

Thanks for your interest in our pre-marital class. The following information should answer your basic questions about the class, but if you need anything further, please let us know!

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## **CLASS INFORMATION**

### **Class Dates / Meeting Times**

We typically hold the class two times per year, beginning in February and September. The class meets for 9-weeks on Sunday afternoons from 3 – 4:30 p.m. There are usually about 10 couples in the class.

### **Class Fee / Registration**

The class fee of \$80 per couple covers a class workbook, Before I Do, for each of you, two marriage related books at the end of the course, and a notebook with supplemental material for the class sessions. The \$80 per couple fee can be paid at the first class session by cash or check payable to The Moody Church—or spread out over two or three payments if that's necessary.

While we know your schedules and planning sometimes change, we prefer people to pre-register so we have an idea of the number of couples likely to attend and the amount of class materials required. However, if your plans change you are not obligated and no fees need to be paid until you begin taking the class. To pre-register, send an e-mail to Lori Imhof at [lori.imhof@moodychurch.org](mailto:lori.imhof@moodychurch.org) giving both your names and both e-mail addresses as well as an indication of which class (September or February) you are interested in attending.

### **What is the Purpose of the Course? Who Can Take the Course?**

The Moody Church pre-marital course is intended and designed to prepare Christian couples who are engaged, or seriously considering engagement, for the significant responsibilities of married life. If a couple is not yet at this point in their relationship, the Pastors and couples on the teaching team are open to meeting with you to provide spiritual counsel on your current questions and status.

The course focuses on Scriptural principles for marriage and a Christian life with practical applications based on the experiences of the teaching couples.

To understand the church's expectation for Christian living and marriage, review Article 2, Section B and Section C in The Moody Church Constitution found at this link <http://www.moodychurch.org/get-to-know-us/constitution/article-2/>

You don't have to be a member or regular attender of The Moody Church to participate. Every couple in the class is granted the same respect and confidentiality in counseling regardless of their church of origin.

### **What Are the Major Components of the Course?**

The course is coordinated by Pastor Kirk Baker and his wife, Amy, and individual classes are taught by them and several other pastor and lay leader couples.

There are three basic components to the course: (1) nine scheduled teaching and discussion sessions; (2) a workbook for each couple to go through at their own pace; and (3) a request that each couple take the PREPARE/ Enrich on-line relationship assessment test. In addition, class participants have access to our teaching team for couple or individual confidential counseling on any questions or conflicts a couple may be experiencing.

If you would like to see a sample syllabus for the class to give you an idea of the topics and biblical emphases covered in each session, please e-mail me for that document – [lori.imhof@moodychurch.org](mailto:lori.imhof@moodychurch.org).

### **How and when do we start on the PREPARE/Enrich testing that's a part of the course?**

All we need is an email from you to Pastor Kirk Baker ([kirk.baker@moodychurch.org](mailto:kirk.baker@moodychurch.org)) indicating you want to begin the testing and including both of your email addresses. Pastor Kirk will immediately contact PREPARE, register you as a couple and the testing service will contact you to take the test. The first party to click in will be asked for a credit card payment of \$35. As soon as both of you have tested, Pastor Kirk will be notified by PREPARE and he will contact you to arrange for a time to go over the results or to send the results to the pastor who will be doing the ceremony for follow up. If you don't have computer access, special arrangements can be made through Pastor Kirk for a paper test format. Obviously, each of you is to test separately without coordinating your responses. No cheating!!

The sooner you register and take the test the better, since this will highlight issues you need to pursue in more depth with each other and in your personal reflection and study of God's Word during the course. The results can also identify specific areas of risk requiring discussion with course teachers or other counselors. Most couples initiate the testing mid-course or near the end which

often creates a backlog in scheduling sessions to review the results. So, it's in everyone's best interests to get it going ASAP!

## **HOW TO HAVE YOUR WEDDING AT THE MOODY CHURCH**

### **Completing the premarital course is one of the key prerequisites for being married at The Moody Church. So what constitutes "completion"?**

Given our nine sessions, we expect at least one of you to be present or Skype in for at least six of the sessions, absent special circumstances. Obviously, it's preferable to have both of you at every session. If a session is missed, we rely on you to contact Pastor Bob if you would like a personal meeting to go over what you missed. But we recognize that work related travel, wedding showers out of town, your locations in different states and plain "emergencies" can complicate your attendance. We do not test on the work book assignments, OK? We trust you to do the work and it's in your best interests to do so as the course proceeds. If you need to Skype, please give Pastor Bob sufficient advance notice since he is not very astute in handling tech matters on the fly! In order to receive an "official" graduation certificate, we expect completion of the PREPARE/Enrich testing prior to the last class session. We are ready to work with you through all of these issues to make "completion" as easy as possible.

### **What is the process for securing approval of a wedding date at The Moody Church? How soon should we begin?**

The approval process has basically three steps: (1) filing an application with Bev Skrak (bev.skrak@moodychurch.org) for review and approval by the Trustees and Elders; (2) filling out the Pink/Blue sheets given to you at the start of class to confirm your Christian testimony for pastoral review and approval; and (3) completing the premarital course. With Pastor Bob's OK, you may start the process while the premarital class is underway by submitting your application for a specific date, subject to completion of the premarital class and designation of a pastor to perform the ceremony. The Trustees typically meet on the second Monday night of each month. Applications for wedding dates up to a year in advance are permissible subject to the above referenced prior conditions. Or, you can simply wait until the premarital class is completed to begin the paper work. You can email Bev at bev.skrak@moodychurch.org to request the form. You can turn in the completed Pink/Blue sheets to Pastor Bob any time during the course. Please note that the Trustees will not consider an application unless the Pink/Blue sheets have been submitted and reviewed by Pastor Bob to confirm that both of you have a genuine personal relationship with Christ and are committed to a biblical marriage.

### **What criteria do we need to meet to qualify for a wedding date at The Moody Church?**

First, one of you should be a member (or enrolled in the current membership class) or regular attender for six months prior to the date the application is submitted. That requirement sometimes is waived under special circumstances. Second, you must complete the pre-marital class as noted above. Third, you both must have a genuine personal relationship with Christ and be committed to a righteous, celibate relationship prior to the wedding date. This last requirement is not subject to waiver.

### **How are charges assessed for use of The Moody Church for a wedding/reception?**

The Trustees set the rate based on the scope of facilities you want to use, subject to a discount if one of you is a member. In addition, sometimes discounts are available under special circumstances such as your family being long time Moody Church attendees, you or your parents being involved in full time ministry, and financial constraints. Please note you must be a member at least six months prior to filing your application to qualify for a member's discount. The facility fee includes use of runners, candelabras and candles available from the church and a sound/lighting technician for the ceremony. In addition, a church wedding liaison person will be supplied to coordinate the use of church facility with you and your wedding planner, if any. Be sure to contact Bev Skrak (bev.skrak@moodychurch.org) to secure copies of the church's more detailed policies for facility use, e.g. no alcohol, limitations on decorations in sanctuary, charge for moving piano or platforms, etc.

### **How do we secure the services of Moody Church pastor? Is there a charge for the pastor to officiate? Can we use a minister from another church?**

If you have a Moody Church pastor in mind, which is our preference, simply ask him. The pre-marital course gives you an opportunity to get to know four of our pastors who perform wedding ceremonies and other pastors on staff are also qualified to do so. The use of a pastor from another church staff must be approved in advanced by Pastor Bob.

There is no specific fee or charge required to use a pastor from The Moody Church to officiate the ceremony, although it is customary to provide a pastor with an honorarium. Assurance of an honorarium will not be a condition of serving you in the ceremony nor will it be raised by a pastor in your discussions. Once a Moody Church pastor has agreed to perform your ceremony, an honorarium for his services will be at your discretion. However, you should feel free to discuss that matter with a pastor, and if travel outside the city of Chicago is required, reimbursement for travel expenses should be addressed at the outset.