

Beginning A Marriage and Family Ministry Suggestions for the first year

Depending on the size of your congregation you may be able to implement all of these ideas or only some of these ideas. Find out if other congregations are doing some of these things so that you don't have to double services. A number of small congregations could specialize in given areas and then refer among the group to serve a wider group of people. Do what you can and do it well.

- Make the commitment to have a Marriage and Family Ministry
- Find a volunteer to coordinate the Marriage and Family Ministry
- Support a Marriage and Family Ministry with time, effort, resources, and a budget
- Determine volunteer resources within the congregation
- Begin a plan and timeline for your Marriage and Family Ministry
- Educate the entire congregation about the need for a Marriage and Family Ministry
- Develop a congregational affirmation regarding marriage and family that is printed and distributed to members
- Develop a congregational marriage policy (A list of requirements to be married at the church or by its ministers) that is explained to the congregation and provided to those inquiring about marriage
- Participate in community marriage agreements
- Conduct a Family Needs Analysis of the congregation
- Be aware of the impact of church schedules on families
- Publicly recognize and celebrate wedding anniversaries each month
- Publicly recognize and celebrate birthdays and spiritual birthdays
- Publicly recognize births as they occur
- An annual recognition of marriages lasting 20 years or more at the five year intervals
- Annual recognition of high school and college graduates (may be a youth ministry function)
- Develop a referral network for issues not handled within the congregation
- Start and maintain a church library which includes marriage and family resources

Marriage and Family Ministry Plan and Timeline Items

- Hold a yearly marriage event
- Have a sermon series regarding marriage (yearly occurrence)
- Have sermons that deal with marriage and family issues such as communication, budgeting, sex, infidelity, domestic violence, and other related issues

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- Have a marriage or family class each quarter
- Begin a marriage mentoring program
- Provide premarital classes (general information and preparation)
- Provide premarital counseling (requiring a premarital inventory)
- Begin a divorce recovery group
- Begin a grief recovery group
- Begin felt needs support groups