

Young Couples Connections

Here are seven ideas for starting and growing a newly married couples class that you or another leader in your church can use or adapt for your setting.

Couples who are just beginning their lives together as a newly married couple sometimes have a hard time fitting into church. Church classes and activities might seem to be geared to established families with children or youth or to senior adults.

Depending on the size of your church, you might be able to solve some of this perception with a young couples Sunday school class or small- or mid-size group. Like anyone else who comes to your church, people in this life situation are looking for a deeper relationship with God as well as relationships with other people similar to them. The idea isn't to segregate them from others in the church; rather, it's to give them a place where they feel like they belong.

Here are seven ideas for starting and growing a newly married couples class that you or another leader in your church can use or adapt for your setting.

1. If the class is just starting, define who it's mainly for. Is it for newly married couples in their 20s without children only? Or can engaged couples and slightly older couples with young children also attend?
2. When you first start this class, kick it off with a social event: a chili supper, Labor Day picnic, or pizza and movie party. This lower-key activity might draw some people from the fringes who won't come to class "cold turkey" without knowing others beforehand.
3. Once your class is established, encourage class leaders to have a standing offer for lunch after church at a nearby restaurant. Anyone in the class can join in. Getting together outside of class fosters relationships more quickly. Announce it every week so newcomers can attend.
4. Stress up front that couples aren't going to find a perfect class or church, but as a group or class they can work together to make an effort to positively affect the lives of each other and those around you.
5. Social events are great, but encourage the class to do one outward service project—for the church or for the greater community—for every two or three inward social events they schedule. These can still be wonderful times of fellowship as class members deepen their bonds through serving together. Serve at a local food bank or homeless shelter, or come up with your own neighborhood outreach.
6. Use technology to stay connected. Almost everyone this age will have Internet access, email and cell phones. Collect email addresses and phone numbers and send e-announcements/text messages to keep class members informed. Consider an e-newsletter, group website or Instagram site to further enhance communication.
7. Hold an annual (or semiannual) retreat for this class away from everyday life. Arrange child care at the site so families with babies and preschoolers can come to the retreat if they desire, yet parents can enjoy teaching and fellowship times apart from the interruptions of children. Make the child care active and fun so the kids want to return, and so the parents feel less stressed about not being with them.