

Syllabus for Marriage Preparation Course

Approved by the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants, for the Use of the Course Centers outside the Syro Malabar Eparchies in India and Abroad

Introduction: The sacred tradition of the celebration of the sacrament of marriage and marital life in the Syro-Malabar Church

I. Marriage: Covenant and Sacrament

- Marriage and Family: According to Major Religions in the world
- Family in the Bible
- Marriage: in the Redemptive plan-Couples become one with Christ-Sacramental fruits of marriage
- Marriage: oneness and inseparability
- Marriage: friendship and procreation of children
- Marriage: self surrender and mutual understanding-
- Sacrament of Marriage: The sacramental implications; liturgical celebration of the celebration of marriage

II. Marriage: Canon law and civil law

- Valid and Invalid marriage
- Canonical impediments (obstructions)- nullity from marital impediments- negative aspects during marriage promises
- Canonical order of marriage, mixed marriage, marriage between different denominations- validity of marriage
- Canonical solutions to the issues in marriage
- Marital divorce, separation of spouses, dismissal of marriage-civil law
- Christian marriage-invalidity of marriage in civil law
- Marital divorce
- Proposed Christian marriage bill (for those in India)

III. Self awareness and personality development

- Self knowledge / self-self awareness and transparency-openness and daringness
- Self esteem and courage
- Inborn qualities and creativity
- Self confidence and realistic mentality
- Social awareness and sensitivity
- Moral consciousness and solidarity feelings
- Integral personality: physical-emotional-social –moral maturity.

IV. Communications in the family

- To strengthen the mutual understanding between spouses there should be sufficient interactive communication.
- Caring for the other- respect emotions/ opinions /interest
- Avoid parallel communication, hidden communication, defects in communication
- Control of the tongue/ ability to forgive and forget
- Importance of family counseling

V. Men-women biology

- Body structure of men and women
- Theology of body and sexuality
- Sexual illness – sexual deflection or deviation
- AIDS awareness

VI. Psychology of women & men

- Ability of both men and women to analyze and take decision
- Swiftness in expressing emotions
- Interpersonal and social relationship
- Variations in sexual reaction and implications for spiritual and prayer life
- Psychology of men & women at physical, mental and emotional levels and at social, moral and spiritual levels.
- Psychology of men and women: in different ages: during marriage, when becomes a parent, significance of mid- age and the psychology of the aged

VII. Sexual morality in marital life

- Sexuality as God's gift
- Purity and holiness – marital and moral statutes
- Conjugal life giving surrender –
- Premarital and extra marital affairs
- Sexual disorder and impotency
- Immorality of artificial means of preventing pregnancy and the practice of sterilization
- Abortion: a mortal sin and unethical practices of using modern mechanism for pregnancy.

VIII. Responsible parenthood

- Value of life and the glory of human beings
- Natural means of family planning (Billings' method)
- Pregnancies, delivery, care for children, parenting - physical – mental – and emotional development during infancy, childhood, teenage etc.
- Human and religious formation
- Giving right education and providing the best context for integral growth.
- Other points to remember while bringing up their children

IX Family problems and possible solutions

a) Inter-personal relations in the Family

Avoid prejudices and suspicion

Foster tolerance and harmony

Face challenges and conflicts in an even mindedness (equanimity)

Understand the problems of the other if he/she is an employer

Keep good relationship with in-laws and relatives of the spouse

Nuclear family

Problems in the family due to one man's rule

b) Financial standardization

- Habit of earning and spending in moderate way
- Eco-friendly life and life situations
- Hygienic - physiotherapy – indigenous treatment
- Avoid prodigality, lavishness and luxury life
- Fight against consumerist business culture
- Avoid bad habits – like drinking, drugs, smoking, chewing pan etc.

c) Media literacy

- Influence of advertisement
- Avoid superstitious beliefs and practices
- Significance of Christian mass media, audio visuals and publications

X. Spirituality in the family

- Family: family as the church, temple, divine tent
- Marriage: call to holiness
- Reading of the Holy Scripture
- Family prayer: Power house of the family
- Sacramental life: Ways for sanctification of the family
- Traditional spirituality
- Celebrations of the liturgical seasons,
- Observations of penance
- Charities and acts of mercy

XI. Ideal family in the third millennium

- Jesus: head of the family
- Holy family: model of a family
- Family: fertile land of virtues
- Gospel values in the family
- Love and compassion
- Sacrifice, service, reconciliation and righteousness
- Peace and tranquility
- Formation of conscience
- Customs and courtesy
- Resistance towards evils
- Civic and social consciousness

XII. Sin - sacrament of reconciliation – graceful life

- Sin: Alienation from God, Human beings and nature
- Transgression of commandments ten commandments and laws of the Church duties living up to the Vocation of family life
- Evaluation of life and change of heart
- Sacrament of reconciliation
- Observations of rites and practices
- A life fitting to receive the eternal reward

XIII. Theme for group discussion

- a) Signs of a mature person
- b) Ideal husband/ wife; model father / mother
- c) Things to keep in mind before choosing the partner
- d) Main reasons of the family problems
- e) External factors that influence the family today
- f) The necessary articles that should have in a Christian family
- g) Changes in the construction of family; advantage or disadvantage
(Joint family – nuclear family – family of one man’s rule)
- h) How to face marital family problems
- i) Characteristics of an ideal Christian family
- j) Importance of pious associations/organizations in the sanctification of Christian families
- k) Parents gathering in pre-marriage course

Approved by



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