



**Natural Family Planning from
The Couple to Couple League**

EXTREME MAKEOVER

NEWS RELEASE

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Making NFP relevant: CCL enlists revitalized presentation and JP II in new program

CINCINNATI, Ohio – The Couple to Couple League, a leading provider of training in Natural Family Planning, was facing a problem: stale materials and a skeptical audience. Its leaders responded boldly, deciding to overhaul all of their outreach materials and methods. After three years of work, CCL is now unveiling brand-new materials animated by modern technology and a more personal approach based on the timeless theology of Pope John Paul II.

At the heart of the change, said Executive Director Andy Alderson, is the realization that young Catholics are harder than ever to reach. “Because the church says so’ is not good enough anymore,” he said. “They need to be reached in a new manner and engaged on multiple levels.”

To do that, CCL teachers will now use an instructional DVD embedded with video clips of experts, including a priest and a medical doctor. It also features computer animation of ovulation and implantation. CCL’s thick, monochrome reference manual has been replaced by a full-color, graphics-rich workbook that couples can write in throughout class. Classroom instruction will be much more interactive. Couples will roll up their sleeves and fill out charts within 45 minutes of the start of the first class; before, that didn’t occur until well into the second class.

Because the new materials simplify the science of the Sympto-Thermal Method, they make room for greater emphasis on another important element: NFP’s rich marital benefits. That altered emphasis is reflected in the line added to CCL’s slogan: “NFP: safe, healthy and effective...and it can change your hearts in surprising ways.” “It’s a little teaser,” explained Publications Director Ann Gundlach. “We want couples to know that if they start living this way, they’re likely to see a change. And the teachers emphasize this by sharing parts of their own experience in each class.”

All the training materials are wrapped in the wisdom of Pope John Paul II, incorporating principles and language from his seminal masterpiece “Theology of the Body.” The level of incorporation is

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what most impresses Father Richard Hogan, a key editor of CCL's new program. "It's refreshing to see how CCL has adopted the ideas of John Paul II, the Great, and sprinkled them throughout all of their programs," he said, "from teacher training, to printed materials, to the public instructional program." When Board Chair Linda Kracht participated in the program pilot, she witnessed the lasting power of the late pontiff. "The teachings of John Paul II ring true with couples," she said. "This makes it easier to teach the moral reasons behind NFP to our students."

Embracing the Internet will also add ease, Alderson said. For example, couples will be able to meet in an online forum to find support for their counter-cultural practice. They can also optionally track their fertility signs in a new electronic charting program, and easily send data to their teachers for any needed follow-up. This brings NFP to the students' computers, right where they send their e-mails and grab their news and pay their bills.

Meanwhile, the web access will enable CCL trainers, who used to rely on a cumbersome paper process to train NFP teachers, to support, evaluate and certify candidates much more swiftly. The polished new materials will persuade many couples to become CCL teachers, Alderson said, while the online format will make training much easier, allowing them to start and stop whenever they want. As a result, CCL is aiming for a 20 percent increase in teaching couples each year.

Early observers are equally optimistic. "NFP has generally resided on the periphery of most Catholic parishes and dioceses. It's still a small percentage of engaged couples who even take an NFP class," said John Gagliardi, chair of the Twin Cities chapter. "CCL is committed to truly mainstreaming NFP. Because of this, we're confident that many more parishes and dioceses will make the new CCL course a normal part of marriage preparation."

Archbishop Harry Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis echoed that enthusiasm. "The Couple to Couple League is paying a double homage to Pope John Paul II: answering his call for a New Evangelization and incorporating his theology. I anticipate a profound impact."

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as declared by Pope John Paul II, makes an apt occasion for CCL to unveil its new approach to NFP training. The pontiff placed under Our Lady's motherly care the innocent lives of children and the unborn.

For an online video explaining the new CCL teaching program and other related information, visit <http://ccli.org/news>.

About CCL

The Couple to Couple League teaches more than 7,000 couples in the United States every year. Since its founding in 1971, the organization has instructed more than 185,000 couples. CCL is made up of a network of more than 850 teaching couples who offer classes in natural family planning throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

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