

PREPARE ENRICH

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The PREPARE/ENRICH Marriage Mentor Program

Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction
– John Crosby

Research has demonstrated that a good premarital program can help a couple get their marriage off to a better start (Doherty & Carroll, 2003; Knutson & Olson, 2004). Research also indicates programs offered six months or more prior to the wedding date, continuing on for six to twelve months after a marriage are the most effective. A solidly equipped group of Marriage Mentor Couples will help expand and strengthen the programs offered to couples in your church.

Implementing a marriage mentor program can be an exciting and powerful addition to the ministry of your church or outreach to your community. A formal mentoring program often ensures that premarital couples get more preparation, and get it earlier in their engagement; two factors which promote healthier relationships.

- For premarital and newlywed couples, Marriage Mentors provide helpful role models during the premarital stage and first year of marriage.
- For married couples, meeting with Marriage Mentors can provide hope, enrichment, and direction for their marriage.
- For Marriage Mentors, investing in other couples can be an enriching experience for their own marriages.
- For the clergy, a mentoring program provides a way to offer more comprehensive premarital and newlywed programs to their congregation and community.
- For the church, it expands ministry options, facilitates outreach to young couples, and helps to develop more sharing and connection among members of the congregation.

Marriage Mentor couples must be trained and directly supervised by a professional counselor, clergy member, or lead couple with solid experience in marriage education. Mentoring supervisor's must also be certified in the PREPARE/ENRICH Program. Supervisors are responsible for organizing the training and supervision of the Marriage Mentors. In order to become a supervisor, the person/couple first needs to attend the full day PREPARE/ENRICH Workshop or complete the Self-Training process (professional counselors only).

The PREPARE/ENRICH Marriage Mentor Program was developed in order to give you, the supervisor, the tools to train Marriage Mentors to work with premarital, newlywed, and/or other married couples. Resources available from Life Innovations include:

- *Supervisor Training Guide (with Supervisor CD)*
- *Marriage Mentor Manual* with training resources in Appendices
- *PREPARE/ENRICH Resource Kit*

The PREPARE/ENRICH Marriage Mentor Program is designed to be flexible so that it can be tailored to fit the needs of each individual congregation or group. Feel free to adapt it in a way that will be most effective for your setting.

Guidelines for Supervising Marriage Mentor Couples

All Marriage Mentor couples must be trained and directly supervised by a professional counselor, clergy member, or lead couple with solid experience in marriage education. Mentoring

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Supervisors should have the most recent version of the PREPARE/ENRICH: Customized Version Resource Kit. The supervisor is the point-person for the whole program, and their Facilitator

ID Number will be used for scoring and ordering supplies from Life Innovations. The supervisor should ensure that the Marriage Mentors are fully trained in how to effectively use the PREPARE/ENRICH Program with their couples. The supervisor should also be able to deal with problematic couples and/or do a referral to a professional, such as a marriage and family therapist, when needed.

Marriage Mentor couples should have a supervisor that they can consult with anytime they have a question or concern about working with their couples. The Marriage Mentor couple should be taught to know their limits in working with other couples. This can occur when the Marriage Mentors are concerned about the information they are getting and/or are unclear how to help the couple deal with problematic issues such as depression, abuse, or an addiction.

Selecting Marriage Mentors

The recruiting and selection process for Marriage Mentor Couples is very important, thus the following 5-step process has been developed.

Step 1: Criteria for Selecting Marriage Mentors

The rationale for these criteria evolved out of a desire to select and equip Marriage Mentors concerned with the quality of their mentoring and who have a commitment towards their own marriage. By providing clear and concise information and expectations for mentors in the selection and training phase, future issues can be minimized. (See *Supervisor Training Guide* for suggested criteria)

Step 2: Informational Meeting for Potential Marriage Mentor Couples

- A. *Send Invitations to Potential Marriage Mentor Couples*
- B. *Follow-up the written invitation with a phone call.*
- C. *Conduct Informational Evening Meeting* (Sample Outline in *Supervisor Training Guide*).

Step 3: Formal Interview of each Potential Marriage Mentor Couple

A 1-2 hour interview should be set-up for couples who wish to become Marriage Mentors. (Sample questions in *Supervisor Training Guide*). After the interview is completed, the supervisor should determine which couples are still seriously interested in becoming Marriage Mentors. For those couples, the next step is the administration of the PREPARE/ENRICH Inventory.

Step 4: PREPARE/ENRICH Administration and Feedback

After administering the Inventory, you'll need to offer feedback to the prospective Marriage Mentor couple. Work through several of the exercises from the Couple's Workbook. This will not only enrich their marriage, but demonstrate to them how the process works as they prepare to become mentors.

Step 5: Selecting Mentor Couples

Once the feedback sessions are complete you will need to determine whether the couple has the relationship strengths to become a Marriage Mentor couple. (See *Supervisor Training Guide* for suggested criteria).