

## Marriage Education and Enrichment Organizations and Websites

United Methodists participate in the programs of a variety of marriage-related organizations and websites. Two of these, **Better Marriages** and **Marriage Encounter United Methodist**, have worked closely with United Methodist Discipleship Ministries through the years. Many others are faith-based or offer faith-based versions of their materials. And others, while not overtly Christian, provide materials that reflect Christian values and which are easily adaptable for faith-based groups. Some organizations were founded by and focus on the works of a particular author or speaker. The following annotated list provides contact information and brief descriptions of the offerings of organizations and websites recommended by United Methodists around the connection. Please contact me if you know of other organizations or websites you would recommend for this list.

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(See also “Marriage Education and Enrichment Reading List for Couples,” “Marriage Education and Enrichment Reading List for Pastors, Church Leaders, and Counselors,” “Marriage Education and Enrichment Curriculum Materials” and other articles posted in the [Marriage Education and Enrichment](#) section under [Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources](#) at [www.marriagelovepower.net](http://www.marriagelovepower.net) - or visit [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries) to search by title or topic.)

**Active Relationships Center**, [www.activerelationships.com](http://www.activerelationships.com) This organization, best known for its work with military families and faith-based groups, provides facilitator training, certification, and curricula for relationship education programs.

**Better Marriages**, 502 No. Broad St., P.O. Box 21374, Winston-Salem, NC 27120, 336-724-1526, 800-634-8325, [acme@bettermarriages.org](mailto:acme@bettermarriages.org), [www.bettermarriages.com](http://www.bettermarriages.com). Better Marriages, formerly known as the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment, has worked closely with United Methodist Discipleship Ministries for years. This non-profit, non-sectarian organization promotes enrichment opportunities and resources to “strengthen couple relationships and enhance personal growth, mutual fulfillment and family wellness.” Better Marriages focuses mainly on helping couples in good marriages achieve their full potential. A leadership training and certification program trains couples for leading various kinds of events. The website provides schedules of upcoming events, book reviews, articles addressing marriage issues, and links to webinars and recordings. Virtual MEGs (Marriage Enrichment Groups) allow couples to listen in by telephone or webcast, live or recorded, to a sample dialogue and then hold their own

conversation on a designated topic. Call the office or visit the website to find leader couples and events in your area, to review available resources, to sign up for quarterly e-newsletters, to access the Virtual MEGs, and join Better Marriages for even more resources.

**Coalition for Marriage, Family, and Couples Education, LLC, (Smart Marriages),** [diane@smartmarriages.com](mailto:diane@smartmarriages.com), [www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com). This non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-denominational organization offers a comprehensive variety of marriage and family ministry information and resources. For 14 years, ending in 2010, the Coalition held an annual Smart Marriages/Happy Families conference, bringing together researchers, program developers, and other experts for plenary sessions, seminars, workshops, and training institutes. At the Smart Marriages website, you can order Playback Now recordings of the presentations made at those conferences, read articles on a variety of relevant topics, check the Directory of Programs for available relationship education courses, and sign up for a free online e-newsletter.

**Couple Communication, Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc. (ICP),** 30772 Southview Dr., #200, Evergreen, CO 80439, 800-328-5099, 303-674-2051, [icp@comskills.com](mailto:icp@comskills.com), [www.couplecommunication.com](http://www.couplecommunication.com). This organization is perhaps best known as the originators and registered copyright holders of the *Awareness Wheel*, the frameworks of “*Styles of Communication*” and “*The Listening Cycle*,” and the collaborative process called “*Mapping an Issue*.” The COUPLE COMMUNICATION I and COUPLE COMMUNICATION II courses teach couples how to use these frameworks to communicate skillfully, make important decisions, and resolve conflicts collaboratively. CORE COMMUNICATION teaches these same skills to individuals. THRIVESPHERE, an on-line relationship inventory which provides insight into the dynamics of a relationship, is available through a trained facilitator. Instructors for these programs, who must complete a certification process, may be located through the website.

**Divorce-Busting (Michelle Weiner-Davis),** [www.divorcebusting.com](http://www.divorcebusting.com), 303-444-7004  
Visit this website to read articles about strengthening marriages, to sample and purchase Michelle’s books, to learn about training workshops, and to schedule telephone coaching.

**Eddie and Sylvia Robertson,** [www.eddieandsylviarobertson.com](http://www.eddieandsylviarobertson.com) Active in Better Marriages since 1974, the Robertsons, are now certified as Specialists in Marriage Enrichment, Leader Couple, and Trainers and Advanced Trainers of Leader Couples. At this website and on their Facebook page (*Eddie and Sylvia Robertson Marriage Enrichment*), you can find couple exercises, information about their local church Marriage Enrichment Group, and details about “*Virtual Marriage Enrichment Groups*,” which provide an opportunity to participate in couple dialogue by phone or webcast the first Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time or on the third Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Mountain Time. You can also learn about their book, *Wonderful Wednesdays: Fifty-two Conversations for Couples*, (Canton, GA: Yawn’s Publishing, 2012), which provides insights and conversation prompts for weekly couple sharing times. Their blog addresses couple issues with honesty and tender regard. Read it on line or subscribe to receive it by email.

**Drs. Les and Leslie Parrot: Help for Your Relationships,** [www.lesandleslie.com](http://www.lesandleslie.com)

This husband-and-wife team founded the Center for Relationship Development on the campus of Seattle Pacific University in 1991. At the website you can learn about their faith-based books and curriculum materials (*Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*, *Real Relationships*, *L.O.V.E.*, *The Parent You Want To Be*, *The Complete Guide To Marriage Mentoring*, and *Love Talk*); view their speaking schedule, invite them to speak at an event, sign up for a monthly e-newsletter; and read about helps for addictions and other issues.

**Family Builders Ministries**, [www.familybuilders.net](http://www.familybuilders.net) Willie and Cindy Batson, located in Somersworth, New Hampshire, offer resources for strengthening marriages, articles on a variety of topics, a special focus on couples dealing with chronic illness/disabilities, and an online couple checkup (fee for scoring report). They also present at a variety of faith-based events and are available for local programs, especially in New England.

**Family Dynamics Institute**, Contact Joshua Persall, Ministry Consultant, Family Dynamics Institute, 615-627-0751, [jpersall@familydynamics.net](mailto:jpersall@familydynamics.net), [www.familydynamics.net](http://www.familydynamics.net). Family Dynamics Institute helps couples build strong marriages and families through inspiring classes, workshops, and education resources. Trained facilitators offer 8-week Dynamic Marriage classes through local churches. Couples report great improvements from this behavioral and experiential program, especially through learning to pray together. They also offer "A New Beginning," an intensive three-day workshop for couples in deep distress. Family Dynamics Ministry Consultants work with congregations to develop Comprehensive Marriage Ministries to specifically address the needs of married couples at every age and stage of marriage.

**Family Life**, [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com), 800-FL-TODAY This organization offers Weekend to Remember seminars for couples, the HomeBuilders Couples Series, The Art of Marriage video curriculum, articles, and other resources to provide help and hope for marriages.

**Growtrac: Build a Better Marriage**, [www.growthtrac.com](http://www.growthtrac.com) This website offers Christian resources for strengthening marriages and articles on a variety of topics. Sign-up for a daily email "Marriage Minute" and monthly e-newsletter. You can also connect on Facebook.

**Imago Relationships International**, [www.gettingtheloveyouwant.com](http://www.gettingtheloveyouwant.com). Based on the work of Harville Hendrix and Helen LaKelly Hunt, this spiritually-based program offers books, workshops, and curriculum materials featuring the IMAGO dialogue process, which helps couples share thoughts and feelings in a way that can heal and nurture relationships. This process works effectively in all relationships, but is especially helpful for developing intimacy that can help heal childhood wounds. Visit the website to locate trainers and events near you.

**Intimate Life Ministries**, [www.GreatCommandment.net](http://www.GreatCommandment.net) This non-profit ministry involves a network of denominational partners, individual churches, businesses, community leaders and counselors working together to produce resources and offer training for strengthening relationships, marriages, and families. A unique two-day retreat called Galatians 6:6 provides personal and ministry renewal for clergy and their spouses. Click on "Events" to learn more and to see a schedule of events.

**Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage**, with Mark Gungor, [www.laughyourway.com](http://www.laughyourway.com)

Visit the website to read articles and learn about resources for marriage and parenting, including live and video programs and conferences, featuring Mark Gungor's unique approach combining common-sense Christianity and down-to-earth humor.

**Living Love**, <http://livinglove.com.au> "Living Love: Discover the Secrets of Passionate Intimacy" offers workshops, consultations, DVDs, and other resources based on the work of author David Deida, who has written numerous books on spirituality and intimacy.

**Love and Respect Ministries, Inc.**, 770 Kenmoor Ave. SE, Ste. #101, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, 616-949-9790, FAX: 616-949-0601, [www.loveandrespect.com](http://www.loveandrespect.com). Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, author of the bestseller *Love and Respect*, and his wife, Sarah, present "Love and Respect" conferences around the country and reach many more couples through video conferences as well. Their work, based on Biblical principles and relationship research, teaches that men are motivated by feeling respected, while women are motivated by feeling loved. At the website you can locate live and video conferences, purchase resources, read articles, and sign up for an e-newsletter.

**Marriage Alive International**, 329 Canterwood Lane, Great Falls, VA 22066, 888-690-6667, [Arps@marriagealive.com](mailto:Arps@marriagealive.com), [www.marriagealive.com](http://www.marriagealive.com), and/or [www.10greatdates.org](http://www.10greatdates.org) Claudia and David Arp, available for speaking engagements and seminars, also offer books, curriculum, training, and program resources designed to strengthen couples' relationships. They are best known for their "10 Great Dates" programs, including *10 Great Dates to Energize Your Marriage* (recently updated), *10 Great Dates for Empty Nesters*, and *10 Great Dates Before You Say "I Do."* These books are available through popular booksellers and at the website, where you can also purchase DVD video curriculums for group use of the first two "10 Great Dates" programs. Also at the website, you can check the Arp's speaking and training schedule, request a seminar for your area, and sign up for their free e-newsletter.

**Marriage Builders: Building Marriages to Last a Lifetime**, [www.marriagebuilders.com](http://www.marriagebuilders.com)

Based on the work of Dr. Willard Harley, this website offers numerous articles and radio link recordings that teach couples how to meet each other's important emotional needs and cultivate their passion. You can sign up for e-newsletters, purchase online courses and access to radio broadcast archives, and read Dr. Harley's columns, many of which focus on preventing and healing from affairs.

**Marriage Encounter/Engaged Encounter United Methodist**, [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org) One of the twelve faith expressions of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, ME/EEUM has worked closely with the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship for years, offering Christian weekend experiences for couples who want to prepare for or enrich their marriages. A team of lay couples and a clergy-spouse couple make a series of presentations encouraging participants to look at themselves as individuals, at their relationship with each other, and at their relationship with God, the church, and the world. Following each presentation, couples are given time in the privacy of their own rooms for personal sharing using the techniques taught during the weekend.

No group discussion is required. Post-weekend experiences for nurturing ongoing growth are offered in many local areas. [Visit the website above to find events scheduled for your area. Visit [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org) or call 800-795-5683 to learn more about Worldwide Marriage Encounter and other faith expressions of this ministry.]

**Marriage Enrichment, Inc.**, Executive Administrator: JoAnn Johnson, 800-726-7424, [mewinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:mewinfo@yahoo.com), [www.marriageenrichment.org](http://www.marriageenrichment.org) This organization provides workshops, including weekend or mid-week retreats, and other formats for nurturing personal and spiritual growth by providing tools to enhance marriage and family relationships. Leaders are committed Christians who have considerable experience with this program and who have completed a careful training process. Call to inquire about the availability of leader couples and to arrange for an event in your area.

**Marriage Savers, Inc.** 9311 Harrington Drive, Potomac, MD 20854, 301-469-5873, [Harriet@marriagesavers.org](mailto:Harriet@marriagesavers.org), [www.marriagesavers.org](http://www.marriagesavers.org). Marriage Savers offers two-day seminars featuring national pioneers in the development of both Community Marriage Policies® and Marriage Savers Churches. In addition, whenever a Community Marriage Policy® is developed, Marriage Savers will train both clergy and lay mentor couples to create Marriage Savers Congregations and to use the new customized version of the PREPARE-ENRICH pre-marital and marital inventories. Visit the website to learn more about programs offering proven interventions at five stages of the marital life cycle: Preparation, Enrichment, Restoration, Reconciliation, and Stepfamilies.

**Marriage Transformation LLC**, 2409 Hamill Road, Hixson, TN 37343, 423-599-0153, [susanne@marriagetransformation.com](mailto:susanne@marriagetransformation.com). Susanne M. Alexander, president of this organization, is a relationship and marriage coach specializing in character growth. She provides coaching, books, eBooks, and other resources for relationship education, marriage preparation, and marriage strengthening. Trained in PREPARE/ENRICH, Susanne is committed to empowering individuals and couples to create happy, lasting, character-based marriages. For information about resources, workshops, arrangements for mentoring and coaching, a free e-newsletter, and marriage education in general, visit [www.marriagetransformation.com](http://www.marriagetransformation.com).

**National Association for Relationship and Marriage Education (NARME)**, [www.narme.org](http://www.narme.org)  
This organization was formed in 2010 “...to represent the interests and serve the needs of Relationship and Marriage Educators.” One of its founders, United Methodist Richard Albertson, is also president and co-founder of Live the Life Ministries, an ecumenical organization strengthening marriages and families city-wide in Tallahassee, Florida. NARME holds an annual conference, offers webinars (free to individual or group members) and other events to equip those working to strengthen families.

**National Healthy Marriage Institute LLC** is a non-partisan, non-denominational social enterprise organization dedicated to developing products and resources to strengthen marriages and families. At [www.HealthyMarriageTips.com](http://www.HealthyMarriageTips.com), you can download Healthy Marriage Pamphlets on a variety of topics, order resources, and sign up for Healthy Marriage “Tip of the Week” and

“Healthy Marriage Tip of the Month” emails. Other resources, some designed for military families, may be downloaded at [www.healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org).

**National Marriage Encounter**, 4704 Jamerson Place, Orlando, Florida 32807, 800-828-3351, FAX: 407-282-8120, [www.marriage-encounter.org](http://www.marriage-encounter.org). Interfaith weekend retreats for couples offer opportunities for personal reflection and communication between husband and wife. Trained leader couples share experiences from their own lives and suggest a process and specific questions for couples to respond to and dialogue about privately. There is no group discussion. Call or visit the website to learn about events offered in your area.

**Non-Violent Communication**, PuddleDancer Press, PO Box 231129, Encinitas, CA 92023-1129, 858-759-6963, [www.nonviolentcommunication.com](http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com). Non-violent Communication programs, developed by Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960’s, teach people of all ages, genders, ethnicity, and background a more effective way to communicate. Separating observation from evaluation, taking responsibility for our feelings, making requests instead of demands, and listening empathically are skills that can enhance any relationship. Certified trainers now teach those skills all over the world. At the above website, you can sign up for an e-newsletter and other free resources, read articles about NVC, and purchase books (including a basic text and companion workbook for group study and a variety of smaller books specifically addressed to parents, teachers, community leaders, etc.) Visit [www.cnvc.org/en/trainingcal](http://www.cnvc.org/en/trainingcal) for more information, schedules of upcoming events, free introductory tools, and contact information for certified trainers. For information about telecourses, visit [www.nvctraining.com](http://www.nvctraining.com). This program works well with mixed groups of singles and couples – and is a great way to involve someone whose spouse is not willing to participate in a couples’ group.

**Relationship Enhancement (RE)**, [www.relationshipenhancement.org](http://www.relationshipenhancement.org) The National Institute of Relationship Enhancement and the Institute for the Development of Emotional and Life Skills provide training and curriculum resources for several different marriage and family programs. “Mastering the Mysteries of Love,” “Love’s Cradle” (for parents), and “Ready for Love” (for singles) all offer direct skills training for communication and conflict management.

**Rodgers Christian Counseling**, 1206 Jules Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226, (704) 364-9176, FAX (704) 366-0729, [www.soulhealinglove.com](http://www.soulhealinglove.com). This center presents a Soul Healers Workshop and publishes resources for engaged couples, married couples wishing to grow deeper in love, couples in crisis, and singles seeking a soul mate. Sign up for free e-newsletter at the website.

**Smalley Center** is a Christian marriage ministry based on the work of Gary Smalley and of Michael and Amy Smalley. In addition to the Smalley Intensive program, which is proven to help hurting couples, this organization also offers radio programs and resources for value-based and Biblical marriage studies. [www.salley.cc](http://www.salley.cc)

**Susan Page: How Spiritual Partnership Transforms Love**, [www.susanpage.com](http://www.susanpage.com) – A well-grounded speaker and writer with United Methodist roots, Susan teaches about spiritual partnerships and proven strategies for improving a relationship even if only one partner

implements them. At the website, you can read reviews of her books and training manual, subscribe to her occasional email newsletter, and sign up for telephone coaching.

**The Association of Marriage and Family Ministries (AMFM)**, 8283 N. Hayden Rd., Suite 258, Scottsdale, AZ 85258, 480-718-3020, FAX: 480-718-3021, [staff@amfmonline.com](mailto:staff@amfmonline.com), [www.amfmonline.com](http://www.amfmonline.com), [www.datenightevent.com](http://www.datenightevent.com). AMFM states its mission as “Impacting future generations by transforming marriages and families today.” Operating out of a belief that “healthy marriages produce strong families, which create vibrant churches impacting their local communities and the world we live in for Christ,” this ecumenical organization offers resources and events to train and equip the church for effective marriage and family ministry.

**The Five Love Languages**, based on the work of Gary Chapman, [www.5lovelanguages.com](http://www.5lovelanguages.com)  
This website provides information about Gary’s work and writing, a schedule of his upcoming events, free downloadable study guides, and pamphlets based on his books.

**United Marriage Encounter**, [www.unitedmarriage.org](http://www.unitedmarriage.org) This world-wide nonprofit organization offers a 48-hour marriage encounter weekend and continuing support activities. The program combines practical communication tools, sound psychological principles, and Christian values to improve and strengthen marriages

**United Methodist Marriage and Family Ministries, UM Discipleship Ministries**, 615-340-7170, 877-899-2780, [www.marriagelovepower.net](http://www.marriagelovepower.net), [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries)). These websites offer a variety of helps for couples, pastors, and mentor couples: a directory of United Methodists trained in a variety of marriage and family programs; schedules of upcoming events and training opportunities; “best practices” articles; and annotated lists of marriage ministry organizations, curriculum resources, books, and other publications recommended by United Methodists.

**Worldwide Marriage Encounter**, 2210 East Highland Avenue, #106, San Bernardino, CA 92404, 800-795-5683, [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org), (for Marriage Encounter United Methodist, see entry above and visit [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org) ) There are twelve faith expressions in Worldwide Marriage Encounter, which offers Christian weekend experiences for couples who want to enrich their marriages. A team of lay couples and a priest or a clergy-spouse couple make a series of presentations. Each presentation encourages participants to look at themselves as individuals, at their relationship with each other, and at their relationship with God, the church, and the world. Following each presentation, husband and wife have time in the privacy of their own room for personal sharing using the techniques taught during the weekend. There is no group discussion. Post-weekend experiences for nurturing ongoing growth are offered in many local areas. Call or visit the websites to learn about events scheduled for your area.

**Youth With a Mission Family Ministries International**, [www.ywam-fmi.org](http://www.ywam-fmi.org) This Biblically-based organization, active in Asia and Europe, works to evangelize and strengthen families. Through this organization, United Methodists Keith and Marilyn Hamilton, trained by Better Marriages, taught marriage enrichment and relationship education courses. They developed a program

titled Relationship Enrichment by Applying Preventive Principles (REAPP), based on the work of David and Vera Mace, incorporating Biblical principles and training in effective communication, the creative use of conflict, and a new model for understanding our sexuality. Although the Hamiltons are now deceased, couples they trained carry on this ministry in many different languages.

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