



## **Making a Marriage**

### **LEADER'S GUIDE**

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Continuing Lay Training Unit 423.10A

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# Introduction

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## PREPARING TO TEACH THIS STUDY

As you read the Leader's Guide make sure you take time to review the web resources available at [www.clt.nazarene.org](http://www.clt.nazarene.org). There you will find handouts, presentation materials, and on-line testing — all free! You will also want to visit [www.nph.com](http://www.nph.com) for other resources that will help your church provide quality materials.

The Leader's Guide is set up to facilitate a nine-week experience consisting of a first-session introduction to the study and to set the expectations of the group followed by seven weeks of exploring content and a final session that invites closure.

The design of the Leader's Guide is specifically and intentionally interactive. The best results will occur as you facilitate a group experience rather than teach a course.

### Expectations of Leaders

Leaders for this study must be growing, mature Christians with a stable marital relationship. Length of the marriage or tenure doesn't have to be the deciding factor, but it should be taken into consideration. If you have taken on the responsibility for leading the study, it is highly recommended that you do some personal inventorying as you prepare (See Appendix 1).

Leaders need to have a strong commitment to the local church and its leadership. It is essential for group leaders to be in support of the staff and lay leadership of their church. This is especially true if some of the participants are new to the church or are unfamiliar with Christian principles. A tremendous amount of damage can be done if group leaders compromise the leadership of the church by criticism or indifference.

It is imperative that you make every effort to establish a strong and safe atmosphere for those who participate in this study. Trustworthiness is an indispensable part of being a good leader. You will undoubtedly be hearing some very sensitive and painful stories from some people who want to do better. Some may even seek you outside

the parameters of the group to discuss personal matters too hard to talk about even in the safe confines of the session. How you handle these matters can go a long way in determining the effectiveness of your ministry and the potential for long-term, positive change in the marriages of those in your group. Your ability to maintain strict confidentiality is a critical component of effective leadership.

### Preparing to Teach

Keep the following guidelines in mind as you make preparations to lead this study:

- Read the Leader's Guide in its entirety to get an overview of the study.
- Write down the teaching resources needed for each session as you think of them (chalkboard or dry erase board, chart paper, markers, overhead projector, laptop computer, Post-it notes, and so on).
- Go to [www.clt.nazarene.org](http://www.clt.nazarene.org) to preview the PowerPoint and print the handouts (Appendix 3).
- Think of people in your group who will need to be contacted ahead of time in order to secure permission to use their personal stories, to ask them to share their personal testimonies, or to request them to read passages from the text or Scripture.
- If your group will meet in homes, be sure the home is scheduled at least one week ahead of time.
- If someone will be responsible for preparing refreshments or drinks, allow persons to sign-up for the week they would like to participate. (Keep the refreshments light and simple).
- Outline each lesson plan in your own words or map it on paper to give yourself a sense of direction for each session.
- Pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit (1) in the way you prepare, (2) in what you say in class, (3) in the way you respond to comments or questions by class members, and (4) in the

way you give time for the Spirit to speak to class members' hearts as each session progresses.

## Engaging the Participants

Stress the importance of reading the assigned chapter ahead of time, so that everyone is prepared and the discussion flows from the material the authors have written. The research data shows overwhelmingly that women read the self-help books more than men. You may want to point this out in a light-hearted way and prompt the guys to read, too without relying on their wives to "pre-digest" it.

The sessions are geared to facilitate a transition from an informal, no-threat opener, to questions and activities that allow for the comparison of ideas and perceptions. Finally, couples look at themselves in the context of a supportive environment with the option to choose behaviors and attitudes which will have a positive impact on their relationship. Multiple options have been provided and you are free to choose the option that fits you or your group best.

## Session at a Glance

- **Engage Their Interest:** ice breaker
- **Working Together:** *group* compares ideas and perceptions (See Appendix 2 for in depth information on facilitating group discussions and activities).
- **Couple Time:** *individual couples* exchange ideas and thoughts based on what has been learned in the session (**BE AWARE:** This section will likely produce some emotional responses. Do not be too quick to interfere. Communicate that possibility to your group so if it happens, they are not caught off guard.)
- **Looking Ahead:** "Take Time to Be a Couple" handouts are distributed. These handouts include a variety of activities that can help couples apply what has been learned in the session. **IMPORTANT:** **These assignments are often very person-**

**al, and are meant to be done at home by the participants.**

- **Closing:** prayer by leader for the group.

## Environmental Arrangements

Make sure the seating is arranged so everyone has visual access to others in the group face to face. Create an environment that does not rely on a predictable pattern of group-member response. For instance, if the group is always seated in a circle, it can become easy to just go around the circle. The main problem with that is there are times when a particular member may not wish to respond, but feels he or she must because it is their turn. Also, try to avoid placing chairs in rows.

Allow space for couples to be able to speak quietly and directly to each other in response to some of the questions (See "Couple Time" in the previous "Session at a Glance").

Ensure a well-lit and comfortable environment where temperature extremes or poor lighting do not become distractions.

## Multimedia Technology

Whether you host the group at church or in a home, always preview and practice playing multimedia clips. (**BE AWARE:** There is always the possibility of technical glitches. It would be wise to have a back-up option in case the technology doesn't work.)

## Resources

The <clt.nazarene.org> web site has many other resources that can be used to enhance or implement the issues discussed in this Leader's Guide. Included are handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and on-line testing. For a complete listing of products for pastors, church leaders, and interested lay people, visit <clt.nazarene.org>.

**NOTE:** A Leader's Guide written specifically for clergy couples can also be found at <clt.nazarene.org>.

# Continuing Lay Training

## REGISTRATION AND REPORTING

Welcome to Continuing Lay Training. Before you proceed, make sure you have properly registered this class with the Continuing Lay Training (CLT) office in Kansas City. You may telephone your course registration by calling 888-243-2767 or E-mail your registration to <clt@nazarene.org>. Once registered, make sure you have a class report form. When the course has been completed, return the class report form to the CLT office or print off and use the on-line class report form. Each participant will be awarded CLT credit for his or her participation.

Here is a brief checklist of instructions:

- Advertise the class and plan a special registration time.
- Register the class with the CLT office and make sure you have a class report form.
- Order textbooks directly from Nazarene Publishing House at least three weeks before the starting date. A 10 percent discount is available if you order more than five of the same book. Unused books may be returned for credit if done promptly, postage paid, and the books are in good condition.
- At the close of the class, report the class to the CLT office in Lenexa. Keep a copy for your file.

Use one of the following methods for reporting.

1. Paper—request a hardcopy of the class report form, fill it in, and return it to the CLT office.
2. Electronic version—an electronic fill-in template can be sent to you via E-mail or you may download it from the CLT web site at <clt.nazarene.org>.

When reporting by paper or electronic version, the CLT office will send a notice of credit along with “credit cards” for each of the participants of the class. You are to fill in the name, unit number, book title, date, and name of the sponsoring group. Sign the credit cards before presenting to each participant in a public service.

For more information, please refer to the catalog and/or the web site, or contact the CLT office in Kansas City.

**Continuing Lay Training**  
**17001 Prairie Star Pkwy**  
**Lenexa, KS 66220**  
**Toll Free: 888-243-2767**  
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# Session 1

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## Session Goal\*

To get acquainted, establish ground rules, and make other decisions concerning location, time, day, and so forth.

## Prepare to Lead

- Secure childcare.
- Prepare coffee, water, and light refreshments.
- Makes copies of your (leader's) contact information to distribute to group members (see Working Together).
- Order the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD (Available through the Adult Ministries office. To order a copy: E-mail [adultministries@nazarene.org](mailto:adultministries@nazarene.org) or call 800-221-6317). Be prepared to play the segment, *What Is Marriage?* (To view a "preview" copy of this DVD, go [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org), choose Denomination Wide under the Studies menu. On the next page, choose the VIDEO tab.)
- Make copies of "The Ground Rules" (Handout 1) for each participant.
- Makes copies of Session 1 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 2).

## Engage Their Interest

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Play the video clip, *What Is Marriage?* from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD. (This is also an option for Session 2)

✓ Give each couple an opportunity to answer and share the following questions with the group.

- Husbands: How long have you been married?
- Wives: How did you celebrate your first anniversary?
- Husbands: Tell about when you first "laid eyes" on her.
- Wives: Tell about the circumstances of his proposal.
- Husbands: Tell about when you first met your in-laws.
- Wives: What was the last romantic thing

your husband did for you?

## Working Together

Say, "There is often a significant difference between our *engagement period* and *married life*. In married life expectations meet reality. In our journey together, we will experience the same process; expectations will meet reality. Therefore, in order to maximize the impact of our group, we will provide clear expectations for what is to happen in the next several weeks as our group moves through this study together."

Let your group know that you are available. Make and distribute copies of the following information to the couples in your group.

Leader Couple's Name(s)  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip  
Best Contact Phone Number  
Leader Couple's Email

## Purpose

- *Spiritual and Relational Growth*: To be able to experience growth in the Christ and growth in our marriages.
- *Fellowship*: To be able to get to know others in our group in a more personal way.
- *Care*: To be able to respond to the spiritual and relational needs of those who choose to participate with us.
- *Outreach*: To be able to invite those who may have a minimal connection to a faith community to join us in strengthening their marital relationships.

## Determine Study Group Type

Generally there are two kinds of small groups: open and closed. An open group is one that permits participants to come and go as they will and to begin their involvement at any point in the series. A closed group recruits participants, and does not allow new persons to join after the start of the first session. Since the material presented in this study is sequential and each chapter builds on

the preceding one, it is strongly recommended that groups be closed. If too much latitude is given regarding attendance and participation, the dynamic of the group changes and it is hard to maintain the integrity of the experience.

If the study goes well, you may find individual participants or couples ask if others they know may be included as well. It may be in your best interest to think in terms of repeating the study for the express purpose of providing the study to newcomers.

## Determine Location

Groups can meet at church, in homes, or other predetermined locations. Decide as a group whether or not you prefer to meet in the same place each week. Some groups find this to be the most efficient method. It can be at the home of the leader or one of the group members. It could be at the church if that is better logistically. Some might like to meet in a restaurant or favorite coffee house. Others prefer the variety of rotating homes or meeting places. It is best to decide at the first session what you will do and stick with it. Participants tend to drop out if there is too much confusion about the location.

So that parents have this time to focus exclusively on the material for the session, it is highly recommended that options for child care be offered. Therefore, if childcare is necessary, the church may be the best option for your group.

## Set Time Parameters

Determine how often you will meet. The recommendation is that you plan to meet weekly. It is best to establish positive momentum early and sustain it by meeting regularly.

Group sessions are designed to last approximately, one and a half hours. Stick carefully to this prescription. The effectiveness of your effort as a leader and the positive experience of the group members can be compromised if this is routinely violated.

## Session at a Glance

- **Engage Their Interest:** ice breaker
- **Working Together:** group compares ideas and perceptions. (See Appendix 2 for in depth information on facilitating group discussions and activities).
- **Couple Time:** *individual couples* exchange ideas

and thoughts based on what has been learned in the session. (**BE AWARE:** This section will likely produce some emotional responses. Do not be too quick to interfere. Prepare your group so when it happens, they are not caught off guard.)

- **Looking Ahead:** couples apply (at home) what has been learned in the session.
- **Closing:** prayer by leader for the group.

A suggested timeline for the weekly meeting might look like the following:

10 minutes

Welcome/Refreshments/  
Announcements/Prayer

10 minutes

Ice breaker (Engage Their Interest)

30 minutes

Discussion of chapter  
(Working Together)

30 minutes

Application of chapter (Couple Time)

10 minutes

Closing (prayer and distribution of  
"Take Time to Be a Couple" weekly,  
take-home handout)

## Ground Rules for the Group

Distribute and go over "The Ground Rules" (Handout 1) carefully with your group.

- *Be affirming.* No advice giving. No *shoulds* or *oughts*.
- *Be confidential.* What you hear in the group stays in the group.
- *Be committed.* Make this group your priority. We know that periodically there are unavoidable interruptions, but remember when one person is missing, the chemistry of the group changes.
- *Be positive.* No criticism allowed regarding the church, church staff, church leaders, church members, church attendees, church policies, other group members.
- *Be respectful.* Be prompt to arrive and prompt to leave.
- *Be courteous.* Listen to other's thoughts and perspectives as you want them to listen to yours. Speak for yourself and yourself only. Remember, no one is obligated to respond to any question.

End this session by asking if there is any confusion about what is going to happen or about the expectations that have just been expressed through the "Ground Rules" for the group.

### Looking Ahead

✓ Ask the group to read the chapter 1, "A Biblical Perspective of Marriage." Suggest they

make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

✓ Distribute Session 1 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 2). Encourage couples to use the scripture passages for their daily devotional time.

\* **Session 1 Option.** Although it is highly recommended that Session 1 be followed as presented, many of the items (study group type, location, time, group rules) could be decided ahead of time by the group leader couple. If you choose to make most of the decisions about the group ahead of time, many of the items in Session 1 could be incorporated into Session 2.

# Session 2

## CHAPTER 1

### *A Biblical Perspective on Marriage*

#### **Session Goal**

This session will challenge couples to examine the lofty and holy vision of marriage presented in the Bible and discover how applying these biblical truths can nourish and grow a marriage that reflects God's image.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Be prepared to share what it was about your spouse that first "caught your eye."
- Secure the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD (Available through the Adult Ministries office. To order a copy: E-mail [adultministries@nazarene.org](mailto:adultministries@nazarene.org) or call 800-221-6317) and be prepared to play the segment, *What Is Marriage?* (To view a "preview" copy of this DVD, go [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org), choose Denomination Wide under the Studies menu. On the next page, choose the "video" tab.)
- Enlist someone to share one or two new, biblical insights discovered in this chapter.
- Make copies of "He Does. . .She Does" (Handout 3) for each participant.
- Make copies of Session 2 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 4).

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Briefly share what it was about your spouse that first caught your eye. Ask each couple to reflect on what "first caught their eye". Invite couples to share their answers with the group.

✓ Play the video clip of the couple or the outtake from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD, *What Is Marriage?* that most resembles *your marriage* and tell why or how it does.

#### **Working Together**

✓ Ask the person you enlisted to share one or

two new, biblical insights discovered as they read this chapter.

✓ Ask, "Were any truths you already believed confirmed for you?"

✓ Talk about what the Hebrew meaning of "ezer" (pp. 14-17) does to the traditional idea that men are dominant in some way.

✓ Say, "Our society is quick to offer opinions and suggestions for the roles they think men and women should play."

- Ask participants to name some of those opinions/suggestions.
- Compare those opinions/suggestions with the biblical (Ephesians 5:21-33) view presented in the text (pp. 26—28).
- Ask, "How has your understanding about God's intention for marriage changed?"

#### **Couple Time**

Distribute "He Does. . .She Does" (Handout 3). Instruct couples to complete the survey and discussion questions.

#### **Looking Ahead**

✓ Ask the group to read chapter 2, "Seven Commitments of a Lasting Marriage." Suggest they make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

✓ Distribute Session 2 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 4). Encourage couples to do at least one of the options before the next session.

#### **Closing**

Close with prayer asking God to bless the marriages of the couples that have committed to participate in this book study. Ask His divine presence and blessing as these couples work to create godly marriages.

# Session 3

## CHAPTER 2

### *Seven Commitments of a Lasting Marriage*

#### Session Goal

This session will challenge couples to examine their own personal commitment to their marriage relationship.

#### Prepare to Lead

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Assign someone record or find a video clip that illustrates the current, societal view of the marriage relationship. (NOTE: Be sure you have personally previewed the selection and have evaluated it for content and language.)
- Secure the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD (Available through the Adult Ministries office. To order a copy: E-mail [adultministries@nazarene.org](mailto:adultministries@nazarene.org) or call 800-221-6317) and be prepared to play the segment, *Are You Ready?* (To view a “preview” copy of this DVD, go [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org), choose Denomination Wide under the Studies menu. On the next page, choose the “video” tab.)
- Make a copy of “Seven Commitments of Marriage” (Handout 5) to be displayed during the session.
- Secure poster board, large Post-Its, or white board and marker.
- Make copies of “How Are We Doing?” (Handout 6) for each participant.
- Make copies of Session 3 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 7).
- Contact your pastor for the names of some godly, experienced couples who would be willing to enter into a mentoring relationship with couples in your study group. These couples should be willing to enter into a mentoring relationship that will offer modeling, encouragement, goal setting, and accountability to those in your group seeking a mentoring relationship.

#### Engage Their Interest

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Ask, “What was the craziest or most special thing about how and when you became engaged?”

✓ Play the *Are You Ready?* segment from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD.

✓ Show a video clip. After viewing the episode with the group, ask, “How has this kind of programming skewed the biblical blueprint for marriage?”

#### Working Together

Display “Seven Commitments of Marriage” (Handout 5).

##### Seven Commitments of Marriage

1. Commitment to seeing marriage the way God sees it.
2. Commitment to marriage as a lifelong connection.
3. Commitment to the high value of keeping promises.
4. Commitment to accountability.
5. Commitment to blessing children with an intact nuclear family.
6. Commitment to honoring your spouse above all other relationships.
7. Commitment to serving your partner instead of gratifying yourself.

Say, “We are going to take a hard look at the seven commitments presented in chapter two. Let’s brainstorm some ideas about what poses the greatest threats to each of these commitments.” Record answers on a poster board, Post-It, or white board.

## Couple Time

Distribute a copy of “How Are We Doing?” (Handout 6) to each person. Say, “After you complete this handout, as a couple, rate your own effort in light of each of these seven commitments by completing this handout.”

Instruct couples to discuss the question: “After reading this chapter, what have you been prompted to change in your marital relationship? What will be your first step?”

## Looking Ahead

√ Ask the group to read chapter 3, “Communication 101.” Suggest they make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

√ Distribute Session 3 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 7). Encourage couples to do at least one of the options before the next session.

√ Note the couples that seem to be thriving in the study. Send them a note of thanks including specifically what you have seen and appreciate.

√ Note a couple that has struggled in their relationship and send them a note of encouragement letting them know that you are glad they are a part of the group and that they are in your prayers.

√ In their book, *The Marriage Mentor Manual*, Les and Leslie Parrott, co-directors of the Center for Relationship Development, recommend that married couples (especially newly married) seek a “happy, more experienced couple” willing to enter a year-long mentoring relationship. This couple can help by sharing resources and relational experiences. Make a list of couples willing to serve as mentors available to couples in your study group. (A good source for mentoring guidelines: *The Marriage Mentor Manual*, Zondervan, 1995, ISBN 0-310-50131-8).

## Closing

Ask God to help those in the study become couples of promise. Pray that couples will reaffirm their commitment to one another. Pray they will commit to work together to make their marriage one of strength, security, and blessing.

# Session 4

## CHAPTER 3

### *Communication 101*

#### **Session Goal**

This session will help couples evaluate their communication skills, and help them build better sharing, listening, and hearing habits.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Make a copy of “Did It Really Say That?” (Handout 8).
- Ask a group member to read “Did It Really Say That?” (Handout 8).
- Be prepared to read/listen to/ or show a presentation of, “Who’s on First” (Link available at [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org))
- Make copies of “What Is My Communication Quotient?” (Handout 9) for each participant.
- Make copies of Session 4 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 10).
- Secure the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD (Available through the Adult Ministries office. To order a copy: E-mail [adultministries@nazarene.org](mailto:adultministries@nazarene.org) or call 800-221-6317) and be prepared to play the segment, Let’s Stop. (To view a “preview” copy of this DVD, go [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org), choose Denomination Wide under the Studies menu. On the next page, choose the “video” tab.)

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

√ Ask a group member to present “Did It Really Say That?” (Handout 8).

#### **Did It Really Say That?**

The following bloopers actually appeared in church bulletins.

- Don’t let worry kill you. . .let the church help.

- Thursday Night Pot Luck Supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
- This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.
- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.
- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Barbara remains in the hospital. She is having trouble sleeping and request tapes of Pastor Jack’s sermons.
- Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don’t forget your husbands.
- Ushers will eat late comers.
- Evening massage at 6:00 p.m.
- Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.
- During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J. F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.
- Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to the church secretary.
- Special thanks are due to the minister’s daughter who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.
- The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, Break Forth Into Joy.

After the humorous bloopers have been shared, say, “Sometimes the spelling, grammar, arrangement, or typing of words produces some unintended outcomes. Miscommunication is a common occurrence in all walks of life. While

these bulletin bloopers were funny, miscommunication in a marriage can have serious consequences. Let's look and see how we can communicate better with our spouse."

√ Read, play, or view Abbott and Costello's presentation of, "Who's on First?" (Link available at [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org)). Say, "Miscommunication is sometimes funny, but always frustrating. In marriage, miscommunication can take the joy out of the relationship. Let's look and see how we can communicate better with our spouse."

### Working Together

√ Have the group brainstorm what is meant by the phrase "communication problems" or "poor communication".

√ Marriage experts agree that good communication is vital to a happy, satisfying marriage. Have the group discuss how Paul's admonition to "[speak] the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) is a key ingredient to good communication.

√ Ask, "Were you surprised to read that as much as 85 percent of communication is nonverbal?" Share some of the nonverbal communication you and your spouse use. Ask if some in the group are willing to share some "nonverbal" forms of communication they use. Make this a fun activity by sharing gestures (eye contact, facial expressions, etc.)

√ Ask, how "feedback" (acknowledging, restat-

ing, clarifying, questioning, checking inconsistencies) is important to good communication.

### Couple Time

√ Distribute a copy of "What Is My Communication Quotient?" (Handout 9) to each participant. Instruct couples to complete the worksheet individually and then share its findings together.

### Looking Ahead

√ Ask the group to read chapter 4, "The Road to Conflict Resolution." Suggest they make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

√ Distribute Session 4 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 10). Encourage couples to complete both assignments before the next session.

√ Play *Let's Stop* from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD. (**HINT:** For maximum impact, say nothing and dismiss immediately following the clip.)

### Closing

Close with prayer asking God to be with couples as they work to improve communication in their marriages. Ask Him to "gift" couples with productive, loving, scriptural communication.

**NOTE:** If you are going to use the video clip, *Let's Stop*, pray first and then show the clip.

# Session 5

## CHAPTER 4

### *The Road to Conflict Resolution*

#### **Session Goal**

To help couples realize conflict is normal in marriage and to help them resolve conflict in a healthy, constructive manner.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share briefly a wedding day incident that led to conflict.
- Make a copy of “Friday Night, Just Got Paid” (Handout 11).
- Assign someone to read “Friday Night, Just Got Paid” (Handout 11).
- Be prepared to show the video clip, *Let’s Stop* from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD. (To view a “preview” copy of this DVD, go [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org), choose Denomination Wide under the Studies menu. On the next page, choose the “video” tab.)
- Make copies of “Conflict in My Marriage” (Handout 12) for each participant.
- Make copies of Session 5 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 13).

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Share (or have the couple you enlisted) with the group the most memorable moment of your wedding day that involved conflict.

✓ Ask a group member to present the humorous story, “Friday Night, Just Got Paid” (Handout 11).

#### **Friday Night, Just Got Paid**

A man left for work one Friday afternoon. It was payday, so instead of going home, he stayed out

the entire weekend partying with the boys and spending his entire paycheck.

When he finally appeared at home on Sunday night, he was confronted by his angry wife and was barraged for nearly two hours with a tirade befitting his actions.

Finally, his wife stopped the nagging and asked him, “How would you like it if you didn’t see me for two or three days?”

He replied, “That would be fine with me.”

Monday went by and he didn’t see his wife.

Tuesday went by and he didn’t see his wife.

Wednesday went by and he didn’t see his wife.

On Thursday, the swelling went down just enough that he could see her a little out of the corner of his left eye.

Say, “Although conflict in marriage is normal, how to deal with conflict in a healthy, godly manner, is a skill that will take time and practice.”

✓ Show the video clip, *Let’s Stop*, from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD. Say, “Although conflict in marriage is normal, how to deal with conflict in a healthy, godly manner, is a skill that will take time and practice.”

#### **Working Together**

Ask the group to think back on how their parents resolved conflict in their relationship.

✓ Ask, “Was your house a loud, boisterous one or a quiet, controlled one? How different was your spouse’s experience in the home in which he or she grew up? What kind of challenge has that presented to you?”

✓ Ask, “What changes has this chapter prompted in your attitude and behavior toward conflict in your marriage and resolving it?”

✓ Continue to remind couples that conflict is a normal part of any relationship. Review and discuss the steps the text suggests for effective conflict resolution.

- Step 1:** Proper preparation (unselfishness, genuine love and respect, flexibility)
- Step 2:** Timing (agreeable with both, calmly)
- Step 3:** Apply the basics (be a good listener, empathize, use "I" statements, be positive, stay on track, be proactive)
- Step 4:** Identify the problem
- Step 5:** Take personal responsibility
- Step 6:** Explore and analyze previous attempts
- Step 7:** Be creative and flexible with solutions
- Step 8:** Explore the solutions

✓ Have couples turn to their spouse and let him or her know which one of the steps reviewed is usually the easiest to accomplish. Which is the hardest to accomplish? Why?

### **Couple Time**

Distribute copies of "Conflict in My Marriage" (Handout 12). Instruct couples to complete the

worksheet individually and then compare and discuss answers.

### **Looking Ahead**

✓ Ask the group to read chapter 5, "Managing Stress in Marriage." Suggest they make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

✓ Ask members to be prepared (at the next session) to share a time when they felt their marriage was most threatened. Was it a sudden crisis or just the long, draining, debilitating process of chronic tension?

✓ Distribute Session 5 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 13). Encourage couples to complete the assignment before the next session.

### **Closing**

Pray that God can use the information gained in this session to bring healthy conflict resolutions to the marriages of the couples in this group. Ask God's guidance and protection as they deal with issues that are causing conflict in their marriages.

# Session 6

## CHAPTER 5

### *Managing Stress in Marriage*

#### **Session Goal**

To help couples understand that stress is common, unavoidable experience in marriage and to give them ways to manage it.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Make a copy of “The Wife” (Handout 14).
- Assign someone to read “The Wife” (Handout 14).
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share about a vacation and how it impacted perspective on life, stress level, etc.
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share about a “tsunami” experience they have experienced in their marriage.
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to talk about the drought of a “heat wave” they have experienced in their marriage.
- Obtain three balls or other small, unbreakable objects for each couple to use in “The Juggling Act.”
- Have paper and pens available for couples to make a list of priorities (see “The Juggling Act”).
- Make copies of Session 6 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 15).

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Tell (or have enlisted couple) about the most outstanding vacation or trip ever taken. Share how it impacted perspective on life, stress level, etc.

✓ Have someone read the story, “The Wife” (Handout 14).

#### **The Wife**

A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor’s office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone.

He said, “Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don’t follow my instructions carefully, your husband will surely die.”

“Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast,” he continued. “Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal for him.”

“Don’t burden him with chores. Don’t discuss your problems with him; it will only make his stress worse. Do not nag him. Most importantly, make love to him regularly.”

“If you can do this for the next 10 months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health completely.”

On the way home, the husband asked his wife, “What did the doctor say?”

“He said you’re going to die,” she replied.

Say, “Hopefully, as you read the chapter this week and as we discuss this chapter, we can find a better solution for stress.”

✓ Have the group participate in the stress-lowering exercise suggested in the text (p. 90):

Let your shoulders relax by letting your elbows rest by your hipbones. Then try closing your mouth (with shoulders relaxed) and breathe deeply through your nose from your diaphragm. Take ten deep breaths. Let your head droop down to your chest to relax the neck muscles. Allow your hands and arms to drop to your side or to the side. Progressively tense then relax the muscles in your body, starting from the feet and working upward.

#### **Working Together**

✓ Have a couple (or you and your spouse) share about a time in marriage when there was the

threat of a “tsunami”. Ask, “How did you find yourself responding to the stress? What did you notice about your spouse during the stress?”

√ Have a couple (or you and your spouse) talk about the drought of a “heat wave” experienced in marriage. Ask, “How did you find yourself responding to the stress? What did you notice about your spouse during the stress?”

√ Review and discuss the “AAA Method” of stress management from the text (pp.100-104).

Anticipate

Acknowledge

Adjust

### **Couple Time**

√ *The Juggling Act*. Distribute three small balls (or other unbreakable, small objects) to each couple. Have one partner begin by tossing and catching one ball at a time. Add a second ball and then a third ball (if possible). Now have the other partner try to juggle.

After the couples have “tried” to keep the three balls going, say, “Trying to juggle is similar to handling the day to day responsibilities of marriage.”

Distribute paper and pens. Have the couple

compile a list of the day to day responsibilities they “juggle”. Ask them to prioritize the list. Instruct them to dialogue about how they might help one another eliminate some of the stresses.

√ *Ready (or Not) Here It Comes*. Describe as carefully and specifically as you can what you intend to do to prepare for the next: tsunami. The next heat wave. What will you need from your spouse?

### **Looking Ahead**

√ Ask the group to read chapter 6, “Building and Maintaining an Intimate Relationship.” Suggest they make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

√ Distribute Session 6 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 15). Encourage couples to complete at least one of the assignments before the next session.

### **Closing**

Pray acknowledging the reality of stress in our world. Ask God’s grace and peace on couples as they deal with day to day stresses. Pray for His mercy and strength for the unexpected tsunamis that will come into their life.

# Session 7

## CHAPTER 6

### *Building and Maintaining an Intimate Relationship*

#### **Session Goal**

To help couples understand the need to build a healthy, meaningful, and intimate relationship in their marriage.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Make a copy of “The Good Ole Days” (Handout 16).
- Assign someone to read “The Good Ole Days” (Handout 16).
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share the “craziest” moment of their honeymoon.
- Assign someone to read: 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, Proverbs 18:22, Proverbs 31:10-12, Proverbs 31:26-28, Ephesians 5:33, Philippians 2:3-4, Ephesians 5:33, and 1 Corinthians 7:3-5.
- Make copies of “How’s Our Intimacy?” (Handout 17) for each person.
- Make copies of Session 7 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 18).

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

✓ Have someone read the story, “The Good Ole Days” (Handout 16).

#### **The Good Ole Days**

Grandpa and Grandma were sitting in their porch rockers watching the beautiful sunset and reminiscing about “the good ole days,” when Grandma turned to Grandpa and said, “Honey, do you remember when we first started dating and you used to just casually reach over and take my hand?”

Grandpa looked over at her, smiled and obligingly took her aged hand in his. With a wry little smile, Grandma pressed a little farther, “Honey, do you remember how after we were engaged, you’d

sometimes lean over and suddenly kiss me on the cheek?”

Grandpa leaned slowly toward Grandma and gave her a lingering kiss on her wrinkled cheek.

Growing bolder still, Grandma said, “Honey, do you remember how, after we were first married, you’d kind of nibble on my ear?”

Grandpa slowly got up from his rocker and headed into the house. Alarmed, Grandma said, “Honey, where are you going?”

Grandpa replied, “To get my teeth!”

Say, “Acts of love and caring are the true foundations of a lasting, intimate relationship. Let’s continue to look for other ways that lasting intimacy can be built.”

✓ Share or ask a couple to share the “craziest” moment of their honeymoon. After an appropriate number of “honeymoon moments” are shared with the group, say, “Shared moments are one of the building blocks of intimacy. Let’s look at the other essentials of true and lasting intimacy.”

#### **Working Together**

✓ Review the five types of intimacy (intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, physical) discussed in the text (pp. 107-108). Discuss how the secular world sees the whole issue of intimacy in a different way. What evidence supports the secular perspective? How susceptible do you think Christians are to thinking and acting in a similar way?

✓ Read and discuss the following biblical premises for marriage:

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (God made us interdependent.)
- ▶ Proverbs 18:22 and Proverbs 31:10-12 (Men are blessed by wives and are to please, honor, and love them.)
- ▶ Proverbs 31:26-28 and Ephesians 5:33 (Women are blessed by husbands and are to

please, honor, and love them.)

- ▶ Philippians 2:3-4 and Ephesians 5:33 and 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (Wives and husbands are to look after each other's best interests.)

### **Couple Time**

✓ Instruct couples to remind their spouse what they find attractive in him or her. Say, "Affirm his or her significance to you as your life partner."

✓ Distribute the "How's Our Intimacy?" (Handout 17) survey. After completing the survey, instruct couples to discuss the answers with their spouse.

### **Looking Ahead**

✓ Ask the group to read chapter 7, "Finding Spiritual Intimacy in Your Marriage." Suggest they

make some notes they would like to discuss or share with the group.

✓ Distribute Session 7 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 18). Encourage couples to complete the assignments before the next session.

✓ You may want to ask a couple or two to volunteer to put a "Celebration of Marriage" night together for the ninth session. Remind them to keep it simple, low-cost, and equally shared in responsibility.

### **Closing**

Pray that couples will find mutual fulfillment, satisfaction, and harmony in their marriage. Pray that God will reveal to each couple His divine plan for their marriage.

# Session 8

## CHAPTER 7

### *Finding Spiritual Intimacy in Your Marriage*

#### **Session Goal**

To help couples build a stronger relationship by giving them tools that will help them learn to share and become spiritually intimate.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- Assign someone to prepare coffee, water, etc.
- Make a copy of “The Pastor and the Eggs” (Handout 19).
- Assign someone to read “The Pastor and the Eggs” (Handout 19).
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share the most unusual thing that has happened to them at church.
- Using pieces of poster board or cardstock create three signs: God, husband, wife.
- Be prepared or arrange for a couple to share how their marriage benefits from spiritual intimacy.
- Assign someone to read: Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-13.
- Secure poster board, large Post-Its, or white board and marker.
- Makes copies of “Planning for Spiritual Intimacy” (Handout 20) for each couple.
- Makes copies of Session 8 “Take Time to Be a Couple” (Handout 21).

#### **Engage Their Interest**

Choose **one** of the following options.

√ Share the story, “The Pastor and the Eggs” (Handout 19).

##### **The Pastor and the Eggs**

An elderly pastor was searching the closet for his collar before church one Sunday morning. In the back of the closet, he found a small box containing three eggs and 100, \$1.00 bills. He called

his wife to the closet and asked her about the box and its contents.

Embarrassed, she admitted having hidden the box there for their entire 45 years of marriage.

Disappointed and hurt, the pastor asked her, “Why?” The wife answered, “I didn’t want to hurt your feelings.”

Confused the pastor asked, “How could the box and its contents have hurt my feelings?”

The wife replied, “Every time during our marriage you delivered a poor sermon, I placed an egg in the box.”

Thinking that three poor sermons in 45 years was certainly nothing to feel bad about, he asked, “So where did the \$100.00 come from?”

She replied, “Each time I got a dozen eggs, I sold them to the neighbors for \$1.”

Say, “Spiritual intimacy is based upon transparency and trust. While this story is humorous, how do you think the pastor felt about his wife’s collection of eggs? Do you feel his trust of his wife grew or diminished because of her egg collecting? What are some methods she could have used to channel her feelings in a more beneficial manner?”

√ Invite couples to tell about the funniest or most unusual thing that has ever happened to them in church.

√ Distribute the signs (God, husband, wife) and ask for volunteers to stand in a triangular formation. As you present the following idea, have the “husband” and “wife” move toward “God.”

Say, “In physics, a law states that when two objects draw closer to a third object, they are closer to one another. So it is in marriage, when the two partners seek the Lord they discover they are drawing closer to one another.”

√ Have a couple (or you and your spouse) share the benefits of developing spiritual intimacy.

## Working Together

√ Ask the group to close their eyes and visualize the ideal, Christian marriage as Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-13 are read.

Say, "Paul suggests that the marriage relationship can be the earthly reflection of Christ's relationship with us." Ask for volunteers to note the characteristics of the *ideal, Christian marriage*. Record answers on a poster board, Post-It, or white board. (Answers should include: sacrificial love, gentleness, kindness, compassion, humbleness, and forgiveness.)

When the list is completed, ask the group to respond to the following questions:

- ▶ Which characteristic(s) would be easiest to live up to?
- ▶ Which characteristic(s) would be hardest to measure up to?
- ▶ Why is it difficult for couples to measure up to this ideal?

√ Ask, "What do you feel is the biggest hurdle most people encounter in their attempts to build and maintain spiritual intimacy in their marriage relationships? What are some things we can do to counter these hurdles?"

## Couple Time

√ Instruct couples to carefully and quietly

evaluate their relationship with their spouse. Ask, "Can you think of a recent time when you might have hung on to your *rights* instead of yielding those to the Lord? Might you have either angrily lashed out at your spouse or coldly withdrawn? If so, ask your spouse for forgiveness."

Instruct couples to talk for a few moments about how they would like to see Christ more clearly reflected in their marriage. Ask the couples to spend some time together in prayer.

√ Distribute "Planning for Spiritual Intimacy" (Handout 20). Have couples complete the worksheet.

## Looking Ahead

√ Share the plans that have been made for the "Marriage Celebration" session.

√ Distribute Session 8 "Take Time to Be a Couple" (Handout 21). Encourage couples to complete the assignments before you meet for the next session.

## Closing

Pray that those in your group will grow spiritually not only individually, but as a couple. Pray that God will help couples draw closer together as they seek His direction for their relationship.

# Session 9

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## CLOSING SESSION

### *Finishing in Style*

#### **Session Goal**

To give closure to the group sessions and to help participants celebrate their marriage.

#### **Prepare to Lead**

- If you chose a planning committee for this session, check with them during the week to make certain they have everything they need for the marriage celebration session.
- Plan for the session to last two hours instead of the usual ninety minutes.
- If you plan to have a marriage vow renewal ceremony, contact your pastor to make arrangements.
- If you plan to make a video, enlist someone to do the taping.
- If you plan to do the letter writing activity, provide paper and pens for the couples.

#### **Marriage Celebration Ideas**

✓ Share a meal together (catered, potluck, private room at a restaurant, etc.).

✓ Allow group members to talk candidly about their learning experience through the eight weeks of the study.

✓ Invite group members to participate in a marriage vow renewal ceremony.

✓ Using participating couples, make a video similar to the segment, *What Is Marriage?* from the Strategic Marriage Initiative DVD. Plan to use the video in a church service.

✓ Invite couples to write a letter to their children about the essentials of marriage. This letter can be saved and given to their children before marriage.

✓ Make plans to meet in three months, in six months, and then annually to share how their marriage relationship has progressed.

✓ Invite group members to affirm what they have seen and heard from their peers and the positive impact it has had on their marriage.

# Appendix 1

## LEADERSHIP SELF-INVENTORY

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How would I characterize my relationship to Christ at this point in my life? What would my spouse say about that?
- If I rated my marriage on a scale of 1 (the worst it's ever been) to a 10 (the best it's ever been) where would that rating fall?
- What are the strong points of my marital relationship?
- Where do I think there is work yet to do?
- How willing am I to be transparent about how my marital relationship has evolved over the years?
- Are there areas of my marital relationship that would be uncomfortable for me to discuss?
- How would my spouse respond to these same questions?

# Appendix 2

## THE MAKING OF A GOOD GROUP LEADER

Good leaders have a general awareness of group dynamics. It isn't necessary to be an expert in this area, but a rudimentary understanding of how groups work will be helpful. Consistently reviewing some of the principles outlined in this guide and making good use of suggested resources will help to achieve this goal.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a pastor? The word really connotes a shepherd. How skilled are you at the care and feeding of your flock? This has everything to do with tending relationships and nurturing those in your group. From past experience, you may already know most groups have both sheep and goats. Sheep are usually compliant, complacent, and appreciative of the efforts of the shepherd. Goats can be stubborn, independent, and may at times be resistant to the shepherd's leadership. Can you be evenhanded in working with both? A part of the shepherding may involve some contact with group members outside the parameters of the meeting schedule.

How will you create time for these encounters?

Good group leaders model the ground rules and expect the people in the group to observe them. Consistency in modeling what you require of the group is crucial. If you compromise any of the expectations you have of the group, you may find it difficult to recover. Don't be afraid to gently reiterate the ground rules (Handout 1) for the first two or three sessions until you're sure that everyone understands and follows them. If you have someone who consistently violates any of these, make time to speak privately and graciously to the offender outside the group experience.

### Four Components of Small Group Life

The group leader's role is to facilitate the meeting around the following four components, and to shepherd the participants between meetings. The group leader is also God's front-line

caregiver during a crisis for a group member, with group members and church staff playing appropriate supporting roles during the crisis. You should lead your group to:

- *Love* by caring for one another and sharing in each others' lives through accountability, prayer, and intentional acts of service to one another.
- *Learn* by experiencing a growing knowledge of God and themselves.
- *Decide* as a group about activities and schedules.
- *Participate* in activities or ministry opportunities together.

A good leader creates an environment of open genuineness and confidence in himself or herself and in the unfolding dynamic of the group process. Have an idea about what you would like to see happen relative to group activities and decisions, but be flexible enough to permit suggestions from the group whose ideas may differ from yours. Toward the end of the group study, determine a "doing" (see Session 9) type of activity that will help bring closure to the experience.

The following information will be helpful to you as you facilitate group discussion, activities, and other types of interaction.

### **Facilitating Dynamic Discussion (ACTS)**

*Acknowledge* everyone who speaks during a discussion. Even if several speak at once, make sure you acknowledge each one. Non-verbal behavior (body language, tone of voice) comprises over 90 percent of what is communicated, so pay careful attention to these.

*Clarify* what is being said and felt: "Here's what I heard you say" or "Let me see if I understand what you are saying" and then paraphrase what you heard.

*Turning it back* to the group as a means of generating discussion, keeps the facilitator from becoming the "Answer Person." Ask the group: "How does that affect you?" or "Have you ever encountered a similar situation?" or "Would you mind if I asked the others how they feel (or what they think) about that?"

*Summarize* what has been said: "So far it seems like we've been saying" or "Do you think we could summarize the discussion to this point?"

### **Facilitating Discussion by Asking Questions**

Questions invite inclusion and participation and are a contrast to statements which can sometimes come across as categorical, critical, and judgmental. Developing the skill of asking the right kind of question at the right time creates an open and comfortable environment for group sharing.

*Opening questions* allow the group to warm up to each other, get to know each other better, and get used to the styles and personalities of group members.

*Launching questions* are designed to facilitate additional group interaction and feedback. Questions are formed around: "What do I know?" or "What do I feel?" or "What should I do?"

*Guiding questions* are designed to lead the discussion in a certain direction or get a discussion back on track. You might:

- Rephrase the question: "You seem to be asking how we can develop trust as a group?"
- Personalize the question: "How might you respond if you were asked the same question?"
- Test for consensus: "Are we saying this is the way that everyone must respond?"

*Summarizing questions* affirm comments and should be delivered with good eye contact and a smile: "Thanks for sharing" or "That's something I hadn't thought of or noticed before" or "That's a good point. Are there other thoughts as well?"

*Application questions* move discussion from speculation to active change: "Here are some things that I am going to do as a result of our discussion tonight" or "What difference will this make to you?"

### **Promoting Discussion with Proper Responses**

Your ability to model responses will be helpful in allowing participants to develop a sense of trust and safety in the group process. Model the use of "I" statements: "I think" or "I feel" or "I will." Avoid the use of the editorial: "We should" or "We ought".

Be willing to allow for different perspectives. Generally when people are sharing thoughts, feelings, and life perceptions in a group, there are no correct answers. Avoid the temptation to demonstrate your expertise by giving a strong negative

reaction to someone’s attempt to share. Find what is pertinent to the discussion, and be able to verbally highlight that.

Avoid using *leading* responses: “If you were in a similar situation how might you have responded?” or *limiting* responses: “What do you see as the main priority here?”

Try using the following types of response as you lead discussion:

*Affirming responses* highlight each person’s value and promote a feeling of safety when group members risk the vulnerability of sharing genuinely and openly. Affirming responses send a strong signal to each person that he or she has been heard, understood, and respected. For example: “I can tell this has been a difficult or painful experience for you. I really appreciate your willingness to take the risk of telling us about it.”

*Participatory responses* validate the individual and invite others to join the process. They create a sense of community and do not leave the respondent shamed, embarrassed, or isolated: “That is a great insight! Can you share how you came to that conclusion?” or “How have some of you dealt with that same kind of situation?”

*Paraphrasing responses* allow you to repeat in your own words the response of another and permits them to share more deeply. It summarizes what has been heard and allows the group to explore personal thoughts, feelings, and actions: “That was a very complicated challenge you faced. How do you deal with similar situations that occur now?” or “That was an incredible breakthrough that you experienced! What kind of change has that brought about?”

## Promoting Good Listening Skills

*Passive vs. Active Listening*

	<b>Passive Listening</b>	<b>Active Listening</b>
<b>Attitude</b>	Rejecting, critical. <i>“I’m really not interested.”</i>	Receptive, accepting <i>“I really want to hear.”</i>
<b>Focus</b>	Me—what I want to say. <i>“What do I think?”</i>	Other person—you think about what others are saying. <i>“What does he mean?”</i>
<b>Response</b>	This is what I’ve been thinking. <i>“I think you should ...”</i>	Clarifying first what you have heard the other person say. <i>“You think. . .”</i> <i>“Do you feel. . .?”</i>
<b>Message</b>	What you said isn’t important. <i>“I didn’t really hear what you said.”</i>	You heard both the feeling and the need in the message. <i>“I hear what you are saying.”</i>
<b>Results</b>	Speaker experiences frustration, anger. <i>Listener communicates, “I don’t care.”</i>	Speaker is willing to compromise or tell more. <i>Listener says, “I care about what you said.”</i>

## Special Considerations

*Managing Conflict.* If tension should arise during a session, it can often be defused by using “I” statements about your own thoughts and feelings or by using some of the questioning or response ideas previously mentioned.

If conflict arises outside the group and a participant has come to complain, use this as an opportunity to help the complainer go to the offender with his or her concern. Avoid trying to manage the tension by operating as a go-between. That is a guaranteed way the conflict will not be resolved, and someone will be very upset with you.

*Caring for those in crisis.* You may have a couple in your group that is in marital crisis. Encouraging them to seek therapy outside the group is an excellent move on the part of the leader.

*A dominating participant.* Some participants can overpower with excessive verbosity. It is perfectly permissible to politely interrupt. Complement him

or her on their passion for the subject, but point out that others need to have the option to express their perceptions: “I like what I’m hearing from you. Let me come back to you in a minute. I’m curious to know what others think about that same thing.”

## A Word of Warning

Be aware of that potential for misplaced or inappropriate attachments. One of the best ways to avoid the trap is to frankly, but gently point it out. Encourage individuals who are struggling with some marital issues to seek out a pastor, trained therapist, or someone of the same sex with whom to work. It is a recipe for disaster when a troubled married man finds a willing female ear from another group member who becomes a confidant. Obviously the same can be said of a troubled married woman who seeks support from a male member of the group.

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# Appendix 3

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## MAKING A MARRIAGE HANDOUTS

### *Making a Marriage Handouts*

Handouts for facilitating *Making a Marriage* group sessions are available **free** at [clt.nazarene.org](http://clt.nazarene.org).

#### **Session 1**

The Ground Rules (*Handout 1*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 1 (*Handout 2*)

#### **Session 2**

He Does. . .She Does (*Handout 3*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 2 (*Handout 4*)

#### **Session 3**

Seven Commitments of Marriage (*Handout 5*)

How Are We Doing? (*Handout 6*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 3 (*Handout 7*)

#### **Session 4**

Did It Really Say That? (*Handout 8*)

What Is My Communication Quotient? (*Handout 9*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 4 (*Handout 10*)

#### **Session 5**

Friday Night, Just Got Paid (*Handout 11*)

Conflict in My Marriage (*Handout 12*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 5 (*Handout 13*)

#### **Session 6**

The Wife (*Handout 14*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 6 (*Handout 15*)

#### **Session 7**

The Good Ole Days (*Handout 16*)

How’s Our Intimacy? (*Handout 17*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 7 (*Handout 18*)

#### **Session 8**

The Pastor and the Eggs (*Handout 19*)

Planning for Spiritual Intimacy (*Handout 20*)

Take Time to Be a Couple Session 8 (*Handout 21*)

# Continuing Lay Training

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Thank you for participating in this CLT class study. Please review the checklist below. We hope you will continue to study and train for ministry in your local church by using Continuing Lay Training (CLT) materials.

## Checklist

- ✓ Advertise the class and plan a special registration time.
- ✓ Register the class with the CLT and make sure you have a class report form.
- ✓ Order textbooks directly from Nazarene Publishing House at least three weeks before the starting date. A 10 percent discount is available if you order more than five of the same book. Unused books may be returned for credit if done promptly, postage paid, and the books are in good condition.
- ✓ At the close of the class, report the class to the CLT office in Lenexa. Keep a copy for your file. Use one of the following methods for reporting.
  1. Paper—request a hardcopy of the class report form, fill it in, and return it to the CLT office.

2. Electronic version—an electronic fill-in template can be sent to you via E-mail or you may download it from the CLT web site at <clt.nazarene.org>.
3. On-line—you may use our fill-in form for reporting classes at <clt.nazarene.org>.

When reporting by the paper or electronic version, the CLT office will send a notice of credit along with “credit cards” for each of the participants of the class. You are to fill in the name, unit number, book title, date, and name of the sponsoring group. Sign the credit cards before presenting to each participant in a public service.

When reporting on-line, you will be given the option to print out “credit cards” for each of the participants. The class presenter can then sign the cards and present them to each participant in a public service.

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