

**LEADER'S GUIDE**

**ART**  
*of Marriage*™

 **FamilyLife.**

FamilyLife Publishing®  
Orlando, Florida

## **Art of Marriage™ Leader's Guide**

FamilyLife Publishing®  
100 Lake Hart Drive  
Orlando, FL 32832  
1-800-FL-TODAY- FamilyLife.com  
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**Please note:** If addiction, affairs, or abuse are present in your marriage, we strongly suggest reaching out to a trusted counselor. These situations likely require more help than we can offer here.

If there is any form of abuse in your marriage, separation may be a necessary first step to protect the life of the abused and get the abuser the help they need. But announcing a desire to separate without a plan in place can be dangerous. If you are in an abusive situation, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline for help. Call 1.800.799.SAFE (7233) or visit [TheHotline.org](http://TheHotline.org).



**LEADER'S GUIDE**

**ART**  
*of Marriage*™

by FamilyLife.

**VIDEO SERIES**

## **A NOTE OF** *thanks*

Welcome to the new *Art of Marriage*! We believe your role is immensely powerful, investing in others by showing up and creating space for God to work.

At FamilyLife, we believe the family is one of the greatest untapped resources for bringing good to the world. Our world could use a little more goodness, don't you think? When you open up your time, life, home, and empathy to others, you're impacting your corner of the world. And it won't be because *you're the greatest facilitator ever.*

We want you to know, right from the beginning, that your impact is not contingent on always knowing the perfect thing to say, the best question to ask, or having the best story to share. Nor does it depend on the quality of the snacks you serve or the cleanliness of the space. It won't be hindered by the fact you and your spouse snapped at each other ten minutes before the first guest arrived.



## LEADER'S GUIDE

When you share yourself and your marriage with others, the gospel can take center stage, rather than your seamless performance. If you were perfect, there'd be no need for Jesus or His grace. If you're someone who humbly, happily receives His grace for your weakness and sin in your own heart and marriage—you'll make an impact.

This leader's guide was written in hopes you'll feel equipped to lead an *Art of Marriage* video series in the context you need. Inside, you'll find ideas for a few different formats we've seen work well, tips for generating transformative group discussion, and some extra guidance to help your group focus on the big ideas of each session. You can find even more inspiration and practical advice for reaching out to others—both in this group and beyond—on [FamilyLife.com/Equip](http://FamilyLife.com/Equip), created just for missional people like you.

Thank you for facilitating an *Art of Marriage* video series. We've got your back, and we trust God's goodness will be with you every step of the way (see Psalm 23:6).

—The FamilyLife Team

# QUICK START

For we are God's *masterpiece*.  
He has created us anew  
in Christ Jesus, so we can  
do the **GOOD THINGS**  
He planned for us long ago.

EPHESIANS 2:10, NLT

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## **Step 1:** Access your videos



Visit [FamilyLife.com/AOMVideos](https://www.familylife.com/AOMVideos)

Your access coupon code: **GPFL24AOM**

Have questions or problems? Call 1-800-358-6329  
(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. CST) or send us a  
message at [email@familylife.com](mailto:email@familylife.com).

## **Step 2: Create your experience**

*Art of Marriage* is designed for meaningful connection inside and outside your marriage. As the saying goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” We’ve found that marriages grow exponentially within an authentic community.

You’ll also find flexibility in this format, so you can custom fit it to your specific context. Others have used this resource in ways like these to shape healthy marriages in their communities:



### **1) Small group/Sunday school**

These six sessions are tailor-made for a weekly experience. Whether you lead a small group or teach in a Sunday school format, each week, you’ll play the video and ask a few thought-provoking questions. Then, you’ll encourage each couple to interact in between meetings with the “Date talk” questions, unique challenges, and devotionals.

## 2) Host an experience

Many leaders use *Art of Marriage* to grow stronger marriages in their church, community, and online groups. Cater this series to your needs. Play all or some of the videos, pick your favorite questions, and grab some of the challenges to use during your event (i.e., AGAPE IN ACTION has a “love letter” exercise; EUANGELION IN ACTION has a “missional marriage brainstorm” for the couple). Then the couple can take the workbooks home for weeks of prepared date conversation starters; practical, spouse-specific challenges; and devotionals. The videos are available to stream directly or download for event viewing. **(DVDs are also available while supplies last by calling 1-800-358-6329, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. CST.)**

## 3) Couple to couple

Some leaders like to create a more personalized, intimate experience. Whether you are helping an engaged couple get ready for marriage or discipling another married couple, we think this study will help you have the conversations they most need but wouldn't likely experience on their own.

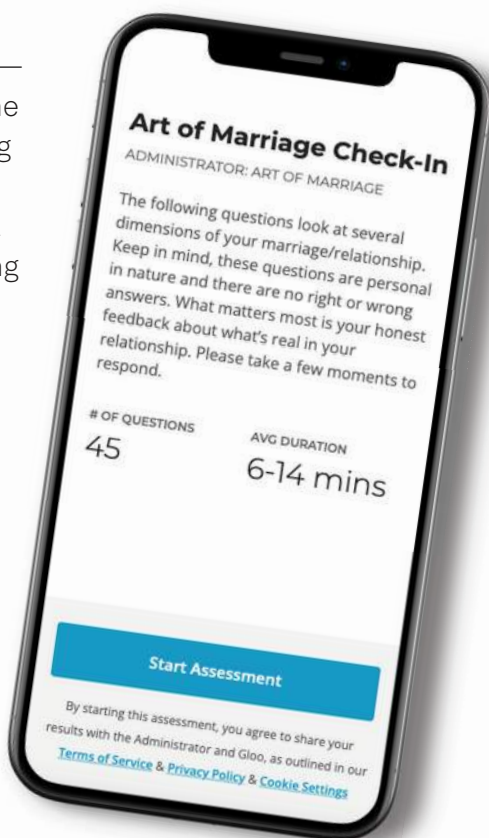


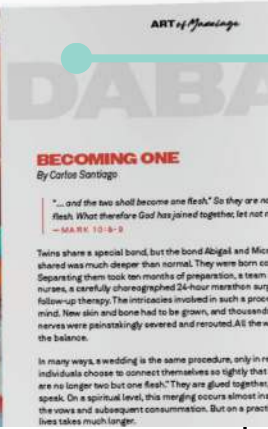
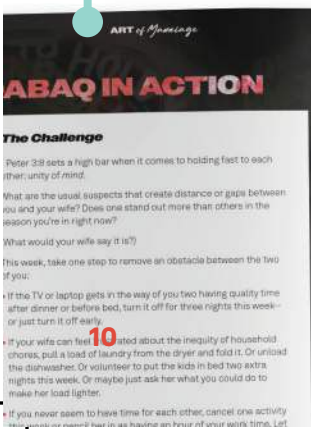
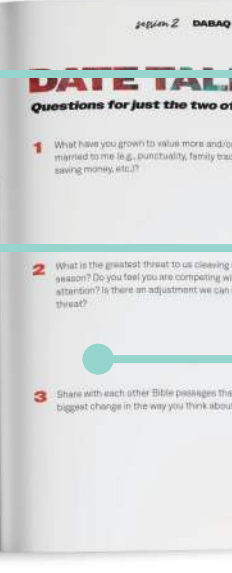
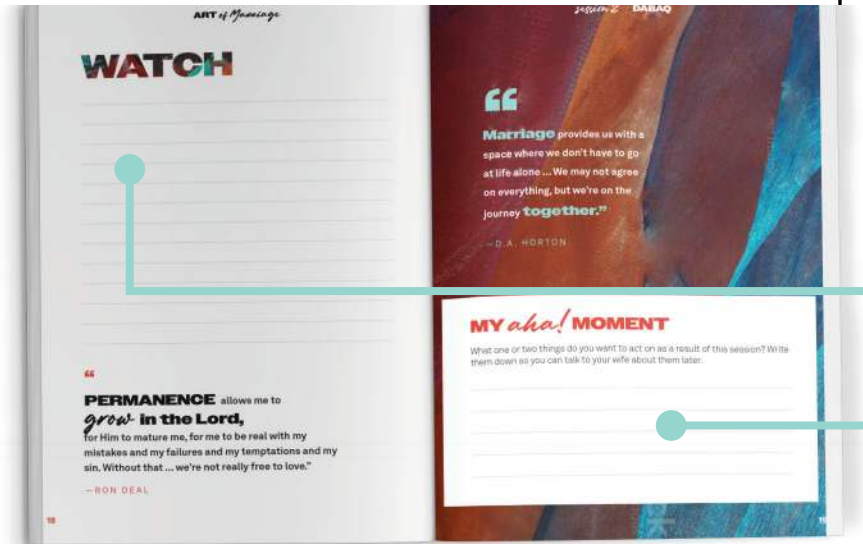


### Step 3: Complete the “Couple’s Check-In” after session one

Couples who experience oneness share a recurring behavior: They regularly inspect the quality of their relationship. Assessing current strengths and weaknesses in your communication, commitment, intimacy, and other important areas keep you on a growth path—both as individuals and as a couple.

So we’re encouraging you in the first session—leaders too—to take the Couple’s Check-In using the QR code below. Once completed, you’ll receive a report offering one area of strength and one opportunity for growth.





## What's Inside Each Session:

**Video Notes:** Here's your handy place to jot down key themes, thoughts, and nuggets from the videos.

**My "Aha" Moment:** After each session, we've found it wise to take a breath and reflect on what touched you. Before you jump into questions, give each person a chance to reflect and write down something they could talk about with their spouse later.

**Group Questions** are designed to serve the leader. Use as many as you want, or make up your own based on the content for that session and the group you are leading.

**Blended Moment:** Follow-up podcasts help apply session content to stepfamily marriages.

**Date Talk:** These prompts for talking over coffee or a night on the town help the couple interact more deeply over the content they received.

**Challenges:** It's easy to talk about loving well; it's harder to *actually* love well. Each week has suggestions on practical ways for each spouse to uniquely practice loving in God-reflecting ways.

**Devotionals:** Written for husband and wife with follow-up prayer prompts, these are a chance for couples to dig into each session's concept in a few moments of quiet throughout the week.

## Tips for Leading

- 1) Pray:** Recognize God is at work in people's lives before they show up for your event or small group, and He'll be at work in their lives long after they leave. Ask God to help you play whatever role He has for you in the middle of those two realities. And trust Him for the results.
- 2) Think through some "ground rules," and don't be afraid to repeat them before each session.** Download this super helpful visual on ground rules for small groups.



- 3) Don't be afraid of silence.** Resist the urge to fill silence with your own voice. In some groups, people's first impulse will be to let you bail them out of the quiet. If you wait just a few more seconds, someone else will get the ball rolling—unless you've already started talking!
- 4) Questions are a guide, not a requirement.** Feel free to pick a few of the group questions most relevant to your group or ones that really hit you. You don't need to ask them all, or in order, or use any of them! Make up your own based on what you learned. They are a resource for you if they are helpful.

## LEADER'S GUIDE

### 5) Your role is “facilitator,” not “teacher.”

Make it your goal to get other people talking and sharing. That doesn't mean you can't add your thoughts along the way, but invest more energy in helping others get their ideas expressed, rather than constantly looking for opportunities to share your own.

### 6) Besides prayer, the best preparation is thinking ahead.

Whether leading a small group or overseeing an event, consider how people might answer the questions in “Group Talk” and try to think of good follow-up questions to keep mining an area of interest.

### 7) You don't need to know all the answers.

See #5!



Supercharge your discussion times with robust conversations and connections. Find more resources to facilitate your group, including conversation tips, how to create safety in your small group, and much more, at [FamilyLife.com/Equip](https://www.familylife.com/Equip). You've got this!

## The Big Ideas For Each Session

### Overall Theme:

Through six sessions, you will unpack six biblical words that describe how God loves and acts toward His creation. When people see a couple modeling the covenantal, steadfast love of God (HESED) to one another, others catch a glimpse of a God who

- stays with us through the highs and lows of life (DABAQ: to cleave to, cling),
- sacrifices His best, Jesus, for our good (AGAPE: to love sacrificially, unconditionally),
- sets us free from the bondage of our sin and failures (LUO: release, forgive),
- sees everything about us and accepts us completely (YADA: to know intimately),
- sends us to others who need His love (EUANGELION: good news, gospel).

Note that this modeling doesn't imply *picture-perfect*—frankly, that's overrated and impossible to achieve. It's about helping couples realize our need for Jesus and the compelling way He journeys with us to turn our marriage into a messy masterpiece that can make a positive impact on the people around us.

## Session 1

# HESED

## *Unwavering Love*

**(Hebrew, heh-sed): The covenantal, steadfast love of God**

**Purpose:** In this first session, we unpack the idea that marriage, like art, was intentionally designed to display something about the Invisible Artist: His characteristics and nature. When a couple models God's HESED to one another, they display three key characteristics of God.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) What were your expectations for marriage?
- 2) The purpose of marriage is to display the covenantal, steadfast love of God (HESED is defined).
- 3) When we choose to love each other like God loves us, we display three characteristics of God:
  - The trinitarian unity of God (Genesis 1:1, John 17:1-5)
  - The promise God makes to His people (Genesis 12:7, 15:1-21)
  - The way God loves/pursues imperfect people unconditionally (Romans 5:8)

*Note: In HESED IN ACTION, we encourage participants to watch a video from FamilyLife's CEO, David Robbins. It's a clear presentation of the gospel. We want to make sure every couple realizes we cannot give God's love away if we have not first experienced it ourselves. Depending on how you are using Art of Marriage, you might want to show that video in your setting and explain how the gospel has changed your life and marriage.*

## Session 2

# DABAQ

## *Resilient Love*

**(Hebrew, daw-bak’): Sticking with each other through the highs and lows of life**

**Purpose:** In this session, we build on what a covenant looks like when we choose to cleave with one another in the good times and bad. A couple will discover three ways they can stick by one another regardless of what season they are in.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) Every marriage goes through tough seasons.
- 2) What makes it hard to cleave to one another?
- 3) Why permanence is so crucial to a marriage (Genesis 2:24-25).
- 4) How do we cleave (DABAQ) with one another regardless of our circumstances?
  - Remember your spouse is not your enemy (Ephesians 6:12).
  - Evaluate the season you are in.
  - Keep investing in one another.



## Session 3

# AGAPE

## *Selfless Love*

**(Greek, ah-GAH-pahy): Sacrificing one's best for the good of another**

**Purpose:** In this session, we help couples see that God loves imperfect people unconditionally by sacrificing Jesus for our good, even though it cost Him greatly. In the same way, God calls each spouse to love someone who isn't always easy to love.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) You married a sinner.
- 2) Our ideas about "love" need to grow up (a cultural vs. biblical idea of love).
- 3) Move from "God change them" to "God change me!"
- 4) Set aside our preferences and desire their good (Philippians 2:2-4; John 15:13).
- 5) Practical ways to show AGAPE.
- 6) Closing thoughts on reflecting God's AGAPE love to our spouses (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

*Note: There's an effective challenge exercise in AGAPE IN ACTION to create time for during your marriage event/experience: Each spouse is equipped to write a love letter. If you really want to amp up your event, give the couple space to not only write it, but make sure they are encouraged to read the love letter to one another (in private!) before the event ends.*

## Session 4

# LUO

## *Forgiving Love*

**(Greek, loo-o'): Setting each other free from sin and failure**

**Purpose:** In this session, we help couples see that God sets us free from our own sin. In the same way, conflict in marriage gives every couple an opportunity to move toward oneness by choosing to regularly repent and forgive. They will discover three practical ways to move toward each other—even in the midst of conflict.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) What does conflict look like in our house?
- 2) Forgiven people forgive others (Colossians 3:12-17).
- 3) How do we move toward reconciliation in the midst of conflict?
  - Call a time-out
  - Own your part
  - Pursue oneness

## Session 5

# YADA

## *Intimate Love*

**(Hebrew, ya-daw'):** Seeing everything about each other and accepting completely

**Purpose:** In this session, we help couples move toward understanding one another and have practical, courageous conversations about sexual expectations and intimacy.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) What I expected from sex in marriage.
- 2) Baggage we brought into the bedroom.
- 3) God's view and purpose for sexual intimacy.
- 4) Be a student/servant in the bedroom (1 Corinthians 7:2-5, Philippians 2:1-8).
- 5) Move toward courageous conversations.

## Session 6

# EUANGELION

## *Missional Love*

**(Greek, yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on): Sending Christ-followers to those who need His love**

**Purpose:** In this session, we help couples realize their marriage, even with its imperfections, was designed to be on mission and bring the good news of God's love to those around them. They will learn three ways to help discover and stay on mission for the gospel.

### **Lesson Outline:**

- 1) How do you want your marriage to be remembered?
- 2) Every marriage has a mission (Matthew 28:19-20).
- 3) Discover your mission in marriage.
  - Pursue God together.
  - Remain in community with other couples.
  - Look around and see who your marriage can impact.

*Note: There's an engaging challenge exercise in EUANGELION IN ACTION that could be accomplished at a marriage event/ experience to help couples develop a vision for impacting the people God has around them. You might decide to build in time for the couple to work on that challenge together.*

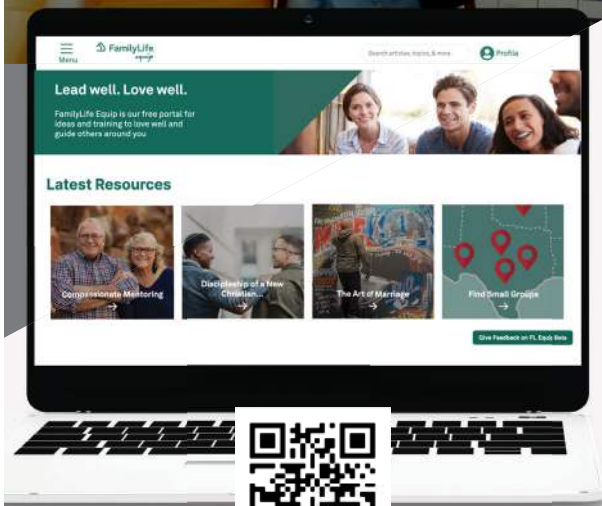


### **Wrapping Up! How was the journey?**

Thanks for leading the Art of Marriage.  
Tell us how we did by leaving your feedback  
in this short two-question survey.



**We'll help you  
open doors.**



For more information,  
scan QR code or visit

**FamilyLife.com/equip**

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We can help.**

FamilyLife Equip is our completely free portal for **ideas, training, and you-can-do-this inspiration** to get out there and **love well.**

Whether you're just starting out, or you've been leading for awhile, find resources you need to **open doors in your community and impact your corner of the world.**



**GIVE YOUR**

**MARRIAGE**

**THE WEEKEND**

**IT DESERVES**



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Choose from over 80 dates and locations nationwide at [weekendtoremember.com](https://weekendtoremember.com)

 **FamilyLife.**



## Pursue what matters most

At FamilyLife, we get it.

Every home is full of moments scattered and sacred, heart-pounding and hilarious, messy and marvelous.

But we believe God's Word has real wisdom for real families. We help your family push through the days that are hectic and heart-wrenching—to come together in spite of the hard.

Through resources and experiences, we'll help you connect in ways that count with those you love.

Lean on us, laugh with us, learn with us, and walk with us to pursue the relationships that matter most.

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