

To: Parish Council Christian Family Life Chairpersons

From: Bernice Gobeil, Christian Family Life, Regina Diocesan Chair.

Greetings to all my sisters in the League. This is my first communique as Christian Family Life Diocesan Chair. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I pray I will do justice in this convenership.

Marriage Mentoring Open To All Couples

According to statistics from the Vanier Institute, marriages in Canada have a 59% success rate. The good news is that couples who undergo marriage preparation and ongoing mentoring have a success rate of 80 to 90 %.

Brent Trickett is the national co-ordinator for **Family Life Canada's Marriage mentoring initiative.**

Marriage mentoring pairs you with an older couple who wants to listen to you and invest in your lives. This isn't crisis counselling, but rather an opportunity to share your story and learn from the Life experience of another couple.

The initiative was launched two years go by Family Life Canada. Eligible younger couples are those who want more from their marriage, who feel they are stuck or drifting apart. Or perhaps they're doing well, but want to strengthen their relationship.

These couples will meet with mentor couples once a month for 60 to 90 minutes. Each month they'll have one of 14 different conversations exploring topics of importance to strong marriages such as gratitude, showing love , communication, house-hold partnership, spirituality and physical intimacy, parenting, and more. In the month between meetings, the mentored couples will have a project they can do to actively solidify what they've learned.

Mentoring is all about having conversations together. The goal is not to teach. It's less a study and more about discussing where the couple wants to head in the future, something they decide together.

The Marriage Mentoring Initiative works through churches and organizations that want to become a marriage mentor centre. Couples looking for mentoring can find the nearest centre by going to MarriageMentoringInitiative.com and plugging in their postal code or city.

“If there isn't a centre nearby, directions are on the website for a church to get set up to train marriage mentors,” Trickett says.

Information by itself rarely changes a person. It's relationships and habits built that do. In a mentoring relationship, mentors help couples make decisions about where they want to go in the future, then help them do it.

Trickett says mentor couples are people who have good and stable marriages. They also have a heart for others, a desire to listen, a willingness to share their life and their story, and 90 minutes a month for a conversation with another couple.

A marriage need not be in trouble to benefit from mentoring. Any marriage can become better. Great marriages have a better chance of producing great families. Great marriages create stability which is good for children, and generally results in longer life for the couple

The cost for the mentoring program? Sixty to 90 minutes of time out of each month for one year— a bargain no matter how you look at it.

This concludes my communique.

Bernice Gobeil.

Resource material: an article written by Darlene Polachic in the Prairie Messenger.