

# THE VIRTUES

## FOR COUPLES

### COMMUNICATION TOOL

Read before starting  
your private conversation.

#### GROW YOUR MARRIAGE BY GROWING IN VIRTUES

### HELPFUL STEPS

### IN SHARING YOUR FEELINGS WITH EACH OTHER

Dear Couple,

We are glad that you decided to participate in The VIRTUES program. Caring for your marriage begins with making time for each other. This program invites you to reflect on the virtues of **Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance**, and how they are lived in marriage. When we talk about virtues we talk about our habits – the way we do things, and when we talk about how we do things, we may find that we disagree. Most couples discover that their habits can be the source of conflicts. Conflicts are unavoidable in marriage, and how we deal with them makes them opportunities for growth or sources of pain. What contributes to the peaceful resolution of our conflicts is how we talk to each other. Here are some suggestions for talking about our differences and our feelings about them.

1. Make sure to listen to your spouse's point of view and feelings. If you disagree it doesn't mean that one of you is right and the other is wrong. Feelings are never right or wrong. They tell us about our spouse's level of comfort or discomfort.
2. Listen respectfully, and if necessary ask your spouse to explain, so that you can understand better. As you do this watch your tone of voice and your attitude toward your spouse. Put your frame of mind in a listening mode.
3. It may be that it is perfectly fine to have a difference of opinion, or different ways of doing things, as long as you are both willing to live with the differences and the minor discomfort that they may cause.
4. If you come across something that is upsetting to either one of you, take a deep breath. Keep calm and listen to each other's feelings.
5. When necessary, agree to take a break and cool off. Then return to the conversation, and be kind to each other.
6. Decide if this is an issue that you can live with, or one that you can tackle by yourselves, or one with which you need assistance. Perhaps you want to talk to a trusted friend, or a priest, or a counselor.
7. Remember that you are partners on a life journey that leads to God. You will find some bumps along the way and these are opportunities for growth. By managing your differences you make each other better persons and mature as a couple.

Dr. John Gottman in studying couples found that 69% of marital conflicts cannot be resolved. Couples choose to live with them.

Practicing the virtues of Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance, and praying are great tools for staying on track on your journey and for overcoming your challenges you encounter. Prayer in particular can be the source of the graces

### THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

*"Moderation and prudence, justice and fortitude... nothing in life is more useful than these." (Wisdom 8:7)*

*Prudence – Justice – Courage – Temperance*