

“Invest in Your Marriage”

- Lauri Przybysz, Coordinator for Marriage and Family Enrichment

Everyone is concerned about their investments these days. The financial gurus keep telling us to hang in there and ride out the crisis. They promise that our patience will pay off.

What investments will you make in your marriage?

Spend time together, whether actively working on a project or just sitting quietly in the evening listening to soothing music. Allow your spouse the time he or she needs to tell you about their hopes and dreams. At least once each day, stop, sit, and make eye contact, giving your mate your undivided attention. Take time to play and have fun together.

Visit www.foryourmarriage.org to see what other couples have done for their marriage today.

Pray. Ask God to guide you to be a better husband or wife. Pray for your mate and ask him or her to pray for you. Worship together as often as possible, and occasionally do so without children in tow. It's ok to get a babysitter to go to church together occasionally.

Self-improvement can pay great dividends. Spiff up your appearance or broaden your horizons, as a special gift to your spouse. Trim a few pounds or learn a new skill. Study about another culture or try new foods. You'll be a more interesting companion.

Cultivate friendships with others who believe in marriage and believe in *your* marriage. Your CFM friends help you learn how to be a better lover, parent and friend. Maximize the positive influences in your life and avoid situations that detract from your Christian commitment.

Marriage education: We invest time and money to acquire and strengthen skills for most of the key areas of our life. We learn about hobbies, physical activities, financial planning, leadership, career, religion, health, etc. Why wouldn't we put equal effort into learning about how to have a successful marriage? A case is forming that shows marriage education and relationship-skills training can have a direct impact on curbing divorce rates. And it's never too late to learn. Investigate some good programs available at www.foryourmarriage.org. Type “marriage programs” in the Search. Some are “teach out of the box” and don't require a professional facilitator. Ask your parish to host them. Or have your CFM group sponsor one.

Not able to take a marriage education course right now? Work at your own pace as a couple on *12 Hours to a Great Marriage*, by Howard Markman and others. Or, read a book together, such as Gary Chapman's *The Five Love Languages* (Northfield, 2004) or Tony Garacia's *Rekindle the Passion While Raising Your Kids* (Sorin Books, 2001).

Finally, take courage! We are not alone. In the financial world, fears can cripple the stock market. To build confidence in your marriage, strengthen your partnership with Christ. Many forces in society are arrayed against your marriage, but Jesus paid the ultimate price to conquer the enemies of life. Embrace the promise of the Gospel that Jesus proclaimed and that we Christians are also charged with spreading. Amazing as it sounds, we believe that the love of God made flesh in Jesus Christ is also made flesh in your marriage. “Take courage,” he tells us, “I have overcome the world!” (John 16:33).

