

MARRIAGE PREPARATION RESOURCES FOR PASTORS AND MENTOR COUPLES

Available through popular booksellers, unless otherwise indicated.

Those marked with [C] available through Cokesbury, (800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com).

See also “Premarital Inventories,” “Marriage Mentoring,” “Resources for Couples Preparing for Marriage,” “Resources for Couples Preparing for Second Marriages,” and other articles in the “Marriage Preparation” section of “Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources” at www.marriagelovepower.net – or search by title or topic at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries>

“**Best Practices in Marriage Preparation**” by Jane P. Ives, web-article formatted for download and distribution posted at www.marriagelovepower.net under “Marriage Preparation” in the “Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources” section or search by title or topic at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries>

Christian Weddings: Resources to Make Your Ceremony Unique, by Andy Langford (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995). Couples can personalize their wedding ceremony by selecting different liturgical elements from those offered in this book, representing more than twenty different denominational traditions around the world.

Counseling African American Marriages and Families, by Edward P. Wimberly (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1977). The author describes the cultural context which impacts the marriage and family life of African Americans, providing guidance for pastors to work effectively with them. He also provides insights and tools that can enhance a pastor’s work with persons of any ethnic heritage: the use of family systems theory; a narrative approach to theology and Scripture; and an emphasis on the love ethic as the cornerstone of marriage and family life.

Foundations Newsletter for Newly Married Couples, by Steve and Kathy Beirne (Portland, ME: S&K Publishers, www.facetsite.com/foundations/about.html). This Roman Catholic bimonthly newsletter addresses different marriage relationship topics in each issue. Bulk rates are available for pastors who wish to buy subscriptions for couples they have married.

Growing Love in Christian Marriage Pastor’s Manual, 3rd Edition, by Jane P. and S. Clifton Ives (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013). The Pastor’s Manual is a marriage preparation and comprehensive marriage and family ministry resource for pastors and other church leaders. In addition to guidelines for using the *Growing Love in Christian Marriage Couple’s Edition* and for pre-marital counseling, the Pastor’s Manual includes information for establishing a mentor couple ministry, for working with couples in groups, and for providing relationship education for all ages and stages of family life. An annotated list of resources includes organizations, programs, and curriculum materials that may be incorporated into local church and community ministries. Visit www.marriagelovepower.net for “Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources” document for many aspects of marriage and family ministries, along with a Directory of United Methodist Marriage and Family Ministry leaders and consultants, a Training Model for the use of *Growing Love in Christian Marriage*, and other helps. You can also find these at

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries> (search by title or topic). [C]

Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies: Samples and Sources, selected and with an introduction by Joan C. Hawxhurst (Kalamazoo, MI: Dovetail Publishing, 1966). The author discusses issues interfaith couples should consider when planning their wedding, then offers sample ceremonies, excerpts from other ceremonies, and a variety of helpful resources.

Marriage Counseling: A Christian Approach to Counseling Couples, by Everett L. Worthington, Jr. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1989). The author provides a Biblically-based theory of marriage and marriage therapy which draws on many secular theories of counseling and therapy, but integrates them into a Christian framework. He describes specific techniques for assessing a couple's relationship, for promoting change and growth, and for helping couples avoid slipping back into old patterns.

Mixed Matches: How to Create successful Interracial, Interethnic, and Interfaith Relationships, by Joel Crohn, Ph.D. (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1995). The author, drawing on years of counseling experience, shows couples in cross-cultural relationships how to approach each other compassionately and negotiate solutions to their cultural and religious differences. This book also offers practical advice on how couples can confront prejudice, deal with in-laws, and help their children develop a sense of identity in a bicultural family.

Dovetail Institute for Interfaith Family Resources, 775 Simon Greenwell Lane, Boston, KY 40107; 800-530-1596, www.dovetailinstitute.org, DI-IFR@Bardstown.com. Respecting the right and need of interfaith marriage partners to explore the spiritual and religious dimensions of an interfaith household, this organization provides such couples, their families and friends, and the professionals who serve them, with non-judgmental educational and networking resources and opportunities.

Opening the Door: A Pastor's Guide to Addressing Domestic Violence in Premarital Counseling, by Susan Yarrow Morris (Seattle: Faithtrust Institute, 2006). The author defines domestic violence as "...a pattern of behavior used by one partner in an intimate relationship to establish power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the use of or threat of violence." (p. 13). She provides a clear understanding of its dynamics and provides specific strategies, questions to ask, and information to share, not only in premarital counseling, but also in ongoing ministry and pastoral care, to prevent domestic violence and intervene when abuse is suspected.

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before - and After - You Marry, by Dr. Les Parrott III and Dr. Leslie Parrott (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995). The authors help couples explore their expectations of marriage; learn how to cultivate lasting love; assess the impact of their attitudes toward life; appreciate and adjust to gender differences; develop effective speaking and listening skills; resolve conflict creatively; and deepen the spiritual aspects of their relationship. See also *Workbook for Men* and *Workbook for Women*.

Saving Your Second Marriage Before It Starts: Nine Questions to Ask Before (and After) You Remarry, by Dr. Les Parrott III and Dr. Leslie Parrott (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001). The authors address expectations of marriage; how to cultivate lasting love; the impact of attitudes toward life; appreciation and adjustment to gender differences; effective speaking and listening skills; how to resolve conflict creatively; and ways to deepen the spiritual aspects of a marriage relationship. In addition, they help couples assess their readiness to remarry and provide tools for blending families. See also *Workbook for Men* and *Workbook for Women*.

The Marriage Preparation Course, www.themarriagecourseusa.org/ Using a format similar to the Alpha series, churches offer couples seven candlelit dinners, with a lively, often humorous video presentation at each, time to talk privately as a couple, and opportunity to practice new strategies to deepen their relationship. Alpha also offers “The Marriage Course,” “The Parenting Children Course,” and “The Parenting Teenagers Course.”

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