



ADVENTIST
**ENGAGED
ENCOUNTER**

A MARRIAGE PREPARATION MODEL

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Where we stand.

US Demographic Data

2013 Pew Research Center nationwide survey identifies new “marriage gap” aligned with growing income gap.

- college educated adults with a good income marry at a higher rate
- Lower socio-economic and lower educated individuals are less likely to marry

Marriage Age & Rates

- ❑ In 1960, two thirds (**68%**) of all twentysomethings were married. In 2008, just **26%** were married.
- ❑ About half (**52%**) of all adults in this country were married in 2008; back in 1960, seven in ten (**72%**) were.
- ❑ 2017 Average age of couples (M&F) at 1st marriage = 27

Is Marriage Becoming Obsolete?

- Nearly four in ten 2013 survey respondents **(39%) say that it is obsolete;**
- In 1978 when Time magazine posed this question to registered voters, just **28% said marriage was obsolete.**

America's Optimism

Americans are more upbeat about the future of **marriage and family**

67% say they are **optimistic** than about the future of the country's:

- ▶ educational system (50% optimistic)
- ▶ economic system (46% optimistic)
- ▶ morals and ethics (41% optimistic)

The Definition of Family.

By emphatic margins, **the public does not see marriage as the only path to family formation.**

86% say a single parent and child constitute a family; nearly as many (80%) say an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family; and 63% say a gay or lesbian couple raising a child is a family. **The presence of children clearly matters in these definitions.** If a cohabiting couple has no children, a majority of the public says they are not a family. **Marriage matters, too. If a childless couple is married, 88% consider them to be a family.**

Changing Attitudes:

Emerging definitions of family

- ❑ People under 30 are generally more tolerant
- ❑ secular individuals are more tolerant
- ❑ Married individuals are less tolerant
- ❑ Blacks are more tolerant
- ❑ A third (34%) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a good thing; 29% say it is a bad thing and 32% say it makes little or no difference.

Readiness for Marriage.

Some 67% of survey respondents say that in order to be ready for marriage, it's very important for a man to be able to support his family financially; just 33% say the same about a woman.

The Rise of Cohabitation.

As marriage has declined, cohabitation (or living together as unmarried partners) has become more widespread, **nearly doubling since 1990**, according to the Census Bureau. In the Pew Research survey, **44% of all adults** (and more than half of all adults ages 30 to 49) say they have cohabited at some point in their lives. Among those who have done so, about two thirds **(64%)** **say they thought of this living arrangement as a step toward marriage.**

In Marriage, Love Outweighs Money.

Far more married adults say that love (93%), making a lifelong commitment (87%) and companionship (81%) are very important reasons to get married.

Whereas, 59% say the same about having children and 31% say financial stability are important reasons to get married.

Unmarried adults order these items the same way.

However, fewer than one third (28%) of survey respondents agree that there is “only one true love”.

Preparing for Marriage.

ADDRESSING THE NEED

Types of Marriage Preparation.

- ❑ Pastoral Counseling
- ❑ Therapist Provided
- ❑ Structured curriculum based sessions i.e. Prepare Enrich
- ❑ Structured curriculum based retreat



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Overview:

- ❑ Experiential weekend retreat
- ❑ Biblically based – Adventist expression
- ❑ Presentations and guided dialog

AEE Benefits.

- Retreat style
- Training/Equipping Curriculum
- Equal Time
- Marriage Mentors
- Dialog Journals
- Integration of Values and Mission
- Permission

Program Flow

Weekend

- ▶ Friday 3-4 hrs - Sabbath 10-12 hrs - Sunday 3-4 hrs

Sessions

- ▶ Mentor Couple Present Topic with personal insights
- ▶ Dialog Question
- ▶ Couples Separate and individually respond in writing
- ▶ Couples Reunite in a semi-private location on-site, share, respond.

Sample Dialog Question

From AEE TALK: “Searching for Love and Respect”

What qualities do I like best about me?

What qualities do I like best about you?

What qualities do I like best about us?

HDTMMF

Topics

- ❑ **Discovery of Feelings**
- ❑ **Human need for inner healing**
- ❑ **Searching for Love and Respect**
- ❑ **Praying Couple**
- ❑ **Marriage Mansion (spiritual divorce)**
- ❑ **Areas for Reaching Out**
- ❑ **Keys to Dialog: Confidence, Forgiveness, & Healing**
- ❑ **Couple Restoration**
- ❑ **Spirituality of Sexuality**
- ❑ **Money Matters**
- ❑ **Mission of Our Home**
- ❑ **Plan of Life : Plan the Marriage, not just the wedding**

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