



The Pre-Marital Process of Heritage Christian Church

Ron Hitchcock once said, "Only a decision to follow Christ will have greater impact on your life than your decision to get married." At Heritage Christian Church, we have developed a pre-marital process that is designed to help couples celebrate their strengths and identify any growth areas that may be pertinent to address. It brings us great joy to see married couples experience a satisfying, life-long relationship that will stand the test of time.

For a Heritage pastor to conduct a wedding ceremony, it is important for him to be true to biblical standards and it is expected that he would be able to give his blessing to the marital union. When people approach a pastor about officiating their wedding, oftentimes the pastor doesn't know them very well. Therefore, the Family Life Ministry of Heritage has set up a pre-marital process, to inform each couple about the church's views on marriage and morality, and to prepare them in the best possible way for their life together. The first part of our pre-marital process is exploratory in nature.

Step One - Contact Linda Buchan, at lbuchan@heritageecc.org (or 898-9412, ext. 215), and mention your desire to go through the pre-marital process. Linda will send out a marriage application for you to fill out. Once Linda receives your email addresses and \$25, she will then sign you up for the Prepare-Enrich online inventory. Payment can be made by cash or check payable to Heritage Christian Church with Prepare/Enrich in the memo line. You may place it in the offering basket during any of the weekend services or mail it directly to the church. You may also choose the option to pay online by [clicking here](#).

The Prepare-Enrich Inventory is an instrument that has been used worldwide by over three million couples and it provides a great roadmap for the pre-marital coaches who will be meeting with you. This important tool addresses topics like communication, conflict resolution, sexuality, finances, stress, your attitude toward leisure, and your relationship with your family of origin. Linda will send your email addresses to Life Innovations (the creator of the inventory) and they will send each of you a link to begin the process.

Once you return the application to Linda in the Family Life office (7413 Maxtown Road, Westerville, OH 43082) and we receive the results of the inventory, you are ready for the next step.

Step Two - You will then be contacted by Becki Brown, our Pre-marital Coordinator, to set up an interview. Please plan for this interview to take two hours. Becki (or someone who works with her) meets with each individual for about 45 minutes and then, concludes the time with a conversation with the couple.



In this interview, we feel it is important for you to have an opportunity to speak about the positive traits that drew you together as a couple *and* to be able to surface potential problems areas, like pornography, lying, uncontrolled anger, verbal and physical abuse, cohabitation, sexual impurity, misuse of alcohol or drugs, and spiritual incompatibility.

At the conclusion of the interview, you will receive two more handouts to fill out and turn in to Becki Brown, at the Family Life office.

Step Three – Once the handouts are received, for most people, the next step is to be paired up with a coaching couple who will meet with you 3-6 times to review the results of the Prepare-Enrich Inventory and map out a strategy for continued growth.

Step Four – Go through a six-week class called *Prepare2b1* that is designed for couples or individuals who want to learn more about marriage and how to choose a good partner. There is no cost for this class, but donations are encouraged for the materials.

Step Five – Once the pre-marital screening process is concluded, the next step is to meet with our Wedding Coordinator, Susan Gebhardt. Susan will assist you in finding a good date for the wedding and in planning and implementing the details of your big day. You can contact Susan at sgebby24@gmail.com or at 614-882-5933. To reserve the church facility for a wedding, a \$100 deposit must be received in our church office. If the building is returned to its original condition, the deposit will then be applied to the other fees associated with this occasion.

After going through this process, if your values and beliefs are in general agreement with the church, it is important to contact one of the Heritage pastors to see if he would be able to participate in the wedding. The officiating pastor will then meet with you to plan the wedding.

We believe that successful, satisfying marriages are still possible but they do not happen by accident. If you are interested in getting married at Heritage Christian Church, please allow yourself at least 6 months to go through the above steps. In fact, most weddings take approximately 9-12 months of preparation and it is important not to rush through the process.

We're not trying to be rigid or legalistic in our approach — we just want you to be ready for this very important decision. If you need any assistance, please contact Becki Brown at marriagecoaching@heritagecc.org.



One more thing: We also urge each couple to meet with either their pre-marital coaches or the officiating pastor for one or two follow-up sessions during the first year of marriage.