

# Marriage Education For Young People



## Introduction

It has never been more necessary than now to encourage teachers and young people's leaders to include the subject of marriage in their syllabus or programme.

However, they are often busy people and many will value help in finding resources to use.

Useful resources for marriage education for schools and church or secular young people's groups (including uniformed organisations) currently known are given here. There is some overlap with sex education but materials which are only for sex education have not been included.

Prices of resources can be obtained from the suppliers. Money spent in this realm can bring priceless lifelong benefits.

Also included at the end is an account of a project to encourage the use of such resources in schools.

## Leaflet

The Family Education Trust's DL size leaflet **WHY SAVE SEX?** is designed for young people aged 11 or over. It is the best such leaflet we have seen. It can be ordered in quantity from them at 19-21 High street, Whitton, Twickenham TW2 7LB Tel.0208 894 2525 Website [www.famyouth.org.uk](http://www.famyouth.org.uk) gives prices.

They also publish a complementary leaflet **WHAT IS LOVE?** which explains that true love is not to be confused with infatuation, lust or mere physical attraction, but will be characterised by commitment, faithfulness, perseverance and patience.

## For Ages 11 - 14

**Evaluate** is a multimedia presentation in schools called provided by CARE. It "seeks to empower young people to make healthy informed choices and supports them in delaying sexual experience until a committed relationship, preferably marriage." The session for 11-13 year-olds is called **This is your life!**

This is given to a school year group by a team of trained presenters. There are teams spread throughout England and one in Scotland. Training is given at a three-

day residential conference, held twice a year, or occasionally at a non-residential conference. This is followed by ongoing training and support. See [www.evaluate.org.uk](http://www.evaluate.org.uk)

**Lovewise** provides a variety of presentations and presentation material from a Christian perspective for young people between the ages of 10 and 18 on the subject of marriage, sex and relationships. The presentations have been written by two paediatricians and are supported by PowerPoint and videos. Topics covered are;-

- The nature of marriage
- Reasons for keeping sex for marriage and the health and emotional consequences of extra-marital sex
- Media and peer pressure to have sex at the wrong time
- Practical advice on going out.

Presentations are made by Lovewise, or by anyone sympathetic to the ethos of Lovewise and who is willing to sign their Statement of Faith and their Code of Practice. However their year 5 to 7 material may be purchased and used without the requirement to sign these.

All their teaching is in line with the DfES's Sex and Relationship Guidance (2000).

Preview of presentations is offered to schools and youth groups.  
Contact Lovewise Office, 14 Portland Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1QQ Tel 0191 281 2825 Email: [info@lovewise.org.uk](mailto:info@lovewise.org.uk)

See their website: [www.lovewise.org.uk](http://www.lovewise.org.uk) for more details.

### **For Ages 13 - 16**

**Challenge Team UK** provides teams of four young adult volunteers to encourage teenagers to be chaste. A team visits schools and youth groups with a sixty to ninety minute dynamic and inter-active presentation, which explores the options open to teenagers today. The speakers have all decided to save sex for their future marriage partner. They explain the risks involved in pre-marital sex and the positive reasons behind their decision.

The presentation lasts approximately one hour and is best followed by a short time allowed for questions from the audience. It uses humorous skits and short inter-active talks. The possibility of starting over again for those who regret previous sexual experiences is presented positively. There are no moral overtones and there is no religious content. Response from both pupils and teachers has been excellent.

Although the presentation covers the many negative consequences of being sexually active, the main focus is on the benefits of practising chastity and the wisdom of saving sex for marriage.

The presenters are volunteers. Host families near to schools are used if at all possible to provide free accommodation while touring. There is a fee to cover travelling and other expenses.

Teachers and pupils alike have commented enthusiastically about the presentation. For further information see their website: [www.challengeteamuk.org](http://www.challengeteamuk.org)

**Evaluate** is a multimedia presentation in schools called provided by CARE. It "seeks to empower young people to make healthy informed choices and supports them in delaying sexual experience until a committed relationship, preferably marriage." The session for 13-15 year-olds is called **Sex: How safe?**

This is given to a school year group by a team of trained presenters. There are teams spread throughout England and one in Scotland. Training is given at a three-day residential conference, held twice a year, or occasionally at a non-residential conference. This is followed by ongoing training and support. See [www.evaluate.org.uk](http://www.evaluate.org.uk)

**The Art of Loving Well** is an American secular resource now being distributed in the UK by the Family Education Trust. There are also Teachers' Notes. See their website: [www.famyouth.org.uk](http://www.famyouth.org.uk)

The book is an anthology containing forty-one readings selected from time honoured classics, as well as the best adolescent literature. Its three sections "Early Loves and Losses", "Romance", and "Commitment and Marriage" include short stories, poems, essays, drama, folk tales and myths. Each selection is accompanied by a variety of creative learning activities. It is not just marriage education but character education.

The book is American, but the Teachers' Notes have been specifically prepared for use in a British context and are linked to the non-statutory guidelines for the teaching of PHSE.

For other resources see **above** under the Ages 11-14 heading.

### **For Ages 16 - 18**

**Explore** (formerly Students Exploring Marriage) aims 'to enable young people to explore the realities of marriage in our society today' and works chiefly with Lower Sixth Formers. Their address is: The EWR Centre, Cloudesley Street, London N1 0HU. Explore began as a voluntary after-school workshop activity, once a week for a term. It is centred around the willingness of three Christian married couples to meet with the young people and answer their questions about the actual experience of their own marriage. The workshop is managed by an adviser-coach; however, the dialogue between the young people and couple is led by the young people themselves. Three couples each visit for three successive weeks. There is a preparation session and two review sessions. At the final session there is an

evaluation of the workshops, which often includes the writing of an article which is posted on their website [www.exploring-marriage.org.uk](http://www.exploring-marriage.org.uk)

Their work has been gradually spreading through the country. However, it received a setback with the introduction of AS levels, which place more academic demands on Lower Sixth Formers. Its work now often takes the form of a Half-Day Conference for all the Lower Sixth (or other year groups), which applies the same basic principles and methods as the workshops, but for much larger numbers. The workshop has been very successfully used with young offenders.

**Evaluate** is a multimedia presentation in schools called provided by CARE. It "seeks to empower young people to make healthy informed choices and supports them in delaying sexual experience until a committed relationship, preferably marriage." The session for 15-18 year-olds is called **Just the One!**

This is given to a school year group (or in the case of Years 12 and 13 perhaps a combined group) by a team of trained presenters. There are teams spread throughout England and one in Scotland. Training is given at a three-day residential conference, held twice a year, or occasionally at a non-residential conference. This is followed by ongoing training and support. See [www.evaluate.org.uk](http://www.evaluate.org.uk)

**Building Relationships** is a book of thirteen chapters by David Olson, the author of the PREPARE Inventories (Questionnaires). It is designed to help young people develop their personal and relationships skills. The chapters focus on important relationship areas, including communication, conflict resolution, family of origin, finances, roles and values and beliefs. Each chapter begins with a self-scoring quiz, which readers take before and after reading a chapter. The answers to each quiz are the focus of the chapter, which helps participants to understand the correct answers.

The book can be used by an individual but has more impact when used in a group setting, whether in a school, church or community group. It can be obtained from PREPARE/ ENRICH, Southampton Voluntary Services, Voluntary Action Centre, Kingsland Square, St Mary Street, Southampton, SO14 1NW Tel: 023 8021 6003 Email: [prepare-enrich@scft.org.uk](mailto:prepare-enrich@scft.org.uk) Website: [www.prepare-enrich.co.uk](http://www.prepare-enrich.co.uk).

There is also a Teachers' Manual. It includes masters for creating overhead transparencies, exercises and assignments to complete with peers and parents, or mentors.

**Celibrate.** The website [www.celibrate.org](http://www.celibrate.org) is a site which gives helpful support and advice to people seeking to remain chaste.

For other resources see **above** under the Ages 11-14 heading.

## **Encouraging your local schools to use the resources**

The project described here was conducted by a Marriage Resource Branch but it could equally well be undertaken by a large church, or groups of smaller churches.

Volunteers were sought who had some knowledge of schools and who were available at least part-time in the daytime. They comprised past or present teachers and classroom assistants, a Youth for Christ worker and a person whose job had taken her into schools.

A list was made of the secondary schools in the areas and enquiries were made to find the names of the Heads of PHSE. The schools were divided up between the project groups, so that each person had four or five schools to contact. Each wrote a letter to the Head of PHSE in those schools, telling them briefly about a new resource. The writer offered a member of the team to meet with the Head of PHSE to demonstrate the resource to them.

Some of the schools had already purchased the resource and were using it, so did not need help. Others had purchased it but were not using it yet. Around 20 to 25% of the schools took up the invitation, the letter having been followed up with a phone call. In one case a project member was invited to lead a training half day for the whole staff on the subject.

Consideration was then given to introducing a resource for primary school teachers. As there were four times as many primary schools in the area compared to secondary schools, it was planned to book the local Teachers' Centre for a half day and invite teachers to a demonstration there. However, the leader of the project group moved and the initiative lost momentum at that point.

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