

Dear Mentor Couple,

Thank you for your willingness to embark on an extremely important and life-changing journey! Your marriage *is* the sacrament of Christ's love, whereby others receive the grace of experiencing the love of God in a tangible way. Mentors serve engaged and civilly married couples by being an incarnation of the free, total, faithful, and fruitful love the couples are preparing to enter into—this is the greatest gift a couple can receive! You will share the story of your love and your family life, and you will both learn that no individual—and no couple—is an island. Community is essential to a healthy marriage and family! Through this process, you will grow tremendously in your own marriage and find that you receive more than what you are giving.

Beginning the Journey of Mentoring

Witness to Love mentors reach their full potential when they become trusted friends, a “safe haven” and a “secure base” as they accompany the engaged or civilly married couple during this time of preparation and beyond the wedding day:

Attachment Theory: Attachment theory is a well-researched model of how people develop a sense of “felt security” and basic trust in close relationships. A person's history of attachment experiences shapes the current pattern of their relational thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. An enduring bond will form between you and your couple through carefully constructed activities, conversations, and virtue development.

Safe Haven: Through your own vulnerability, you become a “safe-haven,” or a place where couples feel free to explore and share their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and struggles. Witnessing how you have endured in your own personal and marital challenges, encourages couples to foster openness and hope in their own relationship. Because of the personal and sensitive nature of what will be shared, it is extremely important that couples honor one another by keeping strict confidentiality.

Secure Base: It is through your wisdom, witness, and consistent emotional and practical support that you become a “secure base” or “stronger, wiser other” for the engaged or civilly married couple. In the best case, the couple you are mentoring will instinctively turn to you during times of stress, emotional struggle, or when making important decisions. Make it a point to be as present to them during this time and in the first five years of their marriage.

Through God's grace, you provide at least part of the attachment security and safety necessary for the couple's growth and maturation as individuals, as a couple, and as they blossom into a family. But you cannot be “all things” to them! Know your limitations and understand that you are not expected to be spiritual directors, conflict mediators, or counselors. If there are serious interpersonal issues, encourage your couple to seek help from a professional counselor. If you are uncertain of something regarding faith and morals, consult with or recommend a priest or deacon. When in doubt, do not hesitate to reach out to your parish or diocesan Marriage Prep Coordinator for guidance.

A deepened personal relationship with God, and prayerful reliance on Him is vital during this process. Be assured of our prayers for you on this exciting journey.

In His Love,



(Over)

About the Workbook

The Couple's Workbook is a powerful resource that helps couples identify areas of improvement, and provides a proven plan to achieve growth in the virtues necessary for a strong and joy-filled marriage. You are encouraged to work through the same material as the couple you are mentoring and share your experience at each meeting. Please also read together the *Mentor's Journey* handbook that was included with your materials. This will help you understand the foundations of the program, and better prepare you to walk with the couple you are mentoring through this process. These are general guidelines for each section of the workbook. Some chapters have additional (or fewer) sections particular to that lesson.

Sections 1-3 are to be completed with your beloved. Section 4 is to be completed individually. These sections should be completed no more than two days before your scheduled meeting. The remaining sections will be completed during the meeting with your couple and in the days following your meeting.

- 1. Introduction-** each chapter begins with an introduction to the virtues (Gear You Need) and themes (Mountains to Conquer) for that chapter.
- 2. A True Story-** brings to life either a key virtue or theme from the chapter. Think of your own story to tell.
- 3. Let's Talk About It-** includes questions to prompt an honest conversation with your beloved regarding the themes for that chapter.
- 4. Extremes & Remedies-** this section gives you a closer look at the virtues for that chapter, especially by assessing how much of a given virtue you've built into your character. Each virtue has two extremes or vices—a deficiency (too little) and an excess (too much). You will rate yourself on a scale for each virtue in a given chapter. This section should be completed individually.
- 5. Meeting with Your Couple-** after catching up and welcoming your couple:
 - Begin with the *Daily Couple Prayer* found at the beginning of each chapter and discuss how things went over the last few weeks. Encourage your couple if they seemed to have struggled.
 - Watch the *Witness Couple Video* on the Witness to Love app (app.witnessstolove.org). Your parish or diocesan marriage prep coordinator should give you access during your orientation meeting.
 - Have a *Group Discussion* about the virtues and themes present in the *True Story* and *Witness Couple Video*. You should share your own witness on how you've conquered a "mountain" or have grown in the virtues highlighted in this chapter. Use the discussion questions as a guide if you need something to get the conversation going.
 - In Chapter 5 (or Chapter 3 for the Civil Marriage Initiative), you will have a chance to share, build friendship, ask questions, and learn about the sacrament of Marriage with your priest or deacon. Preferably, couples would have attended a marriage prep retreat by this point. Be sure to schedule the Chapter 5 (or CMI Chapter 3) meeting with your priest/deacon and couple well in advance!
- 6. Action Plan-** at the end of the meeting, you will each choose a virtue to grow in for the weeks following the meeting. Help your couple come up with a plan and share your own plan for growth and accountability.
- 7. Follow-Up-** review each day with your spouse using the GRACE Daily Examen. After two weeks, check in with your couple to see how it's been going for them. Two days before your next meeting, review Sections 1-4 of the following chapter.
- 8. Invitation to Go Deeper: Scripture & Tradition-** this section allows for some time to reflect on the teachings of Christ and His Church on marriage using the *Nuptial Blessing* from the Rite of Marriage, Sacred Scripture, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.