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Premarital Counseling

The time of engagement is an important time to prepare for your marriage. Besides meeting with me to plan your ceremony, you will also have the opportunity to participate in two sessions of pre-marital counseling before your wedding. These sessions will help you to gain a better understanding of yourselves as husband and wife and prepare you for your upcoming marriage.

Premarital Counseling is not required but is highly recommended.

Instructions on filling out the questions on the following pages:

- 1) Bride and groom are *each* to answer the questions separately in writing *without discussing your answer with your partner*.
- 2) Send a copy of your answers to me at least 2 weeks before your first premarital counseling session. (You will discuss your answers during your sessions. Be sure to keep a copy for you and your partner.)

Instructions on preparing for the premarital counseling sessions:

- 1) Once *both* of you have finished your own answers, share your answers with one another.
- 2) Note
 - Questions which you and your partner answered differently from each other.
 - Any patterns that you observe.
 - Any time your partner's answer surprised you.
 - Any concerns you have about your partner's answers.You will be encouraged to talk about these issues during your premarital counseling sessions.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you think of any other way I can assist you to prepare for your marriage.

Sincerely,
Rev. Terry Aaron, DDiv, MSW, BThC

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Family of Origin

- 1) Describe your family of origin.
- 2) Who in your family were you the closest to (emotionally) when you were growing up?
- 3) Who in your family are you the closest to (emotionally) now?
- 4) Who in your family of origin do you still see on a regular basis?
- 5) Who in your family experienced the most conflict when you were growing up?
- 6) Who in your family of origin experiences the most conflict now?
- 7) Have there been any deaths in your immediate family?
If so, how did they affect you/your family?
- 8) Has there been any significant illness (physical or emotional) in your family of origin (including yourself)?
If so, how has it affected you/your family?
- 9) When your parents experienced conflict between each other, how did they deal with it?
- 10) When your parents experienced conflict with you & your siblings, how did everyone deal with it?
- 11) What are any current expectations your family of origin has on you?
- 12) What expectations will they have on your new spouse?
- 13) Did your parents have close friends when you were growing up?
If so, what were those friendships like?
- 14) Did you have close friends when you were growing up?
If so, what were those friendships like?
- 15) What were your family vacations like?
What would you change about them?
- 16) What is your favorite memory with your family when you were growing up?

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Religious Orientation

- 1) What was your understanding of God when you were growing up?
How has that changed?
- 2) Did you attend a worship service on a regular basis when you were growing up?
What was that experience like for you?
- 3) Do you attend a worship service on a regular basis now?
Why or why not?
- 4) Do you plan on attending a worship service after you are married?
- 5) Does your church or faith have role expectations for men/women, husbands/wives?
If so, how do you feel about those expectations?
- 6) Does your church or faith have any expectations in regard to raising children?
If so, how do you feel about those expectations?
- 7) What expectations does your church or your faith place on your spouse?
If so, how do you feel about those expectations?
- 8) Are there *any* expectations which your church or your faith place on you with which you are uncomfortable?
- 9) How involved do you want your spouse to be in the religious aspects of your life?
- 10) Are there any religious differences (beliefs or practices) between you and your spouse of which you are concerned?
- 11) What are your religious convictions about:
 - premarital sex?
 - birth control?
 - abortion?
 - divorce?
 - remarriage?
- 12) How would you describe your religious beliefs today?

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Money Matters

- 1) Have you ever had a savings account?
 - If so, how old were you when you opened your first one?
 - For what purpose would you put money into a savings account?
- 2) Do you invest in the stock market?
 - If so, how much of your income do you normally invest?
 - How would you describe your portfolio (conservative, risky, balanced)?
- 3) Do you have other financial investments?
- 4) What amount and kinds of investments would you like to make after your marriage?
- 5) Do you balance your checking account every month?
- 6) What are the things over which you believe are worth going into debt? (Home, furniture, home improvements, car, education, vacation, art?)
- 7) Do you regularly use credit cards?
 - If so, how much do you pay on your balance each month? (For example, do you pay them off each month, just pay the interest, interest plus principal?)
- 8) What are your current debts? (Include credit cards, college loans, home, auto, etc.)
- 9) What are your thoughts regarding tithing/giving to your faith community?
- 10) Do you give to a faith community regularly?
 - How much do you now give?
 - How much do you want to give after you are married?
- 11) Do you give to other causes/charities regularly?
 - How much do you now give?
 - How much do you want to give after you are married?
- 12) Do you see yourself more as a saver or a spender? How about your spouse?
- 13) How much do you feel you should have on hand in case of emergency?
- 14) Do you now have a monthly and/or annual budget?
- 15) Who should organize the finances—you, your partner or both?

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Communication & Resolving Conflict

- 1) Do you easily talk about your feelings?
 - If so, are there any exceptions?
 - If not, why not?
- 2) Does your partner easily talk about his/her feelings?
 - If so, are there any exceptions?
 - If not, how do you deal with it?
- 3) Have you noticed that there are times when it is difficult to communicate with your partner?
 - If so, when are those times?
- 4) How do you and your partner resolve conflicts or disagreements?
- 5) Have you had any major fights so far?
 - If so, what were they about?
- 6) Would you be in favor of seeking professional counseling as a help to your communication skills?
 - If so, when would you do this?
 - If not, why not?
- 7) Who would you talk to if you were having a major conflict with your spouse?
- 8) Are there currently any unresolved issues in your relationship?
- 9) Given the high divorce rate, do you think you have more of a chance than others to remain married for the rest of your lives? Why or why not?
- 10) Do you feel safe expressing your feelings to your partner?
- 11) Are you comfortable with the way your partner expresses anger?
- 12) How would you describe your ability to communicate with your parents:
 - When you were a child?
 - When you were a teenager?
 - Now?

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Attitudes & Expectations Regarding Your New Family

- 1) Do you believe that there are roles a person has simply because of gender?
- 2) How many children would you like to have?
- 3) How far apart in age would you like your children to be?
- 4) What are your views on discipline?
- 5) Will you expect your children to perform well in school? In athletics? In other areas?
- 6) Will you expect your children to attend college?
- 7) How often do you expect to go on vacation as a family?
- 8) What is your ideal vacation?
- 9) Would you consider going on a vacation without your spouse?
- 10) How do you expect to spend your weekends?
- 11) How many nights each week would you like your family to be at home?
- 12) How would you describe your ideal home? (Include location, type of building, rooms, yard, etc.)
- 13) Do you hope to have pets? How many? What kind?
- 14) How often would you like to make love with your spouse?
- 15) What kind of things do you hope to continue doing to keep the romance in your relationship?
- 16) How would you describe “quality time” with your spouse?
- 17) What is your idea of a great date?
- 18) Do you have any fears about marriage in general? If so, what are they?

Pre-Marital Counseling

Topic: Blended Marriages

(For marriages where either spouse have children from a previous relationship.)

Answer the following questions *if your spouse has children:*

How would you describe your current relationship with your future stepchildren?

How would you describe your role as a stepparent?

What expectations does your future spouse have of you as a stepparent?

Answer the following questions *if you have children:*

How would you describe your relationship with each of your children?

How do you see your spouse's role as a stepparent?

What expectations do you have of your spouse toward your children?

What kind of financial assistance do you plan on giving to your children once they have graduated from high school?

Answer the following questions *if either you or your spouse has children:*

What concerns do you have regarding the disciplining of the children?

When will you spend quality time together as a couple (without the children)?

What will you do for that quality time together?

What kinds of activities will you share as quality time with the children?

What is your greatest fear or concern regarding your new family?