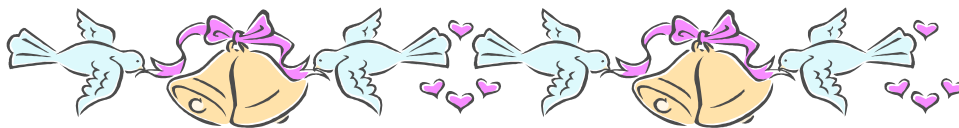


The Department of Marriage And Family Life Ministries Directory



The Department of Marriage and Family Life seeks to contribute to the transformation of society by strengthening marriages and families according to Gospel Values.

The Department serves the needs of households of faith through marriage preparation and enrichment, natural family planning and parenting resources. In addition, the department provides coordination of support groups for those undergoing marital difficulties, adjustment following divorce, and widowhood. Other services include training parish teams for programs of marriage and remarriage preparation, family ministry, and enrichment programs.



Louise Ritz, Director
Bill Michie, Administrative Coordinator
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8AM to 4PM
(850) 435-3532 / pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org and www.ptdiocese.org
Mario Sacasa, (850) 201-0254, mariosacasa@gmail.com

Diocese of Pensacola – Tallahassee



Office of the Bishop

My Dear Friends,

I welcome every opportunity to help couples who look forward to celebrating a marriage in the Church. For this reason the programs described in this booklet have been developed as aids to prepare for unions that will be a lasting joy for those who enter them.

The Sacrament of Matrimony lays the foundation for family life on which our society depends. Because marriage is a life-long commitment it will challenge your skills, maturity and faith to keep it renewed and refreshed. It is my hope that through this preparation process you will come to know each other more deeply so that you will be better prepared for a life together as husband and wife.

There are many other ministries that the Department of Marriage and Family Life promote, such as parenting seminars, parish family ministry support, natural family planning, and bereavement recovery after divorce and other major losses. It is my hope that you avail yourself of the variety of ministries that are offered so that you may grow closer to God through your spouse, your children and your fellow parishioners.

My prayers are with you as you move from one phase of family life to another. May the Lord bless you and strengthen you always.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Ricard, S.S.J.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Most Reverend John H. Ricard, S.S.J.
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee

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Marriage Preparation Programs

These programs are offered by trained volunteers who donate their gifts of time and talent to the engaged in our Catholic community. Early registration is recommended. Please contact Marriage and Family Life Department to verify dates and availability of programs. (850) 435-3532 or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org. (Occasionally dates and / or locations may change)

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1601)



Engaged Encounter Weekend

This is a weekend experience that offers a unique opportunity for couples to discover a deeper appreciation of their relationship and God’s call to unite them in a permanent union. Pre-registration is required. For more information see www.engagedencounter.org.

Gulf Breeze: See Tallahassee

Panama City: Laguna Beach: See Tallahassee

Tallahassee:

- *April 25 – 27, 2008*
- *June 20 – 22, 2008*
- *Aug 8 – 10, 2008*
- *Sep 12 – 14, 2008*
- *Nov 14 – 16, 2008*

For more information or to register, contact: Jose or Lydia Velez:

(850) 234-0447 or (850) 819-3091

joselydia@comcast.net



Pre Cana Day

Pre Cana Day is designed for those couples that will be experiencing marriage for the first time. It is a one day marriage preparation program presented in Pensacola and Fort Walton Beach. The program encourages couples to consider their commitment to enter into one of the most important covenants of adult life: marriage.

Topics to be discussed in detail during the Pre Cana Day program include: *Communication, Family of Origin, Spirituality and the Sacramental Nature of Marriage, Intimacy, Natural Family Planning, Finances, and other issues.*

Pre-registration with the Marriage and Family Life Department is required. The number of participants is limited in each program. Early registration is recommended. The program fee is \$95.00 per couple, which includes lunch, snacks, materials and certificates needed for marriage and Florida licensing discount. If one is not able to afford the fee, contact the Marriage and Family Life Department to request a scholarship.

Fort Walton Beach: (Coordinators: Deacon Dan and Dee McAuliffe)

- *May 18, 2008*
- *August 17, 2008*
- *November 16, 2008*

Pensacola: (Coordinators: Deacon Bob and Pat Leblanc)

- *April 26, 2008*
- *July 26, 2008*
- *October 25, 2008*



To Trust Again

This is a marriage preparation program for couples where one or both have been in a previous marriage to another person.

This re-marriage preparation program is presented in Pensacola, Fort Walton Beach, Panama City and Tallahassee. Pre-registration is required. Each program accepts a very limited number of couples. The fee is \$85.00 per couple, which includes lunch, materials and certificates needed for marriage. If ability to pay is a serious problem, contact the office of Marriage and Family Life to request a scholarship.

Dates for To Trust Again:

Fort Walton Beach: Phyllis Zeller and Jerry Blood

- May 3, 2008
- October 4, 2008
- November 1, 2008

Pensacola: Mary and Nick Thorpe (T) or Lesley and Craig Mateer (M)

- April 26, 2008 (T)
- May 31, 2008 (M)
- June 28, 2008 (T)
- August 2, 2008 (M)
- September 27, 2008 (T)
- November 8, 2008 (M)

Panama City: Vicky and Dennis Bernia

- July 19, 2008
- October 18, 2008

Tallahassee: Jane and Fred Springer (S) or Rita and Lou Fete` (F)

- May 3, 2008 (F)
- July 12, 2008 (S)
- September 13, 2008 (F)
- November 8, 2008 (S)



Saturdays for the Engaged - Tallahassee

This ministry has as its goal to help couples understand the teachings of the Church about marriage and sacraments and to equip them to live their Catholic lives in their marriage vocations. Married couples, clergy and professional family/marriage counselors combine to present topics geared to meet this goal. A \$100 per couple donation is requested to cover the cost of materials and meals.

The program is held at the Co-Cathedral of Saint Thomas More and consists of three Saturdays beginning at 9:00 AM and concluding at approximately 3:00 PM.

For further information and registration contact Ellen Murphy at the Co-Cathedral of Saint Thomas More: (850) 222-9630 or emurphy@co-cathedral.com.

Couples Communication Workshop

Many marriages fail because the couples lack skills necessary to deal with important issues that come with any close relationship. This workshop educates couples to focus on factors they can

control and gives them tools to safely and effectively manage life's surprises. Couples are equipped to recognize danger signs, communicate safely and effectively, protect fun, friendship, sexuality and sensuality as well as harness the power of commitment. Having a great marriage is not a matter of luck nor is an unhappy marriage a matter of mystery. Couples can learn the skills and principles of successful relationships. Isn't a marriage worth this effort?

- Facilitated by Louise Ritz. Couples attend one session: May 3, June 14, Aug 23, or Sep 20. Will be held at Pastoral Center, 11 North "B" Street, Pensacola 32501 in Large Conference Room from 9 AM to 11:30 AM.
- Facilitated by Mario Sacasa. July 19, 2008: Co-Cathedral – Catholic Student Union, 0930 to Noon. To register or for more information contact Mario at (850) 201-0254 or mariosacasa@gmail.com.
- There are no fees. To register call the Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Web Sites of Interest:

<http://www.ptdiocese.org>

<http://marriage.rutgers.edu/>

<http://www.lifeinnovations.com/sample.html>



“FOCCUS” AND “REFOCCUS”

FOCCUS and REFOCCUS are assessment tools used by counselors, clergy, and trained teams to identify areas in which couples have strengths, and areas that may need to be worked by the couple. FOCCUS is intended for couples who are contemplating marriage or have been married in civil courts for less than two years. REFOCCUS is intended for couples who have been married in civil law for two or more years and who seek convalidation of their marriage.

REFOCCUS can also be used as a marriage enrichment tool for married couples.

The FOCCUS/REFOCCUS process enables couples to explore the match, skills, and bonding elements of their relationship. The programs provide individualized preparation for engaged couples and are designed to be administered by clergy, trained teams, and / or counselors. Scoring for the instruments is available through the Marriage and Family Life Department.

“FOCCUS FOR THE FUTURE”

This four page instrument for marriage preparation partners is to be used at the end of the preparation process to integrate what has been learned through the FOCCUS tool, their program experience and their continued dialogue. It provides an individualized summary and planning form for couples.

Clergy and Marriage Preparation Facilitators: Replacement scoring sheets, scoring, and staff training are available through the Marriage and Family Life Department: (850) 435-3532 or

email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Natural Family Planning

Certified instructors offer classes throughout the diocese for couples hoping to achieve or postpone pregnancies. NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family, promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of the child. Couples are encouraged to take classes prior to marriage. See Appendix 1 for contact information for instructors.



Marriage Enrichment Programs

Varied programs are offered throughout the year. When scheduled, these will be advertised in Sunday bulletins, on the diocesan web site, and through flyers. Programs focus on issues and requisite skills for developing a strong and successful marriage. To inquire about the availability of enrichment programs, contact the Marriage and Family Life Department at (850) 435-3532 or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.



Jubilee Mass

Bishop John Ricard, SSJ, honors the anniversaries of couples who celebrate their 10th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, and all anniversaries above 50 years (i.e. 51, 52, 53 ...) This is a special and memorable mass that recognizes these couples for their married achievement. Masses are celebrated in Pensacola and in Tallahassee.

Scheduled Dates:

- Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Pensacola: 2009 To Be Determined
- Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More, Tallahassee: 2009 To Be Determined

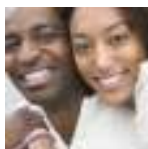


World Wide Marriage Encounter Weekend

Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend: Married and Loving It? Has the routine of everyday life taken some of the spark out of your love story? Plants need tender loving care to grow healthy and strong and so to does your marriage. Spend a little time on your relationship and get away together for a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend! Reserve your spot early. Contact John and Sally Carson at (850) 457-7270 or at two.carsons@cox.net. For more information, go to www.wwme.org.

Scheduled Dates for Marriage Encounter Weekend:

- September 12 to 14, 2008



“REFFOCUS” as a Marriage Enrichment Tool

REFFOCUS was developed for the average married couple to affirm and promote growth and to give direction and help to those struggling with daily questions of marriage. In this process you will explore and discuss your marriage as a process, intimacy, compatibility, communication, and commitment. Time is provided for small group and private sharing, reflections, and experimental exercises in communication. Prayer services and renewal of wedding vows are included. All married couples can attend. Contact the Marriage and Family Life Department of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee for more information at (850) 435-3532 or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Bridges: Spirituality and the Vocation of Marriage:

This workshop is designed to bring greater spiritual harmony and enrichment to a couple's marriage. The program is open to both married and engaged couples. The workshop is scheduled according to demand. Contact the Marriage and Family Life Department for information.

Refresh – Revitalize – Reenergize:

This program provides married and engaged couples a “time out” to explore topics discussed during this enriching and fulfilling program. Topics include effective communication, marital spirituality, sexuality, and more. It is scheduled according to demand. Contact the Marriage and Family Life Department for information.

The Marriage Dance:

This is an exciting and informative workshop that focuses on communication and problem solving skills for married or engaged couples of all ages. Learn to master the steps in achieving greater harmony in marriage. Time and date for next session has not been determined. Watch your Sunday bulletin for notices. To register contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Fitness Training for Your Marriage

Unraveling the Mystery of a Successful Marriage: Two Pieces of the Puzzle: This workshop is intended for all married or engaged couples. Session one addresses maintaining BALANCE in the marital relationship; session two focuses on RESOLVING potential marital conflicts and delves into maintaining the newness and BEYOND: The real marriage challenge.

Presenter: John (Jack) Keller, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology and Professor Emeritus of the University of West Florida. For information or registration contact the Marriage and Family Life Department, (850) 435-3532 or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.



Ten Great Dates

Here's a program that offers you married couples a great opportunity to enjoy each other's company on a fun, romantic date. It starts with a facilitated group session with the kids in childcare (but register early) and, then, after the session and while the children play with other children under the supervision of qualified adults, the couple heads out to a date somewhere fun of their own choosing to spend time together and enjoy themselves. Later, they pick up the kids and go home having spent a great night out.

Different parishes offer this event. Other parishes are working on offering it. Watch your Sunday bulletin for an opportunity to participate or contact the Marriage and Family Life Office, (850) 435-3532, or email at pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Growing Faith Filled Marriages – Raising Faith Filled Kids

For single parents and married couples of all ages: Ideas to make faith an everyday part of marriage and family life. Whether working from a basis of a strong marriage, a single parent family, or a marriage with a non-practicing or non-Catholic spouse, Moms, Dads and children need all available help to make faith in God a part of everyday family life. This is a chance to work on your faith, family, and marriage. Parents, this workshop just might give you the ideas and skills you need to help your kids stay Catholic...

Presenters : Pete Bond and Kay Colvin Guthrie, PhD

Date and time: Sep 6, 2008; 9:45 to 12:30 PM.

Location: Good Shepherd Parish in Tallahassee

Asking a \$10 donation per family
Childcare may be available call Good Shepherd office (850-893-1837)
To register contact Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office (850) 435-3532 or
pnsfamlife@ptdiocese.org.

Building Intimacy With Those You Love

At the very heart of intimacy is feeling safe and secure with our partners. How safe do you feel to be yourself with your partner and what gets in the way??

Safety and trust are foundational to emotional and physical intimacy. You are invited to a workshop presented by Noreen LeGare, Ph.D. to explore these questions and how past experiences and/or trauma impact our present “templates” for feeling safe and secure with our closest others. Recent discoveries of gender differences in brain “wiring” and implications for relationships will be shared. Couples will have opportunity to “try on” some of the ideas and techniques presented.

Co-Cathedral of Saint Thomas More, May 31, 2008, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Fee: \$20 which includes snacks and materials.

Contact Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org to register or to find out more information.

Five Wishes

A workshop to help couples talk about hard to talk about issues and to deal with end of life matters by Noreen LeGare, Ph.D., LMFT and Paul Malley. October 4, 2008, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More. Contact Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org to register or to find out more information.

Marriage is not a commitment to an institution, or to a group of church laws, or to the standard expectations of society. Marriage, rather, is a commitment to another person. This commitment is a mutual covenant that is exclusive and permanent. It is a commitment to create an intimate partnership of life and love.

William P. Roberts, professor of theology at the University of Dayton taken from his Winter 2001 article “Commitment to the Ongoing Process of Marriage” in the Journal of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministries (www.nacflm.org).



The Third Option

This is an ongoing program that meets one evening per week for 14 weeks. It is designed for couples who have reason to tune up their relationship. **Couples may attend together or alone and may join at any time during the series.** There are no charges associated with this program. The programs are held at St. Joseph's Parish, downtown Pensacola, in the Kirwan Room at 133 West Intendencia Street. Scheduled series dates are as follows:

January 17, 2008	February 28, 2008	April 10, 2008
January 24, 2008	March 6, 2008	April 17, 2008
January 31, 2008	March 13, 2008	April 24, 2008
February 14, 2008	March 27, 2008	
February 21, 2008	April 3, 2008	

Dates for next series are yet to be determined.

Contacts: Ron and Mary Beth Johnson, (850) 477-0238; Tom and Theresa Pileggi, (850) 537-4755; and Dan Berube, (850) 458-7898

Consolation for Widowed and Divorced

Several programs are available for those who have lost a spouse or other loved one.



Joyful Again Retreat

For widows and widowers who want to find joy in living again. Joyful Again is a two-day program for widows and widowers who want to resolve the grief they feel inside and begin to live again after the death of their spouse. Participants will find that there are others who understand what they are feeling. Anyone who has lost a spouse through death is welcome to attend, even if it has been years since the death. Those widowed less than four months are not encouraged to attend since they will find their loss is still too fresh in their minds and hearts. Though there is a religious basis to the presentations, persons of any religious affiliation are welcome. "Joyful Again" is based on the belief that with God's help all things are possible and that through Him we can help ourselves and each other. For information about scheduled retreats, call the Marriage and Family Life Department. . Fee to cover costs of books, materials, and food will be \$50.

Scheduled Retreats:

- Pensacola, St. Joseph Parish, Walker Building, June 28 (0830 to 5PM) and 29 (0800 to 1:15PM): Presented by Deacon Gene Palone and Frank & Bernadette Eggleton. . Contact

Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org to register or to find out more information.

- Tallahassee, Good Shepherd Parish Community Center, June 28 (0830 to 7:30PM) and 29 (0830 to 3PM): For information or to register contact Good Shepherd (850) 893-1837



Bearers of Light and Hope

This is a spiritual retreat for bereavement counselors, parish ministers, and those interested in bereavement ministry. This is a joint venture among Christian Formation, Marriage and Family Life, and the Sacred Heart Health System. There is a \$25 fee to cover costs and food. Register by calling (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org.

- Saturday, April 12, 2008, 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese located at 11 North B Street, Pensacola, FL 32501.

New Day Journey

New Day Journey is a facilitated program designed for those who have experienced loss of a spouse, child, parent, or sibling. The program is intended to assist individuals in working through the four tasks of grieving. These tasks will allow individuals to eventually begin moving on with life, while always remembering the loved one, and honoring those memories to build on into the future. This program is offered in the Pensacola area and Tallahassee. Current schedule is pending.



Divorce and Beyond

This is a facilitated program designed to support the divorced. The focus of this series is on searching out ways of coping that will lead to individual growth and the eventual restructuring of lives. Not yet scheduled for the remainder of 2008.

Divorce CPR: Critical Pathways to Recovery

This dynamic session addresses critical areas affecting life after a relationship crisis such as divorce: Self-image, Changes in dynamic of relationships, Coping with holidays, and Receiving of the Sacraments. No fees. For more information or to register contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org.

- May 2, 2008, 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Pastoral Center Large Conference Room in downtown Pensacola, 11 North B Street, Pensacola, FL 32501. Pat Jones will facilitate.

- September 6, 2008, 1:30 to 3:30 PM at Good Shepherd Parish Community Center, 4665 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL 32309. John Goble will facilitate.

Coping With the Holidays

Anniversaries and special days can be difficult times when we long for someone missing from our lives or dreams displaced. Wedding anniversaries, birthdays, national holidays, and religious feast days can be fraught with loneliness and sometimes depression for us even though we ordinarily seem to be coping well and enjoying life. Usual good feeling can be replaced by lethargy, disinterest in life, depression, or anger all over again... Family centered holidays seem to be especially difficult for many. It is much more difficult to be alone when the rest of the world seems to be celebrating. If this is you or if you know someone like this, you are invited to take advantage of this workshop or to bring it to the attention of another.

Pensacola at Diocesan Pastoral Center, 11 North "B" Street, 32501

- November 23, 2008, 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Anne Hooton presents. No fee.

Other Area Programs for Those Divorced and Widowed

Single Again Meeting/Social: Serving all of the Pensacola area: Meets: 2nd Friday of the month in St. Theresa Room at St. Rose of Lima Parish Classroom Building, in Milton, 7:00 PM. The group ministers to separated, divorced, and widowed. This is an opportunity to address your feelings with other people in similar situations. Lisa Melton (850) 675-3257; Cell: 324-4290.

Bereavement Support Group: Pensacola: St. Mary Parish Hall in Pensacola. This group meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Time: 9:30 AM; Contacts: Toli Barraca at (850) 477-3096 or St. Mary Church Office: (850) 478-2797.



Parenting

Parenting resources and materials are available for families and facilitators through the Christian Formation Resource Library at the Pastoral Center. Parenting programs can be arranged by contacting the Department of Marriage and Family Life.

Talking to Your Kids About Sex

Mario Sacasa and Mary Ballard present an event to help parents teach about sex. Scheduled for May 10, 2008. To register or find out more about this event contact Mario at (850) 201-0254 or mariosacasa@gmail.com.

Co-Parenting in a Christ Like Manner

Mary Ballard and Karen Cone will offer a parenting event at the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More, October 4, 2008. Fee is \$10. . Contact Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at (850) 435-3532 or michieb@ptdiocese.org to register or to find out more information.

Other Resources Available

A variety of video resources are available through Christian Formation Resource Library to include topics such as Aging, Divorce, Anger, Natural Family Planning, Family, AIDS, Handicapped Issues, Teenagers/Children/Youth Life Issues, Marriage, and Coping.

The Catholic Church and Divorce

There are many myths regarding separation and divorce in the Catholic Church. To help dispel some of these myths, we offer the following:

- *Divorcing a spouse does not exclude a person from receiving the sacraments. The sacraments provide healing and nurturance at this painful time.*
- *A Catholic who divorces is not excommunicated. The former penalty of automatic excommunication for the divorced who remarried (which only applied to our country) was removed in 1977.*
- *An annulment does not dissolve an existing marriage. It is granted by the Catholic Church Tribunal when it can be shown that some essential element made a marriage invalid from the very beginning.*
- *Divorced Catholics may be a sponsor for Baptism and Confirmation. They may receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Penance.*
- *Divorced Catholics are welcome at Mass and Church activities and allowed a Church funeral and burial.*
- *If you receive an annulment, your children are not considered illegitimate.*
- *Children of a divorced Catholic can be baptized and receive any other sacrament.*

Appendix 1: Natural Family Planning Instructors & Contacts

<u>Method</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sympto-Thermal Instructor	Roger & Cindy Carff	850-780-6065 ccarff@ihmc.us	Pensacola
Sympto-Thermal Instructors	Tyson Kackley & Genevieve Burkett	850-319-6938 ccl.fl.a.bay@att.net	Panama City
Sympto-Thermal Instructor	Janet Kistler	850-265-8224 janetkistler@bellsouth.net	Panama City
Sympto-Thermal Instructors	Robert & Divina Koonce	850-434-0114 robertkoonce@yahoo.com	Pensacola
Sympto-Thermal Instructors	Paul & Maria Lang	850-522-9763 nfp4life@bellsouth.net	Lynn Haven
Billings Ovulation Method	Deacon Santiago Molina	850-222-9630 smolina@co-catherdral.com	Tallahassee
Sympto-Thermal Instructors	Michael & Carey White	850-523-0211 TallahasseeNFP@aol.com	Tallahassee
<u>Creighton Model</u>			
Creighton Model	Dr. Bill Mueller	(850) 496-6837 stgiannafcc@cox.net	Eglin AFB
<u>PROMOTERS / CONTACT PERSONS</u>			
Sympto-Thermal	Nanette Bell	850-664-0361	Ft. Walton Beach
	Matt & Debra Hitpas	850-916-0279	Gulf Breeze
	Deacon Earl Mirus	850-784-1630	Panama City
	Paul & Dawn Ritz	850-438-9870	Pensacola
	Bruce & Dianne Conroy	850-894-8748 TallahasseeNFP@aol.com	Tallahassee
	Dr. Steve & Chris Moleski	850-878-5636 TallahasseeNFP@aol.com	Tallahassee
<u>Online Instruction:</u>	Northwest Family Services WOOMB: Billings Ovulation Method	www.nwfs.org/index.t?goto=signup www.woomb.org	

Appendix 2: The Top Ten Myths About Marriage and Divorce

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE PROJECT. © 2002;
MARRIAGE@RCI.RUTGERS.EDU OR 732 445 7922

Discussion of the most common misinformation about divorce by David Popenoe

- 1 Myth:** Because people learn from their bad experiences, second marriages tend to be more successful than first marriages. **Truth:** Although many people who divorce have successful subsequent marriages, the divorce rate of remarriages is in fact higher than that of first marriages.
- 2 Myth:** Living together before marriage is a good way to reduce the chances of eventually divorcing. **Truth:** Many studies have found that those who live together before marriage have a considerably higher chance of eventually divorcing. The reasons for this are not well understood. In part, the type of people who are willing to co-habit might also be those who are more willing to divorce. There is some evidence that the act of cohabitation itself generates attitudes in people that are more conducive to divorce, for example the attitude that relationships are temporary and easily can be ended.
- 3 Myth:** Divorce may cause problems for many of the children, who are affected by it, but by and large these problems are not long lasting and the children recover relatively quickly. **Truth:** Divorce increases the risk of interpersonal problems in children. There is evidence, both from small qualitative studies and from large-scale, long-term empirical studies that many of these problems are long lasting. In fact, they may even become worse in adulthood.
- 4 Myth:** Having a child together will help a couple to improve their marital satisfaction and prevent a divorce. **Truth:** Many studies have shown that the most stressful time in a marriage is after the first child is born. Couples who have a child together have a slightly decreased risk of divorce compared to couples without children, but the decreased risk is far less than it used to be when parents with marital problems were more likely to stay together “for the sake of the children.”
- 5 Myth:** Following divorce, the woman’s standard of living plummets by seventy three percent while that of the man’s improves by forty two percent. **Truth:** This dramatic inequity, one of the most widely publicized statistics from the social sciences, was later found to be based on a faulty calculation. A reanalysis of the data determined that the woman’s loss was twenty seven percent while the man’s gain was ten percent. Irrespective of the magnitude of the differences, the gender gap is real and seems not to have narrowed much in recent decades.
- 6 Myth:** When parents don’t get along, children are better off if their parents divorce than if they stay together. **Truth:** A recent large-scale, long-term study suggests otherwise. While it found that parents’ marital unhappiness and discord have a broad negative impact on virtually every dimension of their children’s well-being, so does the fact of going through a divorce. In examining the negative impacts on children more closely, the study discovered that it was only the children in very high conflict homes who benefited from the conflict removal that divorce may bring.

In lower-conflict marriages that end in divorce - and the study found that perhaps as many as two thirds of the divorces were of this type - the situation of the children was made much worse following a divorce. Based on the findings of this study, therefore, except in the minority of high-conflict marriages it is better for the children if their parents stay together and work out their problems than if they divorce.

- 7** ***Myth:** Because they are more cautious in entering marital relationships and also have a strong determination to avoid the possibility of divorce, children who grow up in a home broken by divorce tend to have as much success in their own marriages as those from intact homes. **Truth:** Marriages of the children of divorce actually have a much higher rate of divorce than the marriages of children from intact families. A major reason for this, according to a recent study, is that children learn about marital commitment or permanence by observing their parents. In the children of divorce, the sense of commitment to a lifelong marriage has been undermined.*
- 8** ***Myth:** Following divorce, the children involved are better off in stepfamilies than in single-parent families. **Truth:** The evidence suggests that stepfamilies are no improvement over single-parent families, even though typically income levels are higher and there is a father figure in the home. Stepfamilies tend to have their own set of problems, including interpersonal conflicts with new parent figures and a very high risk of family breakup.*
- 9** ***Myth:** Being very unhappy at certain points in a marriage is a good sign that the marriage will eventually end in divorce. **Truth:** All marriages have their ups and downs. Recent research using a large national sample found that eighty six percent of people who were unhappily married in the late 1980s, and stayed with the marriage, indicated when interviewed five years later that they were happier. Indeed, three fifths of the formerly unhappily married couples rated their marriages as either "very happy" or "quite happy."*
- 10** ***Myth:** It is usually men who initiate divorce proceedings. **Truth:** Two-thirds of all divorces are initiated by women. One recent study found that many of the reasons for this have to do with the nature of our divorce laws. For example, in most states women have a good chance of receiving custody of their children. Because women more strongly want to keep their children with them, in states where there is a presumption of shared custody with the husband the percentage of women who initiate divorces is much lower. Also, the higher rate of women initiators is probably due to the fact that men are more likely to be "badly behaved." Husbands, for example, are more likely than wives to have problems with drinking, drug abuse, and infidelity.*