



Keys to a Lasting Marriage

IMPORTANT NOTE

These three sessions on marriage are not meant to cover EVERYTHING about marriage. There is much room for future enrichments to touch on topics like intimacy, finances, time management, resolving conflict, children, empty nests, etc. These three sessions were designed for widespread usage at the local congregation.

So many couples shy away when they consider the idea of marriage seminars or marriage counseling. *Keys to a Lasting Marriage* is meant to be a non-threatening introduction to marriage enrichment. The material in these sessions will offer enough variety in content to intrigue the first timer as well as the marriage enrichment veteran.

GOALS FOR COUPLES

At the end of the session, we'd like every spouse to...

- Better understand God's design for marriage
- Better appreciate his/her status as a child of God and cling to the forgiveness and power for living God supplies
- Take away a handful of practical tools he/she can use to improve patience, communication, listening, forgiving, and other expressions of Christ-like love.

GENERAL OUTLINE

Session One

- Understand Some OBSTACLES to Marriage & Relationships
- Embrace the SOLUTION (Jesus – gospel)
- Start exploring ways Jesus helps us overcome those obstacles

Session Two

- Love in a marriage equals SERVICE
- What does service look like? Why is it so hard?
- Jesus serves us—he makes it possible for us to serve one another

Session Three

- Love & marriage is all about COMMITMENT
- Review how Christ is committed to us
- Go forward, making a commitment to be
 - Communicative
 - Considerate
 - Christ-like

ABOUT THE MATERIALS:

- This Bible study is designed to be interactive and flexible.
- It has three parts
 - each lasting about 60–90 minutes
 - each session includes a student lesson, a leader guide, and a PowerPoint.

LEADER GUIDES & POSSIBLE LEADERS

The materials are designed to be easy to use. The Leader Guides will have answers and background information for the leaders. Leaders will want to spend some time in preparation, making the answers and illustrations “their own.” The Leader Guide is meant to be a starting point or a resource for the leaders. For whom are these Leader Guides designed?

- pastor
- staff minister
- lay leaders
- representative from WELS Discipleship

SETTING

Find the setting that works best for the couples in your congregation. Below are some suggestions:

- Couples Bible study at a local congregation (either on a weekend or weeknight).
 - 4-hour seminar on the same day
 - 3 sessions spread out over a weekend retreat
 - 3 sessions spread out over 3 weeks or 3 months (ex. The first Wednesday evening of each month or three successive Saturday afternoons)
- Large group seminar at a local congregation
- Large group regional seminar at a retreat center
- Small group setting (4–6 couples)
- Outreach offering in your community*

**The material is specifically designed for our Christian couples. In other words, some biblical knowledge and background is helpful. However, these materials could certainly be used in an outreach setting if a small nucleus of the participants are WELS members or if the materials are slightly edited.*

The materials were designed with this setup in mind:

- one facilitator (a husband/wife duo could lead this too)
- projection
- if possible, a whiteboard or flip chart on an easel (for notes and answers shared by participants)
- 2–4 couples at a table where they can see each other and have some interaction/conversation