

Department for Evangelisation



FAMILY LIFE DESK

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

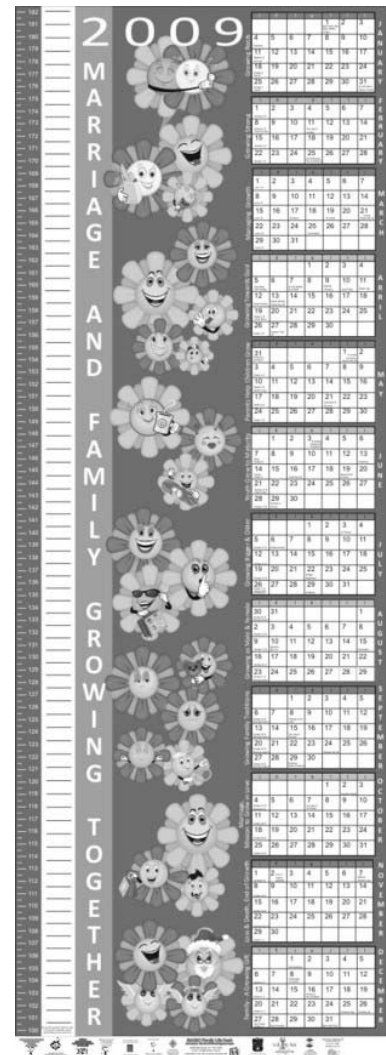
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# Marriage and Family Growing Together

A Programme of awareness-raising about  
Marriage and Family Life for use  
from 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2009 to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
(Cycle B liturgical weeks 21 to 27)  
leading up to a celebration of

# MARRIAGE DAY

On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009



# MARRIAGE AND FAMILY GROWING TOGETHER

## What is it all about?

### IDEAS TO HELP PREPARE & CELEBRATE

From 23<sup>rd</sup> August to Marriage Day on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009

#### A call from the bishops of Africa

In preparing for the African Synod the bishops of Africa already recognised the suitability of using the readings of cycle B weeks 21 to 27, (23<sup>rd</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009) as a reflection on marriage. In the final synod document the bishops speak to us:

*“A major challenge emphasized almost unanimously by the Episcopal conferences of Africa concerned Christian marriage and family life. What is at stake is extremely serious, “truly the future of the world and of the Church passes through the family”. Ecclesia in Africa (50)*

*The mutual love of baptised spouses makes present the love of Christ for his Church. As a sign of this love of Christ marriage is a Sacrament of the new covenant. Spouses are therefore the permanent reminder to the Church of what happened on the cross; they are for one another and for the children witnesses to the salvation in which the Sacrament makes them sharers. Of this salvation event marriage, like every sacrament is a memorial, actuation and prophecy. Marriage is therefore a state of life, a way of Christian holiness, a vocation which is meant to lead to the glorious resurrection and to the kingdom. Marriage demands an indissoluble love; thanks to this stability it can contribute effectively to the complete fulfilment of the spouses' baptismal vocation. (83)*

## CONTENTS AND COMMENTS

ALTHOUGH not always the reality we Catholics believe that marriage is part of God's plan for humankind. We believe that a fulfilling marriage is the ideal foundation for family life and the most valuable place for children to be borne and brought up. But marriage is a challenge. If we had a deep understanding of what the words, “I take you to be my husband; I take you to be my wife,” really meant would we have the courage to make that commitment? On the other hand, if we understood God's plan and desire for the love of a couple to embody the love of Jesus, could we want otherwise?

Many couples go into marriage with star-studded blinkers which fall off all too soon. After only a few years they will have experienced a whole range of ups and downs, joys and miseries together with moments of unity. Many will sadly have given up. It is vital that couples continually re-examine their words of commitment in the context of their present relationship and modify their behaviour as necessary.

It is also necessary that the Church as a whole takes a look at the role and the place of its couples and of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The readings over this focus period provide a wonderful growth opportunity :

- for married couples to reflect and share what their "I do" means to them. This could be treated as a couple retreat.

- For the Church in different ways to focus on the place of the Sacrament of Matrimony in Church life by offering preparation and validation and by celebrating with and for its couples. The sacraments of Matrimony and Orders could be linked during this Year of the Priest.
- For evangelisation of the whole community, to promote this vocation and way of life especially to the young. Marriage should not be seen separately from family life but its ideal foundation.
- For supporting those who are struggling, or have not succeeded and suffered and help to promote their healing.

This resource pack is designed to help you and your local Church get the maximum benefit out of this time to help couples and families to grow together. Although some of the material has been designed to link with the readings of weeks 21 – 27 of Year B parts of it can be used at any time.

## CONTENTS

- Cover page poster *can be used as a publicity poster. A colour version is available.*
- 2009 Family life theme “Marriage and Family, Growing Together.” What is it all about? *Background and suggestions for the parish have been circulated throughout the year and can be downloaded from the website [www.marfam.org.za](http://www.marfam.org.za). All the materials can be*

*photocopied for use in the parish and by different groups, e.g. liturgy or catechetics.*

- Liturgy Suggestions for a Reconciliation Service for Couples beforehand and for Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Renewal of Marriage Vows, Bidding Prayers a Marriage Blessing and Family Commitment prayer and blessing for Marriage Day.
- Adult Ongoing Spiritual Formation – *material for reflection and sharing from Vatican II for youth and adult catechesis e.g. RCIA .*
- Marriage Catechesis - *lesson materials for children and youth.*
- Celebrating Marriage - faith sharing handouts for small Christian communities & couples, available in English, Afrikaans and various vernacular languages. *The pages can be reduced to 71% and made into an A4 leaflet.*
- Information leaflet on movements and organisations offering marriage and family support.
- *Marriage and Family Living Magazine, sample copy of this magazine with articles on contemporary marriage issues. See order form.*

## **IDEAS TO HELP PREPARE & CELEBRATE**

**THE WHOLE PROGRAMME** should be planned with the priest and Pastoral Council and include Parish Family teams and other parish groups e.g. liturgy, catechetics, youth, sodalities and schools. Also include laity, particularly couples.

**RESOURCES** are provided for various needs and groups and can be photocopied freely. However parishes can be creative and develop their own suitable material or celebrate at another suitable time.

Put up posters in good time and use the Pastoral Council and other avenues to **PUBLICISE** the project.

Remember that there are a range of needs around the **SPIRITUALITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY**: the married - including those in mixed marriages, also those preparing, those struggling, separated, widowed and divorced individuals. Remind families that remote and proximate preparation happens at home.

Provide opportunities for **MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT** such as a parish retreat. Give out

dates and information about local resources and programmes.

**ENCOURAGE ALL PARISH GROUPS**, including catechetics, children's liturgy, pre- and post-confirmation and youth groups, RCIA, adult formation, sodalities, women's and family groups to focus on marriage in relevant ways at some time during this period, e.g. day of recollection, couple event.

**ENCOURAGE COUPLES TO SEEK HELP WHERE NECESSARY** and provide information about specialist local resources for marriage counselling, problems with children and issues that impact on the couple relationships such as alcoholism, gambling.. See also leaflet of family movements.

In the case of **TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES** or where couples are married in court an invitation could be extended for these couples to enter into a sacramental marriage. Provide preparation sessions and invite an exchange of vows on Marriage Day.

**INVITE YOUTH**, young adults and those who are co-habiting to reflect on their views of marriage and their own situation.

**SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS.** Find out who is celebrating special anniversaries and who is the oldest and/or newest married couple and invite them to be involved in a special way in the celebration. Pray for those preparing for marriage.

**SCHOOLS** - Make use of the catechetical resources included. Offer material to teachers and parents who may not receive it in the parish.

### **HOMILY NOTES for weeks 21 – 27** **see also “Celebrating Marriage” leaflet**

Bring into the open the passage from Ephesians 5, the reading for 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday, of the “deep secret truth revealed in this Scripture,” that the relationship between husband and wife mirrors that of Jesus and the Church. Paul compares the love and sacrifice in marriage to the love of Jesus for the Church, even to the point of giving up his life. Readings from the letter of James and Mark during these weeks also help in the reflection on life in the domestic church.

If the Kingdom is to be credible those who belong to it have to be witnesses even in the face of opposition.

Homilies on different Sundays could be addressed to couples and also to others about the place and role of marriage in the Church. e.g. the young, the consecrated religious, the elderly, the hurting, even widowed and divorced. Marriage and Orders can be linked in this Year of the Priest.

# LITURGY SUGGESTIONS

**THIS IS A TIME OF FORMATION AND CELEBRATION** for the whole community *about* the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Church. While it is important to be sensitive to those who have been hurt this should not prevent us from rejoicing over the gift of this sacrament.

Involve couples in preparing the liturgies and wherever possible in the celebration. They can be invited to respond to the readings as part of the homily. The homily and bidding prayers on different Sundays can be focused on various aspects of marriage. In that way young and old, married, single, widowed and divorced will experience a sense of belonging and sense of responsibility for the married couples in the community.

Invite couples to Mass together, particularly on Marriage Day. Be conscious of those whose spouses are not able to be present. Welcome spouses belonging to other denominations. Both partners could come forward for Communion with one receiving Communion and the other a blessing.

Special touches can be introduced in a way most suitable for the particular community. For example welcoming the oldest married couple, greeting cards, flowers, couples participating in readings and offertory procession, a lighting of a unity candle etc. Invite all families to pray a Family Commitment Prayer and give families a special blessing.

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## RECONCILIATION FOR COUPLES

It is appropriate that during this time if couples have spent time reflecting on their relationship and their vocation that they have an opportunity to experience reconciliation with God and with each other. A service could be held in the parish with confession, or in the home or small groups with the possibility of confession later for those who are Catholic. Individuals can also use parts of this ceremony for themselves.

Begin with a simple **Greeting and Opening Prayer.**

The Sunday readings of the time, particularly of 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday can be used for the **Liturgy of the Word.**

An **Examination of Conscience** can be carried out reflecting on the words of Jesus *Love one another, as I have loved you. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.*” John 15.

- ? Have I nurtured my relationship with God, as an individual and our couple relationship with God through prayer, reflection and sharing?
- ? Do I have a genuine love and acceptance of myself, valuing my strengths and working on my weaknesses for the sake of our marriage relationship?
- ? Do I have a genuine love and acceptance of my partner, valuing his/her strengths and accepting the imperfections?
- ? In good times have I valued and been thankful for the joy we have experienced?
- ? In hard times have I been committed to restoring the joy that is Jesus’ wish for us?
- ? As a couple do we bear witness to the sacredness of our marriage vocation and the stability of our society through our faithfulness to one another, God and the Church? What part have I played in this?

### Act of Contrition & Forgiveness –

Spouses can make a personal act of sorrow asking God for forgiveness for failing to love as Jesus commanded. They can then be invited to turn to one another and ask for and grant each other forgiveness for the hurts and failure to love.

Together they can thank God and recommit themselves to improving their relationship.

In a parish setting the priest can pray over them, or they can pray as couples. Individual confession can follow.

### Concluding prayer

May the peace of Christ live always in your/our hearts and in your/our homes.

May you/we find the joy that Jesus promised in your/our relationship.

May the grace of God sustain you/us through good and bad times. May almighty God bless you/us with many happy years together and eventual reunion with him in his eternal home.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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## **RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES AND MARRIAGE VOWS**

Those who will renew their marriage vows today and we who are here to witness, do so as an act of faith and as part of the Christian community, so let us first renew our baptismal act of faith.

Do you believe in God, the Father, who gives us the gift of life?  
*We do believe.*

Do you believe in his beloved son, Jesus Christ who so loved the Church that he gave his life for the salvation of all?  
*We do believe.*

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who guides us in witnessing to Christ's relationship with the Church in our own lives?  
*We do believe.*

Dear married couples I invite you now to renew your own commitment to one another.  
*I, N..... renew the gift of myself to you, N..... which I first made when Christ our Lord bound us together on our wedding day.*

*I reaffirm my loving commitment to you, my total love, my absolute fidelity and my undying loyalty, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, all the days of our life.*

*I ask your forgiveness for any want of love, for any selfishness or hurt, for any failure or disappointment that I may have caused you in the past and I promise for the future to give myself in love both to you and our children, trusting in the grace and strength of Christ, our lord, who lives with us in our home.*

What God joins together we are not to separate. Lord, confirm the covenant of love that these husbands and wives have renewed with each other before you and before your people. Enrich them with your blessings and continue to help them to remain faithful to their vow of love forever. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

The intercessions on the different Sundays may include the following:

- For our Holy Father, the pope, the bishops and clergy everywhere, that they may always guide us to grow in our love for God and for one another.
- For the leaders of our country, that they may value the gift of marriage and family life, that they may listen to the needs of families and enable them to lead richer, fuller lives.

- For our parish community, that all who come here will feel welcome and find a home with us.
- For our married couples, that they may be faithful to their vows and that their love for one another will grow stronger each day.
- For those preparing for marriage or who someday will be married, that they may use this time to explore more deeply the meaning of love and lifelong commitment in their lives.
- For those who are in troubled marriages, those who have given up or been abandoned and those who have lost a spouse, that they may experience the healing presence of Jesus in their lives.
- For all the members of the families in our community, present or absent, the old and the young, children and parents, that their experience of love and belonging will help them to overcome the problems they face in their family lives.
- For the sick and dying of our parish family and all those who care for them, that they may experience God's love for them in this ministry.
- For a greater respect for the dignity of marriage and family life in Church and society.
- For the special intentions of those here present....

Father you have given us the witness of the love of married couples to teach us how much you love us and how we should love one another. You have given us our families to create a home for us where we can learn to love one another as you love us. We ask you to listen to our prayers and help us to respond to your grace so that we may grow closer to you and to one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

## **MARRIAGE BLESSING**

Almighty, eternal God, you have raised the unbreakable bond of marriage to become the sacramental sign of your Son's union with the Church, his spouse. Look with favour on these couples whom you have united in marriage as they ask for your help and the protection of the Virgin Mary. They pray that in good times and in bad they will grow in love for each other, that they will resolve to be of one heart in the bond of peace. Lord in their struggles let them rejoice that you are near to help them; in their needs let them know that you are there to rescue them; in their joys let them see that you are the source of every happiness. And May Almighty God bless you....

## FAMILY COMMITMENT PRAYER AND BLESSING

God in heaven, on this day we gather before you as family people, as husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters in a human family and in the family of God.

We thank you for the gift of family life and the opportunity to grow in our relationship with each other and with You. Each family home is a little church, a sacred place, where you are present in the ordinary events of our every day lives.

It is there that we learn...  
 to care and to share with young and old,  
 to love and to belong to You and to each other,  
 to forgive and forget the hurts we cause,  
 to welcome all who enter our home,  
 to remember the words of Jesus, Your Son,  
 that where two or three are gathered together in His name, God is there.

Today we recommit ourselves in our families  
 to pray with and for each other,  
 to share actively in our family life,  
 to celebrate the special rituals in our family,  
 to forgive and be reconciled,  
 to show the respect to each other that we show to You  
 because that is what being a family means.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family we ask for your continued blessing and presence in our home, now and every day.

**BLESSING**

May the Holy Family strengthen you in building up your families. Amen  
 May the Holy Family reconcile any broken relationships in your families. Amen  
 May the Holy Family give you the courage and commitment to make your home like the home in Nazareth where the child Jesus was obedient to Joseph and Mary in whose care his Father had placed him. Amen  
 May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
 Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another. Thanks be to God.

## ORDER FORM FOR MATERIALS

Post, fax or email to MARFAM. P.O.Box 2881, Randburg, 2125 tel/f 011 789 5449 e: info@marfam.org.za

NAME/PARISH: .....  
 ADDRESS .....  
 .....  
 TEL..... EMAIL .....

<b>MARRIAGE PROJECT MATERIALS</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>quantity</b>	<b>price</b>
Marriage Pack, complete with handouts, magazine and calendar poster	@R15,00	.....	.....
Marriage Pack, handouts only	@R10,00	.....	.....
Individual handouts 50c per side		.....	.....
<b>MARFAM materials for marriage and family programme</b>			
Marriage and the Paschal Mystery	R10,00	.....	.....
Becoming Married	R10,00	.....	.....
Becoming Married together with faith sharing leaflet	R15,00	.....	.....
One Faith two Religions	R10,00	.....	.....
AIDS strikes at the heart	R10,00	.....	.....
Becoming Widowed (Redemptorist)	R15,00	.....	.....
Marriage and Family Living QUARTERLY Magazine	R8,00	.....	.....
2009 calendars (current year, to use as posters)	R1,00	.....	.....
Every Child a New Smile, English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sotho	R10,00	.....	.....
Subscription for 2010 (No 4 issue of magazine supplied free)	R130	.....	.....
<b>Total</b>		.....	.....
<b>Postage</b>		.....	.....

**TOTAL:** .....

# MARRIAGE CATECHESIS

Just as the sacraments of initiation are taught in catechesis so should the sacraments of life (Matrimony and Holy Orders) be dealt with at different levels as appropriate. The liturgy in the 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Year B lends itself to focusing on marriage and so those using lectionary-based catechesis can use this opportunity too.

A few lessons are offered here but creative teachers can develop the themes further, using role-plays, dramas, discussion on TV soaps or current movies. Marriage is spiritual and moral and both of these aspects should be included. Classes could study the Marriage rite, do a project on the Church's statement on marriage from Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes* 47-52.

They can interview parents, newly-married or elderly couples to find what makes a marriage tick. Sexuality, family planning and HIV/AIDS can be considered from the perspective of a future marriage. Abstinence education makes little sense otherwise. Marriage breakdown, divorce and annulment can be discussed with older groups, but the life-skill aspect of building healthy relationships is necessary from very young.

Couples from the community that could be considered good mentors can be invited to share their story. There are many marriage movements in the Church and these groups can be invited to give a presentation. Marfam's publications on marriage and the sexuality lessons can be used for different age groups. Marriage counsellors could talk about their work.

In addition to the scripture passages of the time, the story of the wedding feast at Cana in John 2 can be used. In the Old Testament the relationship between God and the people is often described in terms of a marriage relationship.

**Included are three Marriage Lessons for children from pre-school to approximately grade 7. They can be used by catechists, educators or children's liturgy presenters and should be adapted according to the needs of the different age groups.**

**Lesson 2 is suitable for 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Year B. Lesson 3 is suitable for 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B.**

**A session for youth and one for adult formation are also provided.**



## LESSON 1 - MARRIAGE IS A VOCATION

(for grades 4-7 - adapted from People of God)

### AIMS:

#### What do I hope to achieve?

To help the children to understand that:

1. God calls everyone, from baptism through confirmation into adulthood, to follow Jesus through a particular way of life.
2. Married people have a calling or vocation to become united in a special way.

#### Why?

To help the children value marriage as a possible future vocation.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

**Life experience :** Choose an activity that illustrates different careers, e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, labourers, priest and married people. Children could bring pictures or do role plays or consider their own future dreams.

Discuss why people do what they do? Explore the idea of a sense of calling. What it is, where it comes from, how it effects our lives.

Invite the children to talk about their experience of marriage (their parents and others) and introduce the idea that it is also a calling. Discuss the different ways that married people contribute to life.

**Scripture/church teaching:** Use the Catechism of the Catholic Church or *Gaudium et Spes* and

through discussion and sharing bring out the following:

- In baptism we are all called to follow Jesus and his way of life. We become a child of God.
- In confirmation we choose for ourselves.
- When we grow up God again calls us to live in his way of service to others. Some are called as priests, or sisters or brothers and others as married or single people.
- Marriage is a call from God to serve another person, to love that person as Jesus loves them, to have children, to build up a family and so build up the Kingdom.
- Like all callings marriage is not an easy life (as many of the children will have seen) and our parents and other married couples need to work, pray, play, forgive, etc.
- God is present with them and gives them the help they need through their sacrament and through their life together.
- As children they are already preparing for a future way of life – marriage or not. Discuss with them how they are preparing for the future.

### Response

Pray for all married people, that they may live out their calling according to God's plan.

Pray for those with problems, those who are divorced and not able to live up to their calling, those who are widowed.

Invite the children to make a resolution to begin to prepare well for this possible future.

## LESSON 2. HUSBAND & WIFE -

### JESUS & THE CHURCH

(based on Ephesians 5:21 – 32 the reading for 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Year B)



#### AIMS:

##### What do I hope to achieve?

To help the children to understand:

1. The importance of marriage for the Church.
2. To teach how husbands and wives should treat each other as equals and with the kind of care and

respect that Jesus has for the Church, i.e. for us all.

#### Why?

To help them develop a positive attitude towards marriage and its importance in the Church.

**Note:** Be sensitive to the fact that the children may not have a good experience of what marriage should be like.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

##### Life Experience

Choose an activity that illustrates how husbands and wives do or should treat one another, starting from their wedding day.

Use pictures or posters of weddings, ask children to bring wedding photos, or have role plays.

Let them discuss why people marry and reflect on the reality of the life situations around them.

##### Scripture/church teaching

- St Paul says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” He writes that couples should love each other and treat each other as Jesus loves and treats us, the Church.
- Couples marry because they love each other and want to spend their whole life together. They make that commitment on their wedding day when they receive the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- Husbands and wives should treat one another as equals, with respect and consideration.  
This is not always easy and they need to be prepared to make sacrifices just as Jesus did, giving his life for us.
- Jesus was perfect and we as human beings are not always able to do what he did, but that is what God wants us to try our best to do.

##### Response

Pray that God will help all married couples to be happy together and follow Jesus’ example.

Make a collage of pictures, or draw a picture showing Jesus and the Church and a married couple. Take the message home.

## LESSON 3. MARRIAGE & FAMILY

### IN GOD’S PLAN

(based on Genesis 2 the reading for 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B)

#### AIMS:

##### What do I hope to achieve?

To help the children understand that God created marriage for the good of the couple and for their children.

##### Why?

To help them appreciate the value of marriage and family life as God’s plan for human living.

**Note:** Be sensitive to the reality of the children’s life experience.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

##### Life experience

Choose an activity that illustrates the ideal of a happy family made up of a couple at home together with their children. Use pictures, posters, TV adverts, discussion, role plays.

Also reflect on the reality of their own life situations.

##### Scripture / church teaching

Read, tell or have the children dramatise the story of God looking for a suitable companion for the man he had created. The woman is the best companion because she is like man and made to be his equal.

Bring out the following points, from Genesis 1:

- God created.
- God created man and woman to be happy together and through their love to bring children into the world. This is not always the way things happen but God asks us to do our best to live according to his plan.

##### Response

Pray for all married people that they will live according to God’s plan for themselves and their children.

Draw or colour pictures, make a collage and take it home to share with the family.



# MARRIAGE AND YOU - Calling and Sign of God's love in the world

For teen catechetics or youth groups adapted from  
*Matrimony – Jesus Invites Us To Love – Fr C Gallagher*

## AIMS:

### What do I want to achieve?

- To promote a positive view of marriage.
- To help them understand the nature of the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- To invite the young people to look ahead at the time when they will choose a vocation in life.

### Why?

Marriage is important for them in future and also for the life of the Church.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES.

### Life experience

Questionnaire – complete, share and discuss.

Assign a value to each statement. Do you think it is most true / important (5) or least true / important (1) about marriage.

a commitment	1	2	3	4	5
A good friendship	1	2	3	4	5
my parents	1	2	3	4	5
a sign of God's love	1	2	3	4	5
sharing	1	2	3	4	5
the best place for sex	1	2	3	4	5
unrealistic today	1	2	3	4	5
100% give and take	1	2	3	4	5
romance	1	2	3	4	5
a 50 – 50 deal	1	2	3	4	5
not for me	1	2	3	4	5
only if you want kids	1	2	3	4	5
faithfulness	1	2	3	4	5
the best way to live	1	2	3	4	5
A way to holiness	1	2	3	4	5
losing your freedom	1	2	3	4	5

Have a panel discussion or debate on this, view and discuss soapies, videos or movies, make a collage of marriage scenes from magazine articles. Invite an inspiring married couple to share their own story mentioning the ups and downs, how they handle difficulties, God's place in their marriage and what special qualities they see in each other that make their marriage work.

### Scripture / Church teaching

Present as appropriate:

John 15: 11–17, Ephesians 5:21–32. Genesis 2: 18-25 and passages from *Gaudium et Spes* 47–52 or from Catechism of the Catholic Church.

### God's plan for marriage.

Share and elaborate on the following as suitable.

Chances are that God has marriage in mind for you. We have all seen many kinds of marriages; some that are happy and others that may not be, or have broken down. That is not God's plan. He wants every marriage to be a relationship filled with love. He wants every couple to experience unity and joy.

What every teenager looks for in a relationship is understanding, closeness and intimacy, an experience of being loved and of loving someone. While meeting these needs in different ways is important and a necessary part of personal growth and development they can only ever be fully met in a permanent, faithful, fully committed relationship of a man and a woman in marriage. Teenage years are a time of preparation for this and it happens by practising relationship-building skills. But it is important to remember that the degree of intimacy in a relationship should be related to the degree of commitment; total intimacy with total commitment. Teenagers are constantly under pressure from each other and may be hurt by premature decisions. Marriage is a calling, a way of life, a vocation. And even more. It is a life-giving sign, a sacrament, through which Jesus' peace and joy flow into the lives of a couple. In God's plan a husband and wife grow closer to God as they grow closer to each other. Marriage is not a private affair. Children are one of the key signs of the openness and love a couple share. It is said that "the best thing a husband and wife can do for their children is to love each other."

Couples who show they are really open and loving influence others to be the same. They show an example of what Jesus means when he said, "Love one another as I have loved you."

The whole Church community has a stake in marriage, that of every couple, but also in your future marriage. Marriage is the ideal basis for family life and as Pope John Paul II often says, "As goes the family so goes the Church and the world." The happiness of the marriage you may have someday depends greatly on how much of a loving person you are becoming now. The care, concern, honesty and trust that you are putting into your present relationships will greatly influence your future marriage.

### Response: Ask yourself:

Am I becoming a caring, loving, forgiving, marriageable person? Would I want to be married to me? Pray for the person you may one day marry and for all marriages. Make a scrapbook or collage.

# ADULT ONGOING SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## Marriage and Family, a Tower of Strength

From the document THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD (*Gaudium et Spes*)  
The holiness of marriage and family life GS 48 – 50

“48. The intimate partnership of married life and love established by the Creator and endowed with his laws is based on an act of personal consent and mutual self-giving that is permanent.

This bond does not depend on human whims;  
It is sacred

For the good of the husband and wife,  
For the good of children,  
For the good of society.

Marriage by its very nature, is intended for and reaches its crowning achievement in the procreation and bringing up of children.

Man and woman, who by the marriage bond are ‘no longer two but one’ (Matthew 19:6) help and support each other in an intimate union of their personal being and actions.

Day by day they experience the meaning of their oneness and achieve it more fully.

This mutual self-giving as well as the good of the children calls for complete faithfulness and a union that is unbreakable.

Christ blessed this love which springs from God and is like his union with the church.

Just as God encountered his people in a covenant of love and faithfulness (cf Ezekiel 16) now Christ comes into the lives of married Christians through the Sacrament of marriage.

He remains with them, so that just as he loved the Church and gave himself up for her, (cf Ephesians 5:25) the married partners by their mutual gift may love each other with lasting faithfulness.

Married love is caught up into divine love, enriched by Christ’s redeeming power and the Church’s saving activity, thus leading the married partners to God and helping them in their role of father and mother.

Consecrated and strengthened by a special sacrament Christian married people carry out their duties in its power.

Filled with the spirit of Christ they grow in holiness and give glory to God together.

Through their parents’ example and family prayer children will more easily find the path to holiness. Parents should carry out responsibly the task of education that is primarily theirs, especially religious education.

Children in their own way help to make their parents holy.

They should respond with love and trust to the kindness they have received and should support their parents in times of hardship or in the loneliness of old age.”

.....  
*This first part of chapter 1 of Part II of the Vatican II document is entitled “Some Urgent Problems.” It goes on to address other aspects e.g. widowhood, the love of husband and wife, the fruitfulness of marriage and respect for human life.*

*Section 52, the final section of the chapter states that everyone must further the good of marriage and the family. This includes the active presence of the father, their mother’s care, a sound education, support from civil authorities and from the Church, especially to young couples.*

*It concludes:*

*Finally may those who are married be united in mind and heart and mutual holiness so that following Christ in the joys and sacrifices of their calling, they may become witnesses to that mystery of love which our Lord revealed to the world by his death and resurrection. (cf Eph 5)*

### FOR REFLECTION, SHARING AND DISCUSSION:

#### FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING:

Although presented to the Church at the end of Vatican II, this “blueprint” for married life, this theology of marriage, is still fairly new to many. Which parts of this passage are most challenging to you?  
Which parts are most encouraging?

#### FOR DISCUSSION:

In what practical ways can couples be helped to live out their calling more fully in today’s world?  
How can this Good News be presented to youth?  
For further study read the rest of the chapter and the scripture passages to which reference is made.



### **CELEBRATING MARRIAGE - sharing a life together**

A series of reflections, sharing questions and suggested action based on the liturgical readings of Cycle B - 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Sundays (23<sup>rd</sup> August – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009) (*photocopy and reduce to fit on 1 double-sided page*)

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a foundation sacrament of the Church. As sacrament means sign, the way couples live out their sacrament is a sign to one another and to the whole community. It is a sign of the presence and love of God. It is therefore important for those who are married and also for the whole community.

These short reflections are intended first of all for couples and can be used too by those preparing for marriage. Individuals and groups, such as prayer groups or faith sharing groups can use them or incorporate them into other meetings to help them to understand and value the role that marriage plays in the Church and in building the Kingdom of God in the world.

Faith sharing groups have been promoted in the Church for a number of years but reflecting and sharing as a couple may be new to many and may feel strange at first. There are also many couples where one spouse is Catholic and the other worships in another faith community. The reflections are for all couples, those married a short while or fifty years, those who are happy and those who are struggling, because for all couples their marriage is the way to holiness. *VII Gaudium et Spes*

The approach used here is to invite some reflection and sharing on life experience, then consider what God could be saying through the readings and finally to consider what action could be taken for the sake of the particular marriage or the needs of married couples in the Church and society.

We extend a special invitation to couples to agree to this time of reflection and renewal. Put aside some time each week and begin or end this with Couple Prayer. Make a decision to trust each other and be open in sharing honestly, accepting each other as different and unique, with the positive and negative feelings experienced as a normal part of who we are.

The invitation is extended to others, individuals or groups to support couples in living out their special Sacrament for the benefit of us all.

### **WEEK 1. (21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Year B)**

Theme: Husband and Wife are like Jesus and the Church.

**THE WORD OF GOD.** *Eph 5:21-32, John 6:60-69*

**REFLECTION:** In the last century much has changed in the roles of men and women, within their marriage and in all aspects of life. Women's liberation has given women far greater freedom, but has also had a great impact on the men. There are probably no right or wrong arrangements and each couple has to resolve this balance for themselves. Who is the boss in your home? How comfortable are you both with the situation?

The Ephesians reading is quite wellknown and quite controversial. Different translations also use different wording. When the passage starts at verse 22 with "wives submit to your husbands..." there may be a negative response but when it starts with verse 21 - as it should - "Give way to one another in obedience to Christ..." the affect is very different. It seems to relieve some of that tension and opens us up to a deeper understanding. The model for Christian marriage is the model of the relationship between Christ and the Church, not a negative one of subjection but a positive one of total commitment and self-giving. That is the essential message that couples and also those preparing for marriage should consider when they say "I do" not just on their wedding day but in their daily lives.

Today's gospel also highlights that marriage is not just a secular contract but a very spiritual sacramental experience.

Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups

What does (my) marriage in the Catholic Church really mean to me?

How can I support married couples for the good of the Church and society?

As a married couple what contribution are we making to Church life? Are we acting responsibly, to one another, our children and the community?

Conclude with a moment of prayer

## **WEEK 2. ( 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: A Call to Action to Build Strong Marriages.

**THE WORD OF GOD.** James 1:17-18, 22, 27. Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

**REFLECTION:** Sometimes the only indication that someone is married is that they wear a wedding ring. Does the fact that I am a married person have an effect on the way I live my daily life? Do I just pay lip-service to being married or do I really value the relationship and am I constantly aware of my rights, responsibilities and privileges?

Do we as community recognise the rights, responsibilities and privileges of couples or do we treat people as individuals? James appears to have been a very practical man and his letter is full of sound advice. The readings both from James and the gospel point out that paying lip-service only, listening to the word without acting on it is insufficient for salvation. Action means bringing the word to bear on our own marriages and families in whatever ways possible, also not purely concentrating on a private prayer life. Action involves supporting marriage as a way of life.

Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups

How specifically can I put the call to action into practice for the sake of (my) marriage this week?

What help do I need to achieve this?

Conclude with a moment of prayer.

## **WEEK 3. (23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: Value and affirm the good.

**THE WORD OF GOD.** Is. 35:4-7a. Jas 2:1-5. Mark 7: 31-37

**REFLECTION:** Each of us has talents, things we do really well. Sometimes through shyness or false modesty we are aware of them but afraid to acknowledge them to ourselves and each other. What are the talents you and your partner have?

As community what beauty do you see in married couples?

The theme for the day is “The Lord who does all things well.” God restores sight, hearing, speech and in response these are gifts that need to be used in giving glory back to God. The well-known image of the three monkeys see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil could well be reinterpreted as see the good, hear the good, speak the good.

Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups

How well do I use my eyes, ears and tongue in seeing the good in my spouse, listening lovingly and affirming him or her? How willing am I to acknowledge my own gifts within our marriage? Share on these special qualities with each other and take some time out together to show that appreciation of each other.

For others in the community

Share on some of the good you see in the marriages of those around you. Consider ways to affirm and encourage couples in their marriage, sharing how valuable their relationship is for others.

Conclude with a moment of prayer

## **WEEK 4. (24<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: Carrying one's cross is unconditional love

**WORD OF GOD.** *Is. 50:5-9a. Mk 8:27-35, Triumph of the Cross. Phil 2:6-11. John 3: 13-17.*

Every individual, couple and family has their cross to bear. It may be a personal weakness, a disability or something in the other person. It may be big or seem insignificant but even small crosses become heavy to bear. Crosses also change with time as we outgrow some situations and other difficulties arise. Like our good qualities we sometimes find it hard to acknowledge the cross we carry. Both sets of reading speak of the cross. Jesus as the Son of Man took up the cross as a sign of weakness but the cross has triumphed over all adversity. Isaiah's reading from the Suffering Servant makes very explicit what taking up the cross can involve.

Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups

Share lovingly what your particular cross is at this time, how you are coping with carrying it and what your feelings about this are. The intention is to share this and focus on the communication rather than put pressure on the spouse to do something about it. Change may come with deeper understanding.

For others in the community. Discuss the crosses that are common in marriages and pray for all couples for the strength to continue on the journey.

Conclude with a moment of prayer.

## **WEEK 5. (25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: Peace begins in the Home. **THE WORD OF GOD.** *Jas 3:16 - 4:3. Mk 9: 30 - 37*

**REFLECTION:** Jealousy and ambition are constant challenges in marriage. The statement "I want, and I want it all, and I want it now" is well-known and has almost become a norm. James tells us "wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace." Jealousy may manifest itself first as a feeling of rejection, a natural reaction to a situation and feelings are not good or bad, right or wrong. The action that results from that feeling, resentment acted out, recriminations, judgements or criticisms become wrong and harmful to the relationship. Feelings are not always easy to share. For there to be true peace in the home, a sense of tranquility and contentment rather than just an absence of conflict, it is important that couples and families learn to share their feelings and accept each other's feelings.

Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups

Peace is something active not a passive non-action. To build peace understanding and acceptance is required. As a gift to yourselves take time each day to share the strongest feeling you have experienced. Listen carefully and remember to thank each other for this gift. Then share how you have been able to build peace in the home.

For others. Consider what you can do to facilitate communication between couples and pray particularly for peace and joy in their marriages.

Conclude with a moment of prayer.

## **WEEK 6. (26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: Taking stock. Are we being a good example? **THE WORD OF GOD.** *Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48.*

**REFLECTION:** As a married couple do we give a good example of the reality of married life, with its ups and downs, to our children? Children will see us fight, but do they also see us make up? Do they see us expressing genuine love, and going out of our way to be nice to each other?

In Mark's gospel today Jesus condemns in the strongest terms those who give scandal to "these little ones." He paints a graphic picture saying such a person should be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck, have limbs cut off and thrown into the fire.

As couples prepare now for the celebration at the end of this time of reflection they are called on to consider how important their influence is on their children; how important their role modelling is for their children's future. At the same time consider that it is not the fear of punishment but the love we have that enables us to minister to each other in the family. This is a good time for a genuine examination of conscience, a desire for repentance and reconciliation and making a new start in marriage.

**Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups**

During this week reflect on and share as spouses and with others in the family how you have failed in being the example you would have liked to be. Ask for and grant forgiveness to each other and so allow healing to begin. If possible participate in a parish Reconciliation service. Consider if some special action or help is needed.

- for others and the wider community. This could be a time to consider how well this important sacrament of the Church has been supported and treated with the reverence it deserves. What action could be taken?

Conclude with a moment of prayer

**MARRIAGE DAY. (27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B)**

Theme: God created them male and female to become one.

**THE WORD OF GOD.** *Gen 2: 18-24. Mk 10:2-16*

**REFLECTION:** At the end of this time of reflection, preparation and reconciliation it is good to celebrate the special and unique gift that marriage is for couples and for the Church.

Both the first reading and the gospel speak of man and woman being created male and female and called to become one body. Marriage is a sexual sacrament, celebrating most deeply and most uniquely God's gift of sexuality. Through their sexual expression the spouses are the sacramental sign of Jesus to each other and the world. This is true as they celebrate their own relationship and in their co-creation with God of children as the fruit of their love. While all people are created male or female and sexuality is common to all, the ultimate expression of sex makes marriage essentially different from every other human relationship.

**Questions for SHARING AND ACTION - for couples, individuals or groups**

Reflect on and share what the words, "This is my body, given for you" mean to you in this context of marriage. For couples the words describe the gift from Jesus and from your spouse. Renew your commitment to each other by renewing your marriage vows. As a community celebrate the gift of the Sacrament of Marriage.

**A Couple Thanksgiving Prayer**

TOGETHER Lord, we praise you and thank you for your gifts to us.

For giving us life,

For giving us one another,

For trusting us with children,

**We thank you Lord.**

FOR every experience of love, peace and joy we have had together,

For the successes of our life together,

For the failures which have helped us to grow,

knowing ourselves and each other better,

**We thank you Lord.**

FOR the help of others in time of trouble,

For the needy who call on us to be generous,

**We thank you Lord.**

FOR the forgiveness we have received from each other.

For your forgiveness

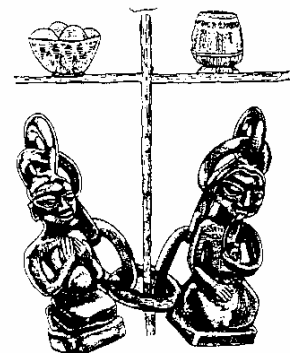
**We thank you Lord.**

YOU have taken care of us from the first moment of our lives, we know your love will never fail us.

May our love for each other mature in Christ.

May the Holy Spirit make our married life a way of holy living.

May old age come in the company of those we love and when the time comes for one of us to die may our love reach beyond death as we look forward to the day when we shall be forever one with you and those we love. Amen.



**FAMILY LIFE DESK – DEPARTMENT FOR EVANGELISATION –**  
**SA CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE**

399 Paul Kruger Street, P O Box 941, Pretoria, 0001 tel (mes) 012 323-6458  
fax 012 326 6218 Cel 082 552 1275 [trowland@sacbc.org.za](mailto:trowland@sacbc.org.za)

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**MOVEMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS ACTIVE  
IN THE FAMILY APOSTOLATE**

**THE FAMILY LIFE DESK OF THE SA CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE** is based in Pretoria. As a part of the Department for Evangelisation its focus is on the evangelization of families and of the wider Church about the role and place of the domestic church. In line with the vision of the Department and priorities discerned at recent pastoral forums of providing ongoing adult formation that recognizes the particular context of the laity in their family and the different strata of society in which they live their daily lives the objectives of the Family Life Desk are:

1. Awarenessraising,
2. Networking with diocesan family life offices, family life movements and with relevant Church and other bodies
3. Accessing, distribution and provision of resource materials
4. Offering formation in the area of family life.

Contact: Toni Rowland. 082 552 1275 [trowland@sacbc.org.za](mailto:trowland@sacbc.org.za)

**DIOCESAN FAMILY LIFE OFFICES** operate independently.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

This is the responsibility of the local diocese and parishes. Parish priests may provide the preparation or refer engaged couples to a variety of available resources. Many dioceses have programmes developed by local priests, couples or counselors. Recognised programmes that are run in various dioceses are listed below.

**Catholic Engaged Encounter.** An experiential weekend away. Presentations on their experience are given by two married couples and a priest on subjects such as self-awareness, communication expectations, mutual decision-making, sexuality, family planning and children, money, family background and an understanding of God and the Sacrament of Matrimony. In response, by means of writing and sharing exercises, the engaged couples explore these topics more deeply.

CEE is an international programme and communities operate in South Africa in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. National contact details. Ronald and Ursula Sobotker Tel 021 705 4512 [ursulas@absa.co.za](mailto:ursulas@absa.co.za) and Fr Rohan Smuts

**Evenings for the Engaged** runs for 6-8 weeks in the evenings or on a weekend afternoon in various parishes, regions and dioceses. The focus is on the relationship of the couple with one another, the society in which they live and with God. This is a recognized programme for the Cape Town diocese but there is no national structure or contact person. Enquire in local diocese.

**LUMKO’s** Marriage Preparation Programme *Preparing for Your Marriage* is a 10 session peer ministry programme and part of the *Training for Community Ministries* series. Trained team presenters, ideally couples, provide some input and facilitate the discussion and sharing by the engaged on spiritual and everyday life matters surrounding their future marriage. Lumko 011 866 2123 [lumko@global.co.za](mailto:lumko@global.co.za)

**Mina Nawe** is an 6-7 week programme that has inculturated Evenings for the Engaged for local African conditions. The focus is on the couple relationship and includes an understanding of marriage

as a sacrament. Johannesburg-based but other areas can be visited on request Follow-ups are held from time to time. Contact Mr and Mrs Phacha 082 560 7246

**Prepare-enrich** is not a religious programme but uses a psychological questionnaire. Prepare is for engaged and Enrich for married couples. It is computer scored and an analysis of the relationship with its strengths and growth areas is used by trained facilitators to provide feedback and facilitate the couple's own discussion. A remarriage version is also available. Contact local FAMSA offices or Family life Centre, Johannesburg 011 788 5660

**Foccus** is a similar Catholic form developed in the US and used in some dioceses including the Durban Family Life Office. Call 031 202 4478

## **MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT**

**Worldwide Marriage Encounter** is a community of couples and priests who believe in the power of Matrimony and Holy Orders as complementary vocations. The primary focus in the experiential weekends is on improving communication and developing intimacy between husband and wife and the family. God's Plan for marriage as a close, loving, caring interdependent relationship contrasts with the world's plan, which focuses on independence and autonomy. Ongoing support groups exist and couples are encouraged to become involved in parish life and especially as a couple to promote the concept of marriage as a vocation. South African coordinators, Joe and Neela Kay. Tel/fax 021 674 6728. [joneel@mweb.co.za](mailto:joneel@mweb.co.za)

**Equipes de Nossa Senhora - Teams of Our Lady** was started in France in 1939 as a response to the question by couples "How do we find God together?" It is a movement of mutual help between spouses and of like-minded couples. A team consists of up to five or six couples who meet with a priest in each others' homes to share their experiences over a simple meal, to pray together, to deepen their understanding of marriage and family life and to improve the quality of their spiritual life. Couples see their marriage as an equal partnership of two complementary individuals where their mutual love leads them to seek an ever closer union with each other and with God. Through sharing their thoughts, aspirations and the various activities of their lives they help each other to develop their personalities and aptitudes and to realise their ambitions.

English-speaking teams are active in the Durban area and Portuguese-speaking in Johannesburg. South African Contact couple: Serafim and Anna-Maria Nogueira 011 615 7827. [anogueira2@wesbank.co.za](mailto:anogueira2@wesbank.co.za)

## **Marriage Course – ALPHA**

The Marriage Course is a series of eight sessions designed to help any married couple build a healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime. The course provides them with practical tools to strengthen their relationship and it gives them the time and space to discuss any difficult issues. The aim is to help couples break bad habits and create good ones to enable their marriage to grow.

The sessions are run like the Alpha course using a video and questions provided for discussion. Contact local Alpha coordinators for information.

**PREPARE-ENRICH.** See Prepare-Enrich above.

## **HURTING MARRIAGES**

Many dioceses and some parishes have counseling resources, some linked directly with the diocese, some with the Catholic Women's League or another agency. Psychologists, social workers and volunteer counselors are active too, in private practice or giving of their time and expertise. Enquire in the diocese

**Retrouvaille** is a three-month programme dedicated to the preservation of marriage and is geared to any couples experiencing marital difficulties. It is essentially a "communications" programme helping couples to understand the deep feelings inside each other which often determine the behaviours they

exhibit. Unexpressed feelings often lead to misunderstandings of motives and behaviour. The programme is presented in the context of Christian marriage but is open to people of all cultures and faith expressions. Southern African Regional contact couple: Stuart and Michelle Allan 011 867 7229. [retrouvaille@lantic.net](mailto:retrouvaille@lantic.net)

## **FAMILY ENRICHMENT**

### **Couples for Christ**

A peer-to-peer marriage and family-life renewal ministry which started in 1981 in Manila, Philippines and now operates in more than 150 countries. CFC provides programmes for personal, family and church renewal. Ministries address all family members in all situations, small children, youth, single young adults, married couples, single mature men and women, grandparents. It also caters for single parents divorced, separated and widowed and is open to spouses who are not Catholic as it supports ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. The entry point into CFC is through a 13 week seminar programme. Thereafter members receive ongoing support for their Christian journey in peer prayer groups meeting weekly in the homes. Additional formation through teachings, retreats, conferences and social gatherings are continuous. Contact local diocese or CFC NATIONAL MISSION CENTRE, Durban 031 207 1843. [cfcsouthafrica@gmail.com](mailto:cfcsouthafrica@gmail.com)

### **Focolare – New Families**

“New Families” is a branch of the Focolare Movement founded by Chiara Lubich in 1967. It was born amidst moral, social and economic pressures undermining the very integrity of family life and family values. Through regular meetings and various events it seeks to promote values within the family, between children and parents, and to be open to broken families, abandoned children, the lonely, the elderly and the marginalized.

The New Families “keeps alight the flame of love in the home and sends its warmth out into society so it, too, can become a family.” It is committed towards the renewal of the family in today’s society, drawing its nourishment from a spirituality of unity. It is spread in 182 nations all over the world, and it counts millions of members.

Contact details: Peter and Hesta Stohr 012 329 1661 e: [peterstohr@mweb.co.za](mailto:peterstohr@mweb.co.za)

### **Schoenstatt Family Movement**

The Schoenstatt Families are part of the International Schoenstatt Movement and strive to realize the message of the Gospel as families by the way they live and share the values and vision of Christian married life. The spirituality wants to lead people to become 'new people in a new community with an apostolic mindset' with the intention of renewing Church and society with the emphasis on love and freedom. Mary is seen as the woman who embodies this new person.

In the Schoenstatt Movement there are various communities for families. These are 'differentiated according to the intensity of their apostolate and community life.' This is expressed in various lifestyles including families who commit themselves to living the evangelical counsels within the context of marriage. In South Africa communities have existed since the mid-sixties, attempting to witness to 'new lay religious communities' within the context of an apartheid South Africa by living very consciously in solidarity with the oppressed and by working for the New South Africa. South African contact: the Director 083 300 0255.

### **MARFAM – Marriage and Family Life Renewal Ministry**

MARFAM is a family enrichment and renewal ministry based in Johannesburg. Currently it works closely with the Family Life Desk and primarily promotes and provides resource materials and publications for the strengthening of family life and relationships. Regular publications are a quarterly magazine *Marriage and Family Living*, a monthly free e-newsletter, a website and booklets for family spirituality at liturgical seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter. The annual Family Life calendar is produced on behalf of the SACBC Family Life Desk.

Contact: Toni Rowland 011 789 5449 [info@marfam.org.za](mailto:info@marfam.org.za) [www.marfam.org.za](http://www.marfam.org.za)