register as a**

family? When? What steps will we take to make sure our involvement is greater? What types of things would we be good at doing?

- 17. Do I see that my task in creating a home is that of creating an atmosphere of the same kind of unconditional love in our home as that with which God has loved me? Forgiveness is important. How good are we at forgiving and forgetting?**
- 18. How has my faith affected my attitudes towards Life? Love? Marriage? My Goals? My Priorities?**
- 19. Am I prepared to be a strong parent, holding fast for what we believe in? Will I be strong enough to withstand my child's complaints that "Everyone else is doing this?" How do I plan to handle this area?**
- 20. One of the best models for my relationship with God is the Man-Woman relationship. Were I to consider it in this light, the following questions would be appropriate:**
 - 1. When was the last time I spent quality time with the Lord?**
 - 2. Do I see Sunday Mass as God's saying to me "would you be there for me Sunday?"**
 - 3. Relating to God is hard work – just like relating to one another. How well do I do with hanging in when the going gets a bit demanding?**
- 21. The best way to show what the faith must mean to each of us is to look at the song "Look to the Rainbow." It is a song written for a young girl:**

**On the day I was born said my father said he. I've an elegant legacy waitin' for ye 'tis a rhyme for your lips and a song for your heart. To sing it whenever your world falls apart
Look, Look, Look to the Rainbow – Follow it over the hill and the stream
Look, look, look to the Rainbow – Follow the fella who follows the dream**

Capitalize "Fella" and you have what the faith should be. Our legacy is:

**Life is the gift of the creator God who became one of us in the person of Christ
Modeled for us how life is to be lived, and taught us it is to last forever.**

This is the song we sing when our world falls apart – It is the wind beneath our wings

It enables us to process the good gratefully - the negative knowing that it's not all here.

A second verse is:

'tis a sumptuous gift to bequeath to a child – and the Lure of the song kept her feet funnin' wild. For you never grow old and you never stand still with the whippoorwill singing beyond the next hill.

WOULD A FRIEND BE ABLE TO SAY THIS IS THE WAY I LEAD MY LIFE?

SESSION EIGHT

- **With the following as a kind of Smorgasbord of traditions from which one might choose, list a complete scenario of the traditions you propose to build into your Home Church. In this session, you will work together to compile a listing of which you will turn in a copy for placement in your marriage file.**
- **Secondly, write a Mission Statement for your family which you will hand to God on Resurrection Day. He would be pleased if you mentioned His name in the statement.**
- **Thirdly, ask both sets of parents to write a prayer to God on your behalf ,as you begin your new life together – their hopes and dreams for you. Put these in your notebook and review them on each anniversary.**

1. RELIGIOUS LIFE IN OUR HOME

- **Do we live a sacramental life? Are Church and sacraments is normal in our home?**
- **Do we extend forgiveness to one another regularly?**
- **Do we have a home in which love and affection are felt and shown?**
- **Is the God's presence felt there? Is home a "safe" place for all of us?**

2. MOTHER AND DAD

- **Is our presence to our children a warm, welcoming, and nurturing one?**
- **Do we take care to spend time with each of our little ones, encouraging their individuality and affirming them?**
- **Does our relationship to one another and to the children reflect compassion and love?**

3. RELIGIOUS VALUES: Are these reflected

- In our selection of TV programs?**
- In our choices for outside the home entertainment?**
- In our magazine subscriptions?**
- Our internet monitoring?**
- Our consistent awareness of what our children are up to, excited about ?**
- Our book purchases?**

4. CARING FOR OTHERS

- **Do we visit, call, help our aging relatives?**
- **Do we pray for those experiencing depression, addiction, illness in our neighborhood?**
- **Do we create positive attitudes towards persons of other races – ethnic origins?**
- **Do we strive to stress the worth of every individual? Does this include the homeless**
- **Do we strive not to stereotype people – label them, judge them, and dismiss them?**

5. CIVIC COMMUNITY

- **Do we create positive attitudes towards involvement in social service – social action?**
- **Do we foster interest in political life, voting, running for office, serving the community?**
- **Do we become informed about the individuals and the issues involved in the elections?**

6. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN THE HOME

- **Prayers before Meals** **Spontaneous Prayer**
- **Mass Attendance – both parents** **Rosary, Scripture Reading**
- **PSR Religion Classes Gr. 1 – 12** **Involvement in Parish ministries**
- **Parish Penitential Rites** **A tradition of seasonal confession.**

7. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- **What religious dimension do I bring to my family's celebration of the following:**

APPENDIX I: FEELINGS

- Add depth and beauty to life - make it worthwhile
- Are poor guides to how to conduct oneself: They cannot be shut off at will. They know no good or bad.
- They shift without warning.
- **THEY MAKE TRUTH WHAT WE WANT IT TO BE.**
- **THEY MAKE APPROPRIATE WHAT WE WANT TO BE APPROPRIATE**
- They must be disciplined or they run wild.
- The purpose of discipline is to give us the facility to do what is right even though feelings may pull us in the other direction.
- In dealing with those of the opposite sex, feelings influence our judgement.
- They distort our perception of a person by minimizing faults, and accentuating positives.
- They create the feeling that with our support and love, anything can be changed in others.
- They allow us to make the judgment that this person is the one to whom I should commit my life, when reason, not distorted by feelings, might advise caution.
- They also confuse a desire to help a person with the feeling that we love that person.
- Deep feelings for another person are often "discovered" and "overwhelming." They can happen whether one is married or not. It's important to know these are signs of normalcy - not of disloyalty to one's commitments. But they must be discussed with spouse, or a close friend if not committed to another, or they will not be dealt with honestly.
- Feelings are never alone a sound basis for commitment but can help in the journey toward it.
- Commitment once made is the only sure guide to sound action. A relationship (or a life) based on feelings alone will last six months - max.
- Feelings grow stronger and take over judgment, the longer one spends time with a person to whom one is attracted.
- Feelings often piggy back on one another: I hate someone. I feel guilty for hating that person. Then I feel I am an unworthy person because hatred is part of my life.
- In dialogue with others, the feelings a person perceives must be validated, that is accepted and heard, if valid communication is to take place. Otherwise we are not hearing what the other is saying.
- Feelings are validated by such statements as: I can see you are angry. I understand that you are disappointed. - I realize how deeply you are hurt.
- Feelings are not validated by statements like: You shouldn't feel that way. That's a dumb thing to be upset about. You're nuts to be worried about that. It didn't hurt that much.
- Not to validate feelings is to put down a person – not to listen to them. We must respect others.
- When a disproportionate intensity of feeling is experienced or expressed on a given occasion, the intensity comes from "History" - that is: a past event is adding fuel to the present situation. Deal with it.
- In relating to others, there is a need to communicate whether one wishes simply a "listener" or whether one wishes "advice." Not to be clear on this befuddles communication
- In relating to others, it is important to distinguish "head problems" from "heart problems." Head problems are resolved by analysis. Heart problems are resolved by "hugs."
- It's hard to resist the tendency to try to solve ALL problems through analysis.
- Feelings can poison communication and sabotage it:
- Negative feelings or attitude bias us to look at negative elements only and blind us to any positive qualities in others.

- **THREE CANCERS OF RELATIONSHIPS - Covered by the Acronym: A C E**
 - Assumptions** about others. Assumptions impel us to look for confirmation of what we think rather than discover who the person really is.
 - Comparisons:** When we compare ourselves with others we always lose. We compare our insides to other people's outsides. Our outsides are as fine as theirs. Others' insides are just as scrambled as ours.
 - We also look at what we don't have and get into a funk. If we look at what we have and be grateful.
 - Expectations** pre-condition us to a fall. We never tell others of our expectations and then are disappointed when they are not fulfilled.
 - We also have dozens of them. Let one not be fulfilled and we're basket cases.
 - We could just as well say: Let's see what it's like and be programmed to accept things.
 - Prejudice affects our thinking and preconditions it. In a word, we find what we are looking for. The need to be in control, the need to get even, competitiveness and inability to move beyond hurt to forgiveness also tend to poison our decisions, our communications, and our behavior.

DISCIPLINE OF FEELINGS:

Recognize feeling as feeling. Make a judgment:

- Can I pursue it?
- Is timing right?
- If unattended, it will grow in importance and I will lose objectivity
- Disciplining feelings sometimes means I must not allow them unattended growth.
- Feelings sometimes find expression in words that are miles from what a person really intends to say. Look for the pain feelings disguise and lovingly address it.

"DEALING WITH ONE'S FEELINGS"

What does it really mean? How is it done?

- Identify the feeling as feeling.
- Make a judgment: Is it appropriate or not?
- If appropriate, and the timing is right go for it
- If inappropriate, then:
 - Act contrary to what it suggests by way of action, judgment, and perception.
 - ACTION:** My friend breaks off the relationship.
My feelings suggest: ACTION: "Kill him or her. Act against it - DON'T
 - JUDGMENT:** There must be something wrong with me. Not necessarily true.
Act against it. Don't beat yourself up.
 - PERCEPTION:** This was my fault. I'm a bad person. Act against it. Relationships are 2 way streets. I'm OK. Let it go. Life is too short and too exciting.
 - Recognize that the feeling itself will probably remain – you can't shut it off.
 - Recognize that this is normal and live with it.
 - Never deny the existence of feelings - ask the question: How much power will I give them
 - Freedom is a state of mind - if I lose it - Shame on Me!
 - Others cannot hurt us unless we give them the power to do so.
 - Always remember the book by the prominent psychologist:
WHAT YOU THINK OF ME IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS!
You don't even have to read the book – The title says it all.

APPENDIX II

TEN FOUNDATION STONES OF MARRIAGE AND COMMITMENT

- Comparisons:** When you compare yourself, your relationship to others, you compare your insides to their outsides and you always lose. The insides of others are just as scrambled as yours.
- Expectations:** We seldom tell others our expectations. Expectations are multiple – let one not be fulfilled and one is a basket case. Far better to go to a situation being open with a “Let’s see what it’s like” attitude.” – Hopes are positive and generic. Expectations are specific and have time tables.
- Find what you look for:** When you find yourself in a funk about the other person, know that you are looking at the bad things in them. Look at the good things and you’ll be grateful.
- Half Hearted Commitment** The only commitment that hurts is a half hearted commitment. Surrender and you will be free at last.
- Hassle free** No commitment is hassle free. You will getting better and better together dealing with hassles.
- Scott Peck** With some discipline we can solve some problems. With total discipline, we can solve all problems. But we never come to the point where there are no problems.
- What is “Need”** One of the cheapest ways of dealing with things that we desperately need is to ask why we need them. Together dialogue on the difference between NEED and LUXURY. You could save yourselves considerable headaches.
- Non-negotiables:** Your children will pick up as important what you hold to be non-negotiable. This is a key element in parenting. If you have as non-negotiables: Getting up in the morning, brushing your teeth, going to school or work, while Sunday Church and God are not part of the non-negotiables, you have taught your children that Brushing their teeth is more important than God.
- Normal in our Home** Another key conversation will be: What is going to be normal in our house? If the life-style you have become accustomed to requires two incomes to support it, the price may be Columbine High School. We have known for generations that child care is not parenting. At times it’s necessary – at other times interesting and energizing – but it’s not the same.
- Process – not Goal:** Marriage is a process not a goal. We cannot go on automatic pilot. When we arise in the morning, our first thought must be:” Hi God” and the second “Today you are the most important person in my life. And when you retire in the evening, remember that nothing has sufficient importance to cause continued static between you.” Lastly, begin no new day with yesterday’s leftovers.
- Carpet the world** If you want peace, change yourself – not any other persons – not any other thing. It’s easier to put on a pair of slippers than to carpet the world.
- I could be wrong:** Perhaps the best gift one can give to another on a wedding day is the pledge to remember that on any given issue, you could be off the wall. If you do this, my may listen – if you do not – God help the other person.