

Marriage Course Annual Report

(for year ending 30 September 2009)

Area of Responsibility

The Marriage Preparation Course and the Marriage Course aim to promote a positive view of marriage, to resource those who are about to get married, and to enrich the marriages of those who are already married within our church and in the wider area.

It is part of the Pastoral Care Strategy and fits into our aims of 'loving people' and serving our local community here in Edinburgh and beyond.

Summary of preceding year

Since September 2008 we have run The Marriage Course and the Marriage Preparation Course once each, and are currently running another Marriage Course.

The courses are different in flavour: the Marriage Course has smaller numbers (typically 7-10 couples) and a more intimate feel, enabling couples to engage with a different topic each week for 7 weeks and talk together at their own private table over a candlelit dinner. The Marriage Preparation Course gives people a chance to compare notes about the forthcoming 'big day' over dinner, but all the personal discussion is still done with your fiancé(e) and privacy is respected at all times during the 5 sessions.

The talks were given by Jane and volunteers at the Marriage Course and Dave with Karl Martin from mbc at Marriage Prep, using the material from HTB in London, who market the course in the same way as Alpha. The hosts and caterers have continued to excel themselves with a warm welcome, pretty table decorations and amazing food! The move back in to the building gave us plenty scope for the courses to be larger. However the Marriage Course ran with 9 couples and was in the ground floor hall. The Marriage Prep course ran with 20 couples and was hosted in the main space.

A continuing highlight is the number of people from outwith Ps and Gs doing our courses, typically about half the guests this year. Some come from other churches and some through friends. A number of the engaged couples end up at the course because they have "googled" marriage prep courses!

For both courses, the lack of a steady team for teaching posed some difficulties; however the feedback from the couples did not reflect this!

The marriage courses team also took part in hosting a Marriage Course party event for promoting the marriage courses to other churches in the Edinburgh and East of Scotland area. We had around 15 couples attend from various churches and Nicky and Sila Lee the writers of the courses were there to talk about running a course and what it involves.

Targets and Resource Implications for the coming year

The marriage course is currently running with 7 couples attending and the talks are being given by DVD which is working very well. The marriage preparation course will run in Feb/March 2010. The main challenges ahead are pulling together a hosting team who are available for the full stretch of the courses. This is quite a big time commitment but one that is very rewarding for those involved. It is anticipated that the marriage prep course will run with upwards of 20 couples and in the main space. It is likely that the marriage course will run again in autumn 2010. The marriage preparation course requires a sound expert and the marriage course would require both sound and media help if it expanded into using the main space. At the moment the catering team is fine and admin support is provided by Mairi in the office.

