

Life Cycles



Fall 2007

The newsletter of the

Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

New Marriage Prep Program

Endorsed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Family Life Office

By George Finnin

The Family Life Office is recommending that marriage preparation teams revise their programs. The suggested program focuses on three main themes: encounter, communion, and mission. It has been developed over the past year and a half. Their suggestion is: “When working with couples directly—either individually, or in larger group meetings—our purpose must always be, first and foremost, to introduce the couple to the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is the source, summit and model of all love, so it is appropriate that the couple’s journey of faith be centered on him.”

The intent of the program is evangelization of the couples. Scripture should be integrated in all presentations. Each presentation should help the couple realize that in marriage they are called to participate in the love of God through their love for each other. Thus, they can see that their love for one another is holy.

The encounter theme focuses on an encounter with

Jesus Christ. The team should pray with the couples. It can help them understand that the third person in their relationship is God, which helps them see that their love for one another is connected with Christ’s love for the Church. The team should provide a basic catechesis.

In the communion theme, the intent is to help the couples sense the meaning of communion of persons—openness to the other person, to accept them even in their imperfections. Communication skills are an expression of the sincere gift of one to the other. The couples’ communication with each other is rooted in the divine communication of God as Trinity. Also, the body speaks. The unitive and procreative aspects of sexual intimacy should be discussed. The engaged couples are asked to consider that chastity and abstinence should be a part of their engagement. They can love in a spirit of self-sacrifice, more deeply and freely, by not

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Letter from the President

Dear PNFPN’ers:

I hope you have all had a great summer and that you were successful in promoting NFP at your parish during NFP Awareness Week, which we celebrated the third week in July. In July of 2008, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*.

As all who support and use NFP know, one of our greatest obstacles is awareness of NFP. As mentioned in a previous letter, a meeting with Cardinal Rigali was held in July on the feast of St. James the Apostle. Michael Castagno, George Finnin, Gregg Ruppertsberger, and I all met with the cardinal to present our business plan for promoting NFP in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The cardinal was very gracious and generous with his time and listened intently to all we had to say. He agreed with our premise that promotion of NFP is necessary. He agreed to celebrate a Mass, perhaps at the cathedral,

during NFP Awareness Week next year for all supporters, users, and teachers of NFP. He further instructed us to follow up with our other suggestions with the Family Life Office to coordinate our efforts with theirs.

Please promote NFP as much as you can on the local level. Please access our website for information on other conferences and support them. Finally, pray, pray, and pray some more. If only two to four percent of the population uses NFP and we can increase it by one percent, we can affect hundreds of thousands of people. Like the miracle of loaves and fishes, it may not seem like we have enough to feed everyone, but we are not the Host, just the servers.

God bless all,
Les Ruppertsberger, D.O.

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Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

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Become a Member of PNFPN

In the past, the PNFPN existed solely through the generosity of a few people and never asked its members to pay dues. While we continue to believe that news and information regarding NFP in the Philadelphia region should remain free, our promotional efforts are severely limited without a source of income. Thus, we are asking our members to consider a yearly donation to assist our efforts in spreading the good news of NFP. We request \$15 for an individual membership, \$25 for a couple, and \$10 for a student. Free copies of *Life Cycles* will still be distributed to everyone on the mailing list, but those who donate will be eligible to vote for the executive board members each year. To make a much appreciated contribution, please send your name, address, and phone number with a check payable to PNFPN to P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

God's Most Wanted: "Salty NFP Promoters"

Jesus proclaimed: "You are the salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13). His words, of course, are timely and compelling. He challenges us to be "salty" witnesses in this culture that desperately needs the "seasoning" that is NFP. How can we be salty NFP promoters?

First: salt seasons. We can enthusiastically speak of the goodness that NFP brings to a marriage. Fertility is respected; marriage is strengthened.

Second: salt purifies. We can pray for and with all those who sin in their acceptance of contraception (and its consequent "fruit," abortion). It is telling to remember that Jesus' words were often unsettling, downright annoying, and, yes, sometimes offensive. His speech was "seasoned with salt." He audaciously "salted" his remarks with specific reference to blind guides, whitewashed tombs, and broods of vipers. He promoted views thoroughly at odds with aspects of his culture. Christ calls us to salt the wounds of our day with the truth of the Gospel.

Third: salt preserves. "Be ever ready to give a reason for the hope that lies within you," Peter advised (I Ptr 3:1). This involves a readiness to think deeply and a readiness for serious conversations and arguments—a salty apologetics.

Stating this another way, C. S. Lewis is refreshingly direct: "It is our painful duty to wake the world from an enchantment." It is time to be the "salt of the earth." It is time to confront the contemporary enchantment of the contraceptive mentality, to "salt" the dangerously icy roads of relativism and hedonism and make them safe with God's standards of holiness; to proclaim with conviction that God's plan for love and life is for our good.

Each day God says: "Season, preserve, purify." Enter the "salt of the earth" NFP promoters, who take their mission seriously. Perhaps we could begin to season our surroundings, shake up the next person we meet with a zesty, "Have you ever heard about NFP?" Let's pray to have a "salty day."

Excerpted from www.woomb.com

MT. KISCO, NY • NOVEMBER 10
Education Phase I for FertilityCare™ practitioners and instructors to be held at the Our Lady of Mt. Kisco Retreat Center. For more information or for an application, contact Kathy Rivet, FertilityCare™ Education Program Coordinator, St. Joseph Hospital, Nashua, NH. (603) 595-3947 or krivet@sjh-nh.org

Update on NFP Witness Couples Speakers Center

We are up and running! The Family Life Office has now publicized the existence of the NFP Speakers Center to all pastors and parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

To date, we have twelve “warrior couples” who have been through one of the two training sessions that have been held. These couples are available to fill requests made by priests and Pre-Cana teams to give a powerful witness to engaged couples on the virtues of NFP—and its positive impact on their marriage.

We have had several requests for presentations already, and—praise God—we’ve been able to meet every one.

Still, we need more “workers in the vineyard.” The next training session will be held on Tuesday, October

16 at St. Charles Seminary from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. If you are interested in sharing the joy of Natural Family Planning and would like to present this alternative to couples who probably will not hear about NFP anywhere else, please consider attending the training.

We owe it to engaged couples to try, as St. Paul says, to show them a better way. If we don’t get the message out, and at least give them the information, they will most likely choose to use contraception, just as the overwhelming majority of married couples currently do.

Please prayerfully consider joining our team. If you would like to attend the October 16 training, or if you have any questions at all about the program, please contact Michael Castagno at (215) 884-8555 ext. 10 (w) or (215) 885-8388 (h).

The “Net”works *NFP Classes and Introductory Sessions*

ORELAND, PA

SEPTEMBER 19 • OCTOBER 24 • NOVEMBER 14
Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue. Contact Barbara Rose, RN, FCP, at (215) 884-2922 for more information and registration.

CHALFONT, PA

SEPTEMBER 21 • OCTOBER 26 • NOVEMBER 30
Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at 800 Manor Drive. Contact Liz Parrish, RN, CFCP, at (215) 249-9829 for more information and registration.

VOORHEES, NJ • SEPTEMBER 27

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Couple to Couple League will be held at 7:00 pm at the Barry Brown Health Education Center. This is a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. For directions and registration call (856) 583-6120 or e-mail: nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org

YARDLEY, PA • OCTOBER 9

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP at St. Ignatius Church, 999 Reading Ave. For more information or registration, please call (215) 587-5639.

LANSDALE, PA • OCTOBER 13

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP at St. Stanislaus Church at the intersection of Main Street and Lansdale Avenue. For more information or registration, please call (215) 587-5639.

PHILADELPHIA, PA • OCTOBER 23

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP at Nazareth Hospital, 2601 Holme Avenue. For more information or registration, please call (215) 587-5639.

MT. LAUREL, NJ • NOVEMBER 6

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Couple to Couple League will be held at 7:00 pm at St. John Neumann Church. This is a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. For directions and registration, call (856) 778-0005 or email: nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org

MEADOWBROOK, PA • NOVEMBER 10

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP at Holy Redeemer Provincialate House, 1648 Huntingdon Pike. For more information or registration, please call (215) 587-5639.

New Marriage Prep Program *Continued from front cover*

engaging in sexual acts. The team should not argue this point with the couples, but help them to understand this as a deepening of their faith. They should discuss living chastely after marriage with Natural Family Planning. In addition to an introduction to the method, material should be available for couples to investigate for themselves. They can be encouraged to do this by emphasizing self-giving love and the issues involved.

The last area of focus is mission. This section will help engaged couples see that they are called to be the domestic church. When they enter their house, is it like

a sanctuary or church? What do they watch on TV? What is in the house that shows that they are disciples of Christ? The future of the Church goes by the way of the family. Most importantly, the team couples should share their Christian faith with the engaged couples. What does it mean to be faithful? What do the unitive and procreative aspects of our lives mean? What does "until death do us part" mean? How is self-giving love experienced in our marriage?

For further information, contact the Family Life Office at (215) 587-5639 or visit their website:

www.archdiocese-phl.org/evangelization/famlife/marriage.htm

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Do you have any news?

Life Cycles is your newsletter. Please remember to contact the editor or staff whenever you have information that would be valuable to PNFPN members. Please share with us your NFP training sessions, fertility appreciation programs, and outreach activities. We also love to hear about God's little blessings, so please send us announcements of births or adoptions. For more information on how to submit news and information, contact George Finnin at grfinnin@verizon.net.

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