



Marriage **Ministries**



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Marriage Ministries was born to look at the reality of marriages in general and at marriages in the Christian church in particular. We have to admit that unresolved problems in marriage grow every day and, in many cases, bring marriages to the point of separation and divorce. "What do we do?" is the compelling question for those of us who are involved in ministry and committed to God to carry out his mission.

If we read the Bible carefully we see that marriage was the plan of God from the beginning.

"The Lord God said: 'it is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" Genesis 2:18 (NIV) God did not create woman to be an instrument of torture, nor to be in competition with man, on the contrary, He created woman to be equal to man and, at the same time, different, the perfect complement.

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them..." Genesis 1:27-28a (NIV). Therefore, we can say that marriage is an institution that was born from the heart of God. It is not a social invention, nor a fashion. "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" Genesis 2:24 (NIV). We believe that marriage is a sacred institution that we must take care of and protect from the attacks of the evil one, who was commissioned to attack from the beginning (Genesis 3). God's plan from the beginning was that together, a man and a woman would live as a married couple, in companionship and harmony, forming the basic unit of mankind.

Today we have an urgent need to develop, in our local churches, a ministry for marriages from a pastoral perspective. We must turn our view to the principles established by God in his Word, make them a reality in our lives, and promote them in our churches to ensure that every day there are more and more happy marriages.

Purpose and Objectives

Marriage is a unit that is composed of two very different people, with complementary personalities and characteristics, which needs to grow and develop fully. For this purpose, Marriage Ministries was created, with the overall purpose and objectives below and is divided into five areas, which are: spiritual, emotional, social, physical and mental.

Overall Purpose: To create opportunities for marriages to have time to grow, mature, enjoy, learn and share together what God has for them.

Objectives:

Spiritual

1. Facilitate spiritual growth among marriages.
2. Help families find God's plan for their lives.
3. Bring to the Lord those spouses who do not know Christ.

Emotional

1. Provide resources and information so that couples can work on their marital relationships.

2. Provide support tools to help with the different stages of crisis that marriages face (birth of first child, job loss, moving to a new house or a new country, death of a child, etc..).
3. Pastorally accompany and guide in the process of emotional healing.

Social

1. Assist married couples in learning to socialize with other married couples.
2. Provide opportunities where couples can share their experiences with each other in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.
3. Establish ties with married couples who do not know Christ in a way that is conducive for evangelism.

Physical

1. Raise awareness among married couples to pamper their spouse.
2. Create opportunities for married couples to learn to enjoy physical activity.
3. Provide adequate nutritional information.

Mental

1. Provide adequate information for a fulfilled married life.
2. Renew the way you think about marriage, creating a bridge between the universal and superior principles of God and your own styles of marriage.
3. Help to incorporate, in daily life, the biblical principles of God for marriage.

The Directors

This is a very important element of the development of this ministry. It must not be taken lightly nor overstated. It's just as bad to think that anyone can lead this ministry as it is to think that no one can lead this ministry. Both are traps of the enemy and we must not be conquered by them.

The directors of Marriage Ministries will be on "display" in front of other marriages at all times. The directors will therefore serve as a reference for other marriages and a role model for young people who are thinking of one day being married. It is not about having directors to organize some activities for the year, it's looking for people who will face this task with a pastoral vision. Therefore, with all this in mind, it is necessary to make certain considerations.

Prayer: It is normal that the desire of our heart is to assist when there is a necessity or an urgency to implement a ministry that needs help, but we tend to neglect a key first step: prayer. Jesus warned us of the lack of laborers for the task but also told us where to go for them: "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers". It is clear that all ministries must begin by seeking the Lord. He will guide us to the right people to carry out the important task of ministering to marriages.

Marriage: It is essential that this task be led by a married couple. The nature of the ministry requires it. We can cause major problems if we allow a single man or woman to lead a ministry to married couples. We must also be sure that those chosen to lead are legally married (recognized by the state/country) and that their marriage is recognized by the Christian church. If we are not sure, it is necessary that we ask for proof.

Members of the local church: As we said before, the directors of the Marriage Ministries will be a couple that will, at all times, serve as an example to the congregation. Whether we like it or not they will be the reference when talking about marriage. Therefore, the Marriage Ministries directors must be members in good standing of the local church where the ministry is developed. This means that they must be people with an obvious commitment to the Lord and active in the local church.

A good testimony: Christian witness is a requirement of every Christian and it becomes essential when we hold a leadership position. It is not a question of whether or not they are good people, but are they people who embody the principles and values of the Word of God, and do they put those principles and values into practice in their marriage and everyday life.

An inspiring marital life: We are talking about people that can infect your joy by sharing their married lives, lives that reflect God's purpose for marriage.

Responsible: The marriage directors must be responsible for their commitments. Dates, times and places should be respected at all times, because constant change produces instability in ministry.

Description of Local Functions

Responsibility: Local Directors

Area of Responsibility: The local church

Period of Responsibility: According to the time for which they are elected

Reports: in writing, to the Adult Ministries Council or MIEDD board.

It is important that the directors of the Marriage Ministries are a married couple of good standing and that they are active participants in the local church. They should serve on the Adult Ministries Council and be accountable to the same.

The directors must:

1. Report to, present proposals to and solicit funds from the local Adult Ministries Council.
2. Determine the needs and interests of the married couples of the local congregation, through observation, study and any other way possible.
3. Provide to married couples of the church a place in which to minister to other married couples.
4. Promote and publicize the activities for Marriage Ministries, in all possible ways.
5. Identify areas of need within the church and the community in which the Marriage Ministries can help.

6. Provide Bible studies, prayer groups and other means to help marriages develop and grow spiritually.
7. Help couples develop and use their talents, gifts and abilities.
8. Incorporate Marriage Ministries into the overall program of the church.
9. Cooperate with the district directors of Marriage Ministries, completing requested report forms and promoting district activities.
10. Work in coordination with the director of Adult Ministries to avoid conflicting dates with other activities.

Description of District Functions

Responsibility: District Directors

Area of Responsibility: The Entire District

Period of Responsibility: According to the time for which they are elected

Reports: in writing, to the District Adult Ministries Council and the District Convention of MIEED.

It is important that the District Marriage Ministries directors are a married couple in good standing, that they participate in the District Adult Ministries Council if there is one, if not then they should serve on the District MIEDD Board and should be accountable to the same.

The directors must:

1. Report to, present proposals to and solicit funds from the District Adult Ministries Council.
2. Know what materials are widely available to the Marriage Ministries in the region.
3. Share the information they receive from the region or the area with the local directors of Marriage Ministries.
4. Serve as advisors for the local directors of Marriage Ministries.
5. Encourage and assist in the implementation of Marriage Ministries in each local Church on their district.
6. Monitor and evaluate the activities of the District Marriage Ministries.
7. Form a Council, if possible, to plan and execution the activities of Marriage Ministries, on the district.
8. Prepare a well-developed program that addresses the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical and social needs of marriages.
9. Establish, if possible, a newsletter to keep local directors informed of District Marriage Ministries news, resources and activities.

10. Share ideas, concerns and suggestions with the District Office and the Regional Office of MIEDD for the improvement of the ministry.

The Beginning

The beginning is the key to the meetings of married couples, because this will determine the assistance to future activities. The following suggestions will be used to organize the first meeting and should be taken into account for the following meetings. It must be punctual, dynamic, in an informal environment, participatory and social.

Punctuality: you must start at the set time with the first couples to arrive. Do not wait for anyone, but start with those who are present. This will set the stage for subsequent meetings. In addition, you must honor those who arrive on time. We must be considerate of those that must arrange for a child care in order to attend these meetings, so that they return home at the set time. So, respect both the start time and end time. At the first meeting you can use a few minutes at the beginning to have the couples fill out an information sheet that will help those who will be organizing the activities (see annexes). Perhaps to encourage timely arrival, you can announce that there will be a prize for the couple who arrives first at the next meeting. The prize should not be something expensive, it can be a candy or a simple decoration for the home, etc.

Dynamics: In this type of meeting you should avoid having one person talk for an hour. Divide the time into several short segments so that there is variety in the program.

Casual atmosphere: It is a meeting of married couples and, as such, must be different from a worship service. There may be a prayer at the beginning and ending and a topic to be addressed but avoid making it like a worship service (choirs, prayer requests, offering, preaching, etc.). If you want to have a worship service for married couples, that can be arranged in a different setting on a special day and can include sermons and programs in keeping with the theme.

When we say informal meeting we are referring to a relaxed atmosphere where people can feel at home with a group of friends. This will help if someone was to invite their husband or wife who is not a Christian or a married friend who does not know the Lord. You can play instrumental music in the background; decorate with flowers or candles, among other things, which will help to create a good atmosphere.

Participation: It is good to have people participate in the activity. There should be different dynamics, and time where spouses can talk together. We must avoid making couples share intimacies with the rest of the group, since marriage for many is very private, and this can make them feel uncomfortable.

Beware! We must know the couples and if there are married couples in which someone does not like to talk, we must not expose them and make them uncomfortable, because they may not return. Little by little we must get to know the group.

It is important that we take time to understand the needs of couples and not presuppose the topics that the married couples are interested in. Therefore, the first meeting is a good time to take time and collect topic ideas that are of interest to the group. To do this, allow everyone to participate so that everyone has the opportunity to present their topics of interest. These topics will be the working material for upcoming meetings.

Social: If you have created a nice atmosphere the couples will want to stay and chat for a while after the meeting. At the end of the meeting, you can provide coffee and soft drinks and a snack to share. Each couple can take a turn to bring cookies or sandwiches so that everyone has the opportunity to bring something to share to future meetings. This will depend on the group. At the first meeting you can ask for help from the couples to see who is willing to participate in bringing something.

In the appendices section you will find a suggested program for the first meeting.

Activities

To accomplish the overall purpose of Marriage Ministries you should develop different activities. These activities must be carefully planned taking into account the different objectives that Marriage Ministries pursues.

Some activities may be:

1. Visits

The directors of Marriage Ministries must maintain a good relationship with all marriages. They should seize every opportunity to get closer to them. By generating informal meetings (a meal, a cup of coffee, a walk, etc.) you can spend time talking to and getting to know each of the married couples. Keep in mind special dates that will help you in your approach. For example: birthday, anniversary, illness, birth of a child, mother's day, father's day, graduation of either of the spouses or of their children, etc.

2. Dinners

It may be fitting to organize a dinner occasionally, perhaps you can schedule a dinner twice a year or more depending on the availability of the group. This must be a special dinner in a romantic place with a good view, or if you are going to do in the church or in a room in a home, you should decorate the room for the occasion. You can use candles, nice tablecloths, have beautiful heart-shaped nametags or something related to the theme and decorations on the wall, etc. The purpose of the dinner is to provide an opportunity for the married couples to have a special time for them. Do not fill the time with activities, but promote dialog between the spouses. The dinner can have a theme and you can have everything revolve around that theme. The following is a possible program:

Opening Prayer

Background music

(Instrumental music or songs that speak of marriage)

Dinner

Devotional

(Do not talk for more than 30 minutes and it can be presented while people are eating or after dinner.)

Dessert

3. Conferences

These are conferences about different topics to help marriages. Conferences are open to the community. You can invite specialists to speak about the different topics of interest. A key aspect for the success of these conferences is the promotion.

4. Meetings

These meetings can be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. You should bear in mind when preparing for these meetings that they should be attractive and they should not end up being monotonous or routine.

5. Crusades (EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS)

In these crusades, the theme of the sermons should be about marriage. It is an excellent time to invite those couples that do not know the Lord, which you have been reaching out to at other activities of Marriage Ministries.

6. Picnics

Picnics can be a day with all the families. It's good to have it outdoors where there is room to have games with the different ages. You can play games where participants are; married couples, or where a child and a parent comprise a team, or have siblings be together (see games in appendices).

7. Retreats

Is important to conduct retreats where married couples can go alone, without the kids, and spend a night or two away from home together. Many couples, after the honeymoon (and sometimes not even on the honeymoon), have not had the opportunity to spend time alone together.

Counseling

When developing a pastoral ministry to marriages we must think about the comprehensive care of both spouses. Therefore, it is very important that you make available to these marriages a service specialized in counseling marriages. It may not be possible to have a specialist in all the local churches but we can try to have one or more mature married couple(s) that would be available to meet with the married couples that require counseling.

The majority of the marital problems will solve themselves through the tools that, in the development of this ministry, we are providing them. However, you may have certain crisis or situations that will require a "good external arbitration", an aid outside of the struggling couple. This is when you need a ministry of counseling. If your local church doesn't have a counseling ministry, it would be a good idea to find a local counselor that you can recommend if they are needed.

Aspects to consider for counselors

First, it is recommended that they are married, that they are members in good standing of the local church where this ministry is being developed, they have been married not less than 10 years, are good witnesses and have an inspiring married life.

It is also important that both spouses show aptitude for marriage counseling. It can be measured by the following eight aspects:

1. Love. This is an element that cannot be absent in any task that we perform for the Lord, especially when the task is directly related to people. We must feel real passion for those to whom we are going to or are serving. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are ministering to hearts in need of guidance, healthy friendship and appropriate council to direct their lives.
2. Maturity. Paul, when describing to Timothy the aspects of a person aspiring to be in a leadership position, included: "Not a recent convert", 1 Timothy 3:6 (NIV). Maturity in the Christian life is fundamental to those who are advising and guiding others. A marriage needs to have a sufficiently solid experience with our Lord Jesus Christ and firm convictions to guide other marriages.
3. Respect. This requirement is a must. Under no circumstance, can we differentiate cultures, social groups, economic statuses, racial groups and much less religions. All people deserve our utmost respect. This aspect is a prerequisite for cultivating a relationship as a shepherd – sheep asking for marriage advice are looking for guidance and direction.
4. Confidentiality. This means that the problems that the married couple share, however simple they may seem, contain information of a confidential nature. Remember that it is very difficult for some married couples to be open and talk about their problems that are private; therefore if we violate this confidence, we can close a door that is very difficult to re-open. This includes using their story as an example in conversations, sermons or classes. It is important to keep confidentiality, since what have been shared are profound experiences and intimate feelings of people who decided to contact us in search of help.
5. Impartiality. Impartiality is a rule that Paul asked his spiritual son Timothy to comply with (1 Timothy 5:21) and in return it is asked of us today. In this type of work, where there are two people involved, we must make the maximum effort to remain impartial in any situation that is presented to us. Sometimes, the person who

describes to us the problem presents it portraying themselves as the only victim in the situation. We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated by the description of the problem, but look at the whole picture (listening to the other spouse) and then show them the biblical principles that will help them to reflect on the conflict.

6. Diligence. "Never be lacking in zeal (diligence), but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord". Romans 12:11 (NIV) Diligence, according to the dictionary means: "constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken; persistent exertion of body or mind" (Dictionary.com). The requisite of the apostle Paul in this regard is that, in matters that require diligence, we are not to be lazy but painstaking and fervent in spirit, because we are serving the Lord.

7. Tact. When we talk about tact we mean to be wise in our actions and words. To carry out the words of James when he says: "... Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry," James 1:19 (NIV). Advice is not to be given away unsolicited, so it is important to wait for married couples to come and seek help. It is not at all wise to go and interfere, offering help to those who have not asked for it. Nor is it good to express opinions or judge the actions of parents, in-laws or extended family.

Policies for marriage counseling

We always need a path to follow. That is precisely why we try to have a policy. These are not stumbling blocks or obstacles, nor are they shortcuts, the path is built with effort through actual experiences in the field. The policies are the guidelines to reaching a final goal. The secret is to respect and comply with absolute faithfulness to the policy in place, making it a tool that will help us in our daily work.

1. In no situation should literature, advice or anything else be sent to a third person.

The married couple that asked for advice should receive it from the counselors they approach and they (the married couple) will be the only ones who receive the advice. It may happen that, for example, a married couple concerned about their married friends tells the counselors about a situation and asks for advice that they can take to their friends or they ask for the counselors to send advice via a letter or by other means. Unaware of the real causes and other circumstances surrounding the situation, it is not right to give advice to those who have not requested it. When a married couple asks for advice, it increases their chances of being helped by 50%.

2. Never, under any circumstances, should you argue with the married couple you are advising.

One of the characteristics of the Christian counselor is being emotionally stable, in a word: steady. In the ministry of marriage counseling you will possibly deal with cases in which the situation of child abuse, spousal abuse or intolerant positions of the spouse will bring you to the edge of anger or raising your voice. Either spouse may also share an offensive opinion, an ironic comment or something like that toward your spouse or yourself. This must not be a reason to start an argument or respond in an inappropriate way and make the situation worse. Rather, we must take every possible advantage to make the married couple feel at ease and to facilitate restoration of their marriage.

3. You should never decide to advise a spouse based on the comments of the other spouse. Always listen to both sides. Every story has different versions. In the ministry of counseling you must be careful not to take sides. When you listen to only one of the spouses you will have a tendency to take their side, but it will not be an impartial decision if you didn't hear the other spouses' side. To solve this we must make it a rule that both of the spouses must attend counseling together.

4. Under no circumstances should you promise any service you cannot provide.

When we say “services that you cannot provide” we are referring to services that you are not qualified to provide, that you cannot do or that go against these policies. For example: make a personal visit to another married couple with problems, send literature to a spouse at the request of another, etc. You should never promise something you know you will not be able to adhere to.

5. Never try to advise in situations beyond your expertise.

You must remember that you are not professional counselors, so there will be cases that are beyond your abilities of counseling. Don't be afraid to recommend professional counselors to assist at these times. It's a good idea to look for professional, reliable, and available marital counselors in your area and develop a list of them to keep on hand.

Short bibliography of aid for counseling

Hamilton, James D. Ministry of Pastoral Counseling (Beacon Hill, USA, 1976)

Oates, Wayne E. New Dimensions in Pastoral Care (Fortress Press, USA, 1970) Pp. 86

Rice, Howard. The Pastor as Spiritual Guide (Upper Room Books, USA, 1999) Pp. 208

Appendix

Information Sheet

The full names, addresses, dates and other data are fundamental to the work of a pastor. Without them we can never maintain personal contact and following up with the married couples. Therefore it will be important to make some kind of data archive system. The best is index cards (sheets of white cardstock 5 x 3 (12.5 x 7.5 cm) or 6 x 4 inches (15 x 10 cm,)). They can be bought at a very low cost in the bookstores or office supply stores, but they can also be made.

The fact card can be designed in many different ways; however we present a simple model (example 1) that will serve well for the intended purpose.

Also the card may be used on both sides. On one side, you can write the full name and address of the married couple; on the other side of the card you can write in detail any other important information so you will have all the necessary data for each person.

These fact cards can be stored in a box or metal file in alphabetical order or in number order, etc.

Example 1

No. 1	
Wife's name:	
Birthday:	
Cell Number:	Work Number:
E-mail:	
Husband's Name:	
Birthday:	
Cell Number:	Work Number:
E-mail:	
Wedding Anniversary:	
Home Address:	
Home Telephone:	

Appendix

First meeting – Marriage Ministries

As couples arrive, have a badge with each person's name on it set out for them to pick up. Give each couple a pencil and a fact card to fill out while they are waiting the other couples to arrive.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome
3. Introduction of Participants – have each person introduce their spouse saying: their name, what they do for a living and something they like.
4. Explanation of Marriage Ministries.

Purpose

To whom the ministry is directed.

Introduction of those in charge - (You can present the pastor, the adult ministries director or the MIEDD Superintendent).

Meeting times - (You may present the annual calendar)

5. Dynamic Icebreaker

Goal: To see the degree of knowledge that spouses have about each other.

Materials: Cards and pens.

Directions: The couples will work sitting back to back. Each one must write their name on their card and respond to the following questions, which are read out loud by the person who is leading. When all the questions have been read, the couples turn around and compare their answers. The couple, who has the most matching answers, wins. You can reward the winning couple.

Questions:

1. If your spouse were to inherit \$100,000 what would you do?
2. What is the gift that your spouse most likes to receive?
3. What is your spouse's favorite color?
4. What is your spouse's shoe size?
5. What is your spouse's favorite food?
6. What is the greatest dream or desire of your spouse?
7. Does your spouse like pets? What kind? (cat, dog, fish, etc...)

8. What does your spouse like to do in their free time?
9. Does your spouse like sports?
10. How would your spouse react if you didn't wear your wedding ring?

6. Read Genesis 2:24 and 25.

Comment: This is the beginning, the divine model for marriage. A model that today is under discussion and is attacked in many ways. It would seem that this model is not relevant today, that it is only a concept (something from God's imagination), or that it is a big joke that God played on man and woman. Without doubt, married life is a model that requires a lot of work, it is not just a simple union, but it needs commitment and dedication by both the men and the women.

7. Brainstorming

Goal: To determine the main topics of concern to the marriages of our church and their order of importance.

Materials: Cards, pencils, newspaper and tape or whiteboard and markers.

Directions: In three minutes each married couple determines five major problems that, according to them, marriages face today and write them on the card. Then, each couple shares one of the items on their card and the other couples respond to it. Make a master list of the problems that every marriage faces and finally, all together, determine the level of importance for each of the items for future discussion.

8. Closing Prayer (Also pray for the food)
9. Food and Time of Fellowship

Appendix

Publicity

Publicity is a key element to the success of these activities. We should not minimize its importance or put it aside. It is important to make an annual plan for the activities of Marriage Ministries so that publicity can be done in a timely manner. When it comes to publicity, it is essential to place advertising where those you want to reach will see it. The general information of an advertisement must answer the questions: What? When? Where? You can add other information such as the purpose of the activity, etc., but never forget the general information. Never saturate the publicity with too much information or graphics, photos or designs, because it can be distracting and not achieve the objective. Finally, don't forget to include a map to the address where the activity will take place, as well as a telephone number in case someone gets lost in the attempt to arrive.

The following are some ways to promote these activities:

Posters

When we talk about this type of advertising we are referring to something you can see from far away. The minimum measurement should be 8.5 x 11 inches (letter size). Poster can be put on the bulletin board of the church or displayed in prominent locations for your target audience.

Flyer Advertising

Flyers can be different sizes, so, you can choose what is best for you. It is suggested to be about a quarter of a letter size sheet. This form of advertising is very useful when you need to make a large numbers of flyers to distribute around the community to promote an activity open to your neighbors.

Personal Invitations

Everyone is honored when they have a personal invitation to an event. Therefore, invest a little time for some activities and then send personalized invitations. Delivery is also important. You can deliver it after Sunday worship or at another activity, but try to make sure that the married couple is together.

Advertising in the Church Newsletter

Don't forget to use this way to promote the activities of the Marriage Ministries. Use the church newsletter whenever you can and but avoid using the same announcement. Be creative and change the announcement for each event so that people will always read it.

Advertising on the Churches General Calendar

If the church has a general calendar for all the activities of the church don't forget to put the activities of Marriage Ministries on it. Don't worry if the calendar is only in the pastor's office, at the secretary's desk or in the boardroom, in all of these places, people will see it and that's what is important.

Announcements from the Pulpit

If it is common in your church to make announcements from the pulpit do not pass up this opportunity.

Present the announcements in different ways: have the leader make the announcement, have a married couple, who has been blessed by attending a Marriage Ministries event, share their experience, have couples perform a short drama, have a transparency on the overhead projector prior to the start of the service, have puppets with an invented character make the announcement, have a Power Point presentation, have a video clip, be creative and come up with your own ideas as well.

Here are some games that you can use at appropriate activities.

Bursting Balloons

Materials: Balloons

String or yarn

The Game: Form teams of 2 (teams can be made up of a parent & child or a team can be a married couple). Give an inflated balloon and a string to each person. Use the string to tie the balloon your ankle. The teams must hold on to each other tightly. The object of the game is to burst the other teams' balloons by stomping on the balloons. The game ends when only one team has one (or both) of their balloon(s) still inflated. The winning team is the couple that still has an inflated balloon(s).

1. The Shoe Mystery

Materials: The shoes of those participating

The Game: (can be played with young people)

Ask the participants to take off their shoes and mix them up in a heap in a corner or off to the side. In the opposite corner form teams of three or more people. One person will be responsible to find the shoes of their group with clues give to them by their team. If the person responsible is unsuccessful, they must ask for more clues and go to search for the shoes again. When they succeed, the owner of the shoes that were found, puts them on, and becomes the one responsible for going out to find another pair of shoes. The game is repeated until every member of the team has their own shoes. The first team that finds all their shoes is the winner.

2. Water Race

Material: Disposable cup with water

The Game: Establish a starting point and a goal for this race, and then form teams of 4 participants (each family can be a team, if the family has more than four members, choose four to participate). Give each team member a plastic cup with water and have them stand in pairs, back to back, holding the cup with their arms. The objective of this game is to run toward the goal as quickly as possible without spilling the water. Give a prize to the couple that finishes first and to the couple that ends up with the driest shirts.

3. Freeze Ball

Materials: 1 Ball

The Game: A person stands with their back to the rest of the participants. They then throw the ball into the air while shouting the name of one of the people behind them. Then everyone runs, except for the person whose name was called, they must catch/get the ball. When the person, whose name was called, has the ball, they yell, "STOP" and everyone must freeze (stay in place). The person who has the ball is allowed to take 7 steps from where we got the ball up to the nearest person. Once they take 7 steps, they must throw the ball at the closest person trying to hit them with it. If they hit the person, that person becomes the one that will throw

the ball into the air and shout a new name. If they miss, the person who threw the ball throws it into the air and calls a new name.

4. In the Air

Materials: 1 Balloon per Team

The Game: Form teams of 3 or 4 participants each (or make each family a team). Each team holds hands to form a circle. Each team is given a balloon. The game consists of trying to keep the balloon in the air for as long as possible, but the team members can only blow at the balloon (hands cannot be used). Place a time limit on how long to play (for example 2 minutes or as long a song plays). The team that manages to keep the balloon in the air until the time is over or longer is the winner.

5. Charades

Materials: small sheets of paper and a clock to check the time

The Game: Prepare ahead of time pieces of paper with the names of Bible stories or Bible characters (3 or 4 clues per team.)

Form teams of 3 or 4 participants (or make each family a team). Each team, in turn, chooses a person who then randomly chooses a clue that contains the name of a Bible story or Biblical character. They then have 2 minutes to act out their clue (without saying anything) using only gestures, to their teammates. The team must say exactly what it says on the paper. Each time rotate with another person on your team choosing a clue and acting it out.

Continue around to each team until all have had two or three turns, depending on the size of the group and the amount of time you have. The winning team is the one that answers correctly the most clues.

6. Blind Pictionary

Materials: small pieces of paper, pencils and a handkerchief or piece of cloth to cover the eyes.

The Game: Prepare ahead of time, small pieces of paper with the names of different objects or animals on each piece. Then fold the pieces of paper and put them in a basket or colored bag. Form teams of 3 or 4 participants (or make each family a team).

A member of the first team takes a piece of paper and reads (silently) the name of the object or animal that is written on it. The rest of the team should not know what is written on the paper. After having their eyes covered, the person who pulled out the paper has 1 minute to draw the object/animal that was on their paper. Once they finish, show the drawing to the rest of their team to guess what the drawing is of. If the team correctly guesses what the drawing is of, they are awarded a point. Continue, allowing each team an opportunity to have someone draw. If there is time, allow each team 2 or 3 opportunities to draw with a different team member drawing each time. The winning team is the one with the most correct guesses.

7. Balloon Volleyball

Materials: A Rope and Several Balloons.

The Game: Form teams of 3 or 4 participants each (or make each family a team). Two teams play at the same time.

For this game, tie a rope or piece of heavy twine to make a division, this rope should be placed a half meter higher than the participants.

To begin, take a balloon and throw it into the air. Each team must blow the balloon to the other side of the rope, without using hands. If a team allows the balloon to touch the ground or if the balloon goes under the rope, the other team gets a point. The game should have a set time limit. The winning team is the team with the most points after the set time limit.

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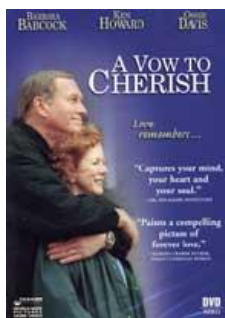
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Video Resources



Movie: A Vow to Cherish

Genre: Drama

Format: DVD

Length: 84 minutes.

Description: Emotionally charged new release that will change families for good. A medical diagnosis could tear the Brighton family apart or make them stronger. Will Dad stay with a wife who hardly recognizes him?