

# Marriage for Keeps

A Project of Catholic Charities, Inc.  
— Diocese of Wichita

Strengthening  
Families for Life

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## In Their Own Words

by Christine Siefers

Our couples are the best voice for sharing the benefits of the Marriage for Keeps program. Each month we'll give some couples an opportunity to highlight the effects that Marriage for Keeps has had on their relationships and their families. This month we hear from **Treva and Marty** and **Jennifer and David**.

They call themselves a new old couple. **Treva and Marty** have been married less than two years, but this marriage is not the first for either of them. They liken their experiences in the Marriage for Keeps program to taking a refresher course on how to be in a marriage. They both brought bad experiences from previous relationships into their marriage and through the skills and tools learned in the workshops they've been able to "decipher the core issues and leave

the baggage behind," said Treva.

"Marriage for Keeps helped us to be more proactive," Treva said, "and aware of how the relationship could be."

Marty said it's like the two of them walked into the light together, and it's helped things to become more clear.

"Overall the program was not necessarily intense but it gives you the tools to open those doors and have those conversations at home," said Treva.

"It gave us the couple time that life can get in the way of," said Marty. "Lots of people don't realize the importance of that until it's too late."

Treva and Marty love to share what they've learned with other couples and help them through struggles they may be having.

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## Make Couple Time a Priority [www.TwoOfUs.org](http://www.TwoOfUs.org)

It's tough to be a parent one minute and an attentive spouse the next. So if a strong marriage provides your kids with a much-needed sense of stability and security, how do you make time for your spouse and your marriage? Here are five tips:

**Plan regular date nights.** Hire a sitter and grab dinner and a movie every week or month. Meet each other for lunch. Watch a movie at home after the kids fall asleep. It's not what you do that matters, it's that you spend time together. Take time to connect and talk like adults and ignore the "business" of life. Even when you're married, it's important to continue to get to know each other and talk about everything from the weather to your plans for the future

**Explore the little things.** Take advantage of small encounters and moments to let your spouse know how much you love them. When you see each other at the end of the day, stop what you're doing, greet each other, and talk briefly. Offer compliments, and do them a favor without being asked. Don't take your spouse for granted.

**Talk.** Make time for small talk and meaningful discussions. Be respectful and

listen when your partner talks (remember the Speaker Listener Technique). You don't need hours to connect, just some uninterrupted time. Communicating and working together to solve problems are key to maintaining healthy relationships.

**Do It Together.** Take up a hobby, enroll in a class, or pursue an activity you both enjoy. If you can't agree on an activity, consider creating a list of experiences you'd each like to try and alternate from one list to the other.

**Make Time for Sex.** When it was just the two of you, there was no need to make time for sex; it just happened. Unfortunately, spontaneous intimacy isn't one of the hallmarks of parenting. It won't be easy but you need to make sex a priority in your marriage. The intimate, one-on-one time you share will be exactly the closeness you and your spouse need to stay connected.

In conclusion, parenting is stressful. It's no wonder many couples let their marriages run on autopilot while they devote their energy to the kids. It's important to give your kids your love and attention, it's just as important to maintain a healthy marriage.

**"In every marriage more than a week old, there are grounds for divorce. The trick is to find, and continue to find, grounds for marriage."** ~Robert Anderson, *Solitaire & Double Solitaire*

April Fools' Day got its start in France during the 16th century. In 1562, the beginning of the new year was changed from its date of April 1 to January 1, which is the day we still celebrate the beginning of a new year. Back then they didn't have the internet, television or even phones to spread the news, so some people didn't get the information in a timely manner or chose to ignore it, continuing to celebrate on April 1 instead. Those people were called "fools" and other folks played pranks on them because they continued to celebrate the new year on April 1.

In England, pranks are only played in the morning and if you're the target of a prank you're called a "noodle."

In Scotland you're called an "April gowk," which is another name for cuckoo bird!

Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

- Put a few drops of food coloring in the bottom of a cereal bowl. Pour in the cereal and wait for a family member to pour in their milk and watch their reaction as it turns a funny color.
- Use some super glue to attach some coins to the sidewalk. Hide in the shadows and watch people try to pick them up.

Check out [www.kidzworld.com](http://www.kidzworld.com) for more information on how to celebrate this centuries' old holiday. For an April Fools' Day craft project, see page 3.



## In Their Own Words

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**Jennifer and David** learned about the program through a home school newsletter that landed in Jennifer's e-mail inbox. It didn't take her long to decide that it was something that she wanted to do with her husband. She called immediately and set up an appointment for intake without David's knowledge.

"I had one foot out the door if not more," said Jennifer. "I was just barely tolerating life at that point." Jennifer's father had passed away and David was so supportive to her throughout that time, but she still wasn't happy with their relationship.

"I had the warm, fuzzy feelings for him, but was so mentally fed up with the marriage and lack of communication," Jennifer said. Getting the support from him through her father's funeral gave her the desire to want to work on things. It brought back an emotional connection for her that had been lacking. They came into the program thinking, "What do we have to lose?"

"I didn't really expect much out of it," said David.

"That first Saturday orientation we realized there was more to it," said David. "He talked to me more that day than he had in 10 years," said Jennifer. "He shared opinions with me that I had never been privy to." They also related to other couples in their group and realized that they weren't unique because they had some issues. "It was a relief to know that we're not the only ones," Jennifer said.

"We decided that we wanted to fight for our marriage and we wanted to commit to it and work together" because of the program, said Jennifer. "The difference now is that we have the tools to help us continue to fight for it," she said. They began to actually talk to one another and share their opinions. "Now instead of another child, I have a partner," Jennifer said.

As a result of their participation in the program, the couple decided to recommit to each other and renewed their wedding vows on their eleventh wedding anniversary this past August. "I could hardly stand him on our tenth anniversary," Jennifer said. What a difference a year makes!

# April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 MFK
4	5	6 MFK	7	8	9	10 MFK
11	12	13 MFK	14	15	16	17 MFK
18	19	20 MFK	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 MFK	28	29	30	

## April

### Marriage for Keeps

April 3, 10, 17 at the White Tiger Martial Arts Bldg. 1905 W Wyatt Earp, Dodge City Ks. 3-6:00pm. This class will be in Spanish.

### Marriage for Keeps

April 6, 13, at the Dodge City Community College 6-8:00 pm. This class will be in English

### Marriage for Keeps

April 6, 13, 20, 27 at the Garden City Community College, endowment room 3-5pm. This class will be in Spanish.

# May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 MFK	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 MFK	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 MFK	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25 MFK	26	27	28	29

## May

### Marriage for Keeps

May 4, 11, 18, 25 at the Garden City Community College, endowment room 3-5pm. This class will be in Spanish.



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## Marriage for Keeps Announcements

**Marriage for Keeps, classes in Spanish  
 Tuesday April 6, for 8 weeks  
 Endowment Room at GCCC 6:00-8:00  
 Call CSS at 272-0010 to sign up  
 \$50 in Gift Cards Classes are FREE**

**The 2010 Charity Wine Tasting  
 A Catholic Charity Centennial Event  
 April 16, 2010 from 6 to 10 p.m.  
 The Club at Stone Ridge  
 Great Bend, Kansas**

**"The remarkable thing is, we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the string we have and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you... We are in charge of our attitude."**

**Charles Swindoll**

### **Sliding vs Deciding**

[marriageforkeeps-ks.org](http://marriageforkeeps-ks.org)

[catholicsocialservice.org](http://catholicsocialservice.org)



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