

Develop a Marriage Mentoring Ministry in Ten Easy Steps

Every church's marriage mentoring ministry could include three components:

1. Pre-marriage mentoring (Prepare) done by lay couples and/or a pastor and his wife. This is your starting point!
2. Marriage enrichment (Enrich) mentoring done by mature, experienced marriage mentor couples.
3. Professional Christian Counselors (on staff or locally) for couples who have needs that go beyond the scope of mentoring.

Selection and Training of Your Marriage Ministry Leaders (Getting Started)

1. Identify a mature lay couple with a strong marriage of 10+ years (Ministry Leaders) and/or pastoral staff member to lead the overall marriage ministry. See Chapter 1 of *The Solution for Marriages* for guidance.
2. Have the Ministry Leaders and a pastoral staff member get **trained and certified** in Prepare/Enrich (one day class). Local Prepare/Enrich training and certification opportunities can be found here. <http://www.thesolutionformarriages.com/mentoring-certificationprograms.html>
 - a. Prepare/Enrich is the couple assessment tool that will help you determine how to match up each of your mentor and mentee couples. It will also help your mentors pinpoint the areas where a couple needs their help, maximizing the use of the mentor's and mentee's time.
 - b. We recommend that two lead couples at each church be trained and certified in Prepare/Enrich to help assure marriage ministry continuity. Large or multi-site churches may want to certify additional couples centrally or for each site.
 - c. Use these ministry leaders to oversee and monitor the marriage mentoring program, train other mentors, assign couples to mentors, and provide guidance and encouragement to mentors.
3. Provide a copy of *The Solution for Marriages* to each marriage ministry leader as part of their training and preparation for leading this ministry.*

Selection and Training of Pre-Marriage Mentors (Years 1 & 2)

4. Select some lay marriage mentor couples with the spiritual, relational and emotional maturity required. See Chapter 1 of *The Solution for Marriages* for guidance.
 - a. Determine how many weddings your church performs each typical year. Train one mentor couple for every 2-4 weddings performed at your church each year.
5. Train each lay marriage mentor couple how to **interpret and use** the Prepare/Enrich Facilitator's Report.
 - b. Individual mentor couples working under the guidance of a Prepare/Enrich Certified mentor are not required to be certified.
 - c. If possible, assign Vitalized and Harmonious couples to your newer mentor couples. Use experienced mentors for Harmonious and Conventional mentee couple types.
6. Provide a copy of *The Solution for Marriages* to each marriage mentor couple as part of their initial training and to assist them in their ongoing development. Bulk discounts are also available. Contact us at <http://www.thesolutionformarriages.com/contact.html> *

Marriage Enrichment Mentoring (Years 2 and beyond)

7. As your marriage mentoring program gets established and your mentors develop their skills further, you are ready to consider expanding this ministry to include mentoring married couples who need additional help learning marriage skills and resolving relationship issues.
 - a. Married couples needing enrichment or conflict resolution help often require longer periods of time with mentors in order to address relationship problems that have become engrained in the marriage. Mentors doing enrichment work with couples should plan on at least twice as much time for each topic addressed vs. pre-marriage mentoring.

8. Incorporate other marriage enrichment resources (DVDs) into your program, such as The Art of Marriage, Love and Respect, etc.

Christian Marriage Counseling (Ongoing)

9. Identify professional Christian counselors in your area that are trained in marriage counseling and couple restoration.
 - a. Some sources for finding counselors based in the United States are:
 - i. <http://www.aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor>
 - ii. <http://christiantherapist.com/>
 - iii. http://referrals-loc.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/referrals_loc.cfg/php/loc/enduser/loc.php
 - b. Note that in order to limit your liability, it is important that the couple selects their own counselor.
 - c. If you have Christian Counselors in your church, they can also help with the training and development needs of your mentors.
 10. Assign Conflicted and Devitalized couples to professional counselors (or consider assigning them to pastors or mentor couples with extensive mentoring experience and exceptional relationship skills, if counselors are not available in your area).
 - a. Have experienced mentors train other mentors on topics where they have expertise.
 - b. If a couple's needs go beyond mentoring, only the services of a competent Christian Counselor should be used.
- * The authors of The Solution for Marriages can also provide training seminars on-site or remotely for your mentor leaders, pastoral staff and lay marriage mentors or you can purchase the training slides and instructor notes and do this training yourself. Details regarding training seminars and materials can be found at <http://www.thesolutionformarriages.com/mentoring-marriageskills.html>