

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

"A Gift for NFP Teachers/Couples"

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What can happy couples who use NFP do better than anyone else? They can be authentic witnesses to the beauty and goodness of human fertility and sexuality! Who needs their witness and who might be open to listening to them? "The young people in our dioceses!"

Mother/Daughter and Father/Son Fertility Appreciation and Chastity Programs may be just the avenue you need to help young people and their families. These programs bring parents and children together to learn about growing up and God's plan for love.

NFP teachers/couples do much of what is needed in a Mother/Daughter or Father/Son Program. These programs allow their good work to be done on a large-scale basis reaching hundreds of families each year. Almost 1000 people will attend our programs in Memphis during 1990. Once the young people are told the truth about the goodness of their fertility, we hope they will want to learn more about NFP as they enter adulthood. At least they will have heard of NFP and that fertility is good!

The program began at a typical NFP teachers meeting in 1986 where many of us lamented the usual lack of interest in NFP. We wondered what more we could do to spread the word and enable people to share in this wonderful gift. We decided that a program to help mothers and daughters open the doors of communication about growing up would be a possibility. We knew that many mothers had difficulty knowing just when and how to begin talking to their daughters, and we knew that our NFP background would be a great asset to help them. We also knew that we could offer a unique program by emphasizing the gift of fertility and God's plan for each person. We didn't want to put together a long range on-going program, but just a brief one-time get together to help lay some strong foundations for families.

We didn't know what to expect, but we decided to schedule a program on a Sunday afternoon for 9-12 year old girls and their mothers. The program included a tea party setting, which we thought would be fun. This setting provided time for jotting down questions and socializing. We anticipated 50 to 100 people for a first offering, but to our surprise, about 450 people made reservations!

Needless to say, we realized this was a good idea. It didn't seem different from what we had been doing; however, many people were calling and wanted what we had to offer. Continuously mothers thanked us for the moral values which were an intricate part of the program. We, in turn, were very grateful for the opportunity to offer these

programs to the people in our community.

After adding a program for 13-17 year old girls, we knew we would have to respond to the requests, "Do one for the boys." Once more, having too little faith, we thought, "who's going to come?" "Men don't go to things like that, and we sure couldn't have a tea party for them!" Hoping for 30 attendees, over 200 fathers and sons filled the hospital auditorium. Another surprise!

It is truly a blessing to be doing something so good, worthwhile, and helpful for families. We make use of our NFP knowledge and experience in a different way. We are able to introduce the beautiful signs of fertility to many young people together with their parents in a happy and loving setting.

Please think about offering these programs in your diocese. I do believe they are a special gift from God! To aid you in your efforts, we have written a "How To" manual. It provides materials and guidance for starting Mother/Daughter and Father/Son Programs. If you have concerns or questions, please call (901-765-1757), I would be happy to hear from you.

To order the "How To" manual, which includes three audio tapes of the Memphis programs, send a check for \$25.00 to: Diocese of Memphis, NFP Center, St. Francis Hospital, 5959 Park Avenue, Memphis, TN 38119.

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marital infidelity, it is certainly not the only one. Chemical addiction, financial irresponsibility, refusal to communicate on a human level, being married to the job (or the TV) are among the more serious ways in which one can be unfaithful to one's spouse. But marital infidelity can show its face in many other ways: holding back on the energy required to be truly present to you, ignoring you as a person, or becoming so preoccupied with the children that I neglect your needs.

To be faithful is to believe in myself and my spouse, to be full of faith in our relationship.

Unwillingness to Serve

Our past provided us with stereotypes that divided marital responsibilities in a way that was most comfortable for the male and that put unfair burdens on the female. Cooking, washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning toilets and changing diapers were all considered woman's work rather than mutual human responsibilities.

If marriage, however, is a partnership, then the couple are to be partners not only in bed or at the table, but also in doing all tasks necessary for survival and for creating a comfortable household. There are no male jobs, no female jobs; only human work. If we look upon all the household and childrearing tasks as burdens that must be divided in legalistic fashion, we open the door for arguments and conflicts that can wear us down and strain our relationship. If, however, these tasks are embraced by both partners as signs of love and as ways to ease the other's burdens, they become powerful opportunities for

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