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Before You Take the Leap...
*Jumping into marriage without a preparation class
is as dumb as bungee jumping without a cord!*

Poster Discussion Guide
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The Myth – Marriage is a natural part of life. There is no need to prepare for it in order to be successful; it just comes naturally. (If you both love each other, that is enough to have a good marriage).

The Facts – Long term studies prove that marriage education works! Marriage preparation programs have been shown to:

- Improve commitment to the relationship.
- Increase acceptance of partner.
- Decrease disagreements.
- Decrease negative emotions.
- Improve communication between partners.
- Lead to happier, better functioning children.
- Teach skills that are useful in relationships with other family members, friends and co-workers.
- **Cut the divorce rate by half.**

What Works?

Although many couples programs are successful, those which focus on giving the couples specific skills appear to enjoy the most research support. Sollee (1999) suggests that skills are more important than knowledge about marital relationships. **Take a premarital inventory and participate in a marriage preparation seminar/program.**

Three high-quality pre-marital inventories are available today:

PREPARE – This is the most common inventory, but is also the most expensive and must be administered through a trained clergy or professional. www.prepare-enrich.com

RELATE – This is fairly inexpensive and is available online. www.relate-insitute.org

FOCCUS – This inventory does a good job of addressing issues for interreligious couples, cohabiting couples, and couples for whom this is a second marriage for one or both persons.
www.foccusinc.com

Anyone can learn how to have a successful relationship and a healthy marriage. Courses work for couples at any age and stage. There are programs for teens and young adults, whether dating or not, as well as classes for couples who are engaged, newlywed, cohabiting, married, separated or on the brink of divorce. A listing of popular, well-researched and affordable marriage education programs can be found at the Smart Marriages® website <http://www.smartmarriages.com/directory.html>.

More Resources

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