



## **Building a Eucharistic Marriage Course Description**

The “Building a Eucharistic Marriage” course is a 7-part video series, built off of a therapeutic model for change, which connects 7 areas for therapeutically strengthening our marriage with 7 areas of deepening our relationship with Christ through the Eucharist. This course comes out of a longer program written by Greg Schutte, MSW, LISW-S called “Discovering Our Deepest Desire,” which has an imprimatur from the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Below is a description of each of the 7 sessions and what the expected outcome is.

### **Session 1: Where Did the Time Go?**

In this session, the author addresses the importance of making time for your spouse and for God in order to keep these relationships connected and growing. Couples often don't fall out of love first, but rather get so busy and lack time for each other that they fall out of knowing their spouse. This lack of knowing often leads to deeper divides in the emotional connection that couples have. This session also addresses how to know your spouse more deeply by understanding their personality differences, their love language, as well as how men and women deal differently with stress. This same divide happens in our relationship with God, if we are not spending time getting to know Him through the Mass, through adoration, through Scripture, and through prayer.

The goal of this session is to encourage couples to get back to making and taking time for each other and for God on a daily basis in order to keep connecting and building healthy patterns.

### **Session 2: Understanding God's Design.**

In this session, the author presents a connection between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of the Eucharist. He talks about the importance of not becoming complacent in our marriage or our faith. He explores God's design not only for our earthly marriage, but also delves into the importance of growing more in our understanding of and building a deeper relationship with Christ through the marriage feast of the Lamb - the Mass.

The goal of this session it is to help couples grow deeper and understanding not only the power and Grace that is given through a sacramental marriage but also to grow deeper in their understanding and love for the Eucharistic feast.

### **Session 3: Recognizing that Which Divides**

In this session, the author talks about the first problem that must be addressed in any marital struggle: our own unhealthy patterns. Most people have no problem pointing fingers at each other as being the problem, but the only person we can truly change is ourselves. He talks about the importance of self-reflection as being the first stage of making things better in our relationship. This is the same thing with our relationship with Christ in the Eucharist. Before and during the Mass, we have the ability to address and be healed of our past sins through confession and through the penitential rite prior to receiving Christ in the Eucharist.

The goal of this session is to get spouses to stop the blame game, and the focus on the one person they can truly change: themselves. The other goal is to help couples again realize the great gift of God's mercy and healing through confession and the penitential rite.

### **Session 4: Listening to the Heart**

In this session, the author explores healthy skills for inviting and accomplishing good communication between spouses. Couples learn a new tool for more productive communication with each other. Couples also learn the importance of truly listening to the heart of God speak to us through Scripture at the Liturgy of the Word.



The goal of this session is to assist couples in starting to build new patterns and skills in communicating with each other and listening to each other's needs. It also focuses on the importance of listening to God as He speaks to us through Scripture as well as through the Church.

### **Session 5: Where Mercy is Found**

In this session, the author talks about the importance of apologizing and giving forgiveness to our spouse in order to heal and rebuild marital division. He delves into a discussion of how to effectively apologize as well as offer mercy through forgiveness. This gift of mercy is connected to our walk with Christ and others through the Sign of Peace and the Lamb of God at the Mass, which offers us another avenue for healing before receiving the Eucharist.

The goal of this session is to encourage couples to move past bitterness in their marriage by way of accepting responsibility for mistakes made and giving forgiveness with a heart of mercy and compassion as Christ does for us.

### **Session 6: Committed to Change**

In this session, the author presents the importance of not only renewing our commitment to our spouse in marriage as we go through the healing process, but also the vital necessity of having a resolve to change unhealthy and unhelpful patterns in our relationship. He also addresses the same importance we have in recommitting our lives to Christ, especially through the renewed vow we take through reciting the Creed. In addition, he calls for us to resolve to live out our "commitment to change" that we vow through reciting the Our Father prayer.

The goal of this session is to help couples understand the importance of staying committed to the vows we've made in our marriage and the importance of improving our marriage, for the sake of our children and our united walk towards heaven. We do this through recognizing and being willing to change our unhealthy patterns.

### **Session 7: Eucharistic Love and the Grateful Heart**

In this session, the author connects Christ's gift of the Eucharist to each one of us, with our call to be Eucharistic towards others, especially our spouse. He discusses the importance of being Eucharistic in our actions, in our one flesh union gift, and in our gratitude toward God and each other. He connects these actions with what our Lord gives to us through the Eucharist, and our response of being thankful in return.

The goal of this session is to again teach couples how to be attentive to, to understand, and to "feed" each other's needs along with showing each other continual gratitude.

## **Participant Testimony**

The Marriage Enrichment Ministry at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke, Virginia loved the program *Building a Eucharistic Marriage*. We invited our engaged and married couples to partake and had wonderful evenings of fellowship "supper and substance" and going through the program together.

The 7-part video-based series by Gregory Schutte and his wife, Stephanie, was beautifully done. All couples were able to relate to the stories shared and therefore able to laugh with them and at ourselves for it was humbling to hear the honesty shared about relationships. The program gives hope and inspiration to couples who have their hearts open to have a Christ-centered marriage. The PDF printable resource was also amazing for each lesson and to keep as a keepsake to continuously reflect back to.

I highly recommend *Building a Eucharistic Marriage* for any engaged or married couple to do in the comfort of their own home or as a parish program. I also loved how scripture and the CCC were also tied in. We enjoyed stopping the videos to have a group and individual discussion questions using the reflection questions. The "keep it fun questions," "personal reflections", and "action steps" were a great way to be connected with ongoing discussions with our spouses during the week.

The program helps to grow and enrich your marriage and is designed to build a relationship with Christ in and through the Mass.