

MARRIAGE PREPARATION INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Please complete the following:

1. Name:	Age:	Occupation:
2. Address:		
3. Telephone (home)	(work)	
4. Level of education:		
5. Where were you born and raised?		
6. How long have you been dating each other?		
7. Where do you plan to live after marriage?		
8. Desired wedding date and time:		
9. Why are you coming to the church for a wedding rather than a non-religious service?		
10. If you were to die tonight, could you say you would be absolutely sure of going to heaven?		
11. What are the basic requirements for being received into heaven? Do you think you have met them?		
12. Please describe something of your church background and current involvement.		
13. If you are a believer, describe how you have been growing in Christ. In what ways?		

REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

1. Have you been serious with anyone else before this person? _____ How recently? _____

2. Do your parents approve of the marriage? _____ If not, what do you think of their reasons?

3. Are you happy living at home (or in your present situation)? _____ Why or why not?

4. Do either of you feel pressure from any quarter to get married? _____

5. Are you (your fiancée) pregnant? _____

6. Make a list of the qualities you see in the other person which make you want to marry him/her:

7. What fears do you have about marriage or about your impending marriage?

Office Use Only

In Pastor's Class or a Member of SRPC

_____ Church Attendance

WEDDING STANDARDS

We believe we are responsible before God to marry only those people who a) have God's blessing (favor) for the marriage and who b) are prepared for the demands and responsibilities of this relationship. Marriage is a contract—a job! You don't expect to get other jobs without qualifications—so there are qualifications for marriage.

1. You must have a similar commitment to Christ. (II Corinthians 6:14).
 - a) Unless we are in covenant with God, we lack the strength and love to really meet the demands of marriage.
 - b) Without God, our natural selfishness prevents a relationship from really blossoming. Sin destroyed the oneness between Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). What plans do you have to overcome your natural selfishness? Example: Ships that have faults in the internal steering mechanisms will run into each other. If our hearts are not right with God, we cannot expect our relationships to be right.
 - c) You need to be active together in a church.
2. You must be mature enough and willing to build a marriage based on the principles of God's word.
 - a) The way to handle a machine so that it continues to work properly is to follow the directions of the manufacturer.
 - b) If you ignore the instructions, there will be breakdown. Freedom comes from following the rules of the creator.
 - c) This means, first of all, you must be willing to talk through and solve problems God's way. For example, have you been engaging in sexual relations now? Here's a test! Are you willing to accept God's word that this practice is wrong?
 - d) Here's another test. Are there any personal problems that either is keeping from the other out of fear or shame? Unless you can base your relationship on communication now, how will you do so later? Make a list of the problems or disagreements that you have solved satisfactorily to both. Are there any?
3. If this is not your first marriage, and if you are divorced:
 - a) Was your divorce biblical—on the grounds of adultery or the willful desertion by your unbelieving partner?
 - b) If not, have you: 1) repented to God, 2) sought reconciliation with your former spouse?

Meet the Pastor

1. You will need to meet with the minister who will be performing your ceremony. You should contact the minister who you desire to perform your marriage and find out if he is available for the date you have chosen. What should you expect to take place at this meeting? Expect the minister to ask you about your Christian faith: when you became a Christian, what you understand it to mean to be a Christian, the place that Christian faith has in your life. Also expect him to ask you about your relationship: What is the history of your relationship? How do your friends and family feel about it? What do you perceive to be the greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses of the relationship? Are you striving to keep your relationship sexually pure? If you want additional counseling or the minister thinks you need some additional counseling that will be discussed at this meeting. Generally, a minister will not be able to confirm with certainty that he will perform the wedding until this meeting has taken place.
2. After the initial meeting, each couple will be expected to attend four more counseling sessions before the wedding.
3. The minister will generally conduct the wedding rehearsal at the agreed upon rehearsal time. Regretfully, because of families and the busyness of schedules, ministers many times are not able to attend rehearsal dinners or receptions. It is their sincere hope that such inability not to be taken as an offense.

Wedding Contract And Policy Agreement

I have reviewed the contents of the *Wedding Standards and Planning Your Wedding at SRPC* and agree to abide by the policies as stated herein. I also agree:

- To attend SRPC on a regular basis
- That at least one of us is a member of SRPC or currently in the Pastor's Class
- That we are only allowed to miss one week of the Marriage Preparation Class in order to complete it successfully
- That we go to two counseling sessions with Rich Greete
- That we will meet with a pastor of SRPC 2-3 times prior to the wedding date

Bride

Groom

Date

Premarital Counseling

Rich Greete, M.A., M. Div.

greetemtw@earthlink.net

Cell phone: 352.613.4549

Goals:

- Evaluate a couple's preparedness for marrying by taking stock of the strength and growth in areas that are present in their relationship.
- Evaluate their level of idealism toward marriage.
- Explore important relational topics that they may otherwise avoid.
- Further develop communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Give each couple a positive counseling experience so that they know caring, confidential help is available after they marry.

Tools:

- Prepare/Enrich Inventory—taken online one week before counseling begins
- The Marriage Builder, by Larry Crabb (purchased separately)
- Two counseling sessions

Cost:

- \$175 (Two counseling sessions \$140; Prepare Inventory \$45)

Payment:

- Checks for the Prepare Inventory that will be taken online should be made out to Rich Greete and is due at the first class.
- Checks for the counseling sessions should be made out to Grace Clinic and are due at the time of the counseling session.

The use of Prepare/Enrich Inventory will objectively focus counseling sessions on critical relationship issues. The inventory categorizes critical relationship areas into the below four main groups each with additional subgroups. There are 165 questions on the test, which provides ample data for the counseling sessions.

Critical Relationship Areas

1. Personality issues
 - a. Assertiveness—their ability to express their feelings to their partner and ability to ask for what they would like.
 - b. Self-confidence—how good a person feels about themselves and their ability to control things in their life.
 - c. Avoidance—their tendency to minimize issues and reluctance to deal with issues directly.
 - d. Partner dominance—how much a person feels their partner tries to control them and dominate their life.
2. Intrapersonal issues
 - a. Idealistic distortion toward marriage
 - b. Marriage Expectations
 - c. Personality Issues
 - d. Leisure Activities
 - e. Spiritual Beliefs

3. Interpersonal Issues
 - a. Communication
 - b. Conflict Resolution
 - c. Sexual Relationship (expectations)
 - d. Cohabitation Issues (variation 3, cohabiting couples)
 - e. Role Relationship and Children and Parenting

4. External Issues
 - a. Financial Management
 - b. Family and Friends
 - c. Family of Origin

The test is known for being both preventative and educational as couples are led in an evaluation of their own self-report of their relationship. It also has an 80-85% accuracy range in discriminating premarital couples that get divorced from those that are happily married. This statistic is derived from a database of more than 500,000 couples.

For couples in different life situations there are two additional variations of the test. One is for premarital couples with children, and another is for cohabiting couples. Both of these variations of the test cover the same areas above, but in a way that is more appropriate to the couple's situation.

In addition to the Prepare Enrich Inventory, I recommend that couples read The Marriage Builder, by Crabb. In this book Crabb succinctly gets at the heart of what marriage is about: oneness. And, to develop oneness it talks about grace, commitment and acceptance. At 150 pages it communicates without overloading the couple. The book also includes a set of discussion questions.