

Spring 2016

Mentors Prepare Couples for Marriage Success

Michelle (Cummings) Solomon
Cedarville University, msolomon@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/staff_publications



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Solomon, Michelle (Cummings), "Mentors Prepare Couples for Marriage Success" (2016). *Staff Publications*. 67.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/staff_publications/67

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

Mentors Prepare Couples for Marriage Success

by Michele (Cummings) Solomon '91

Fit To Be Tied, a program in Cedarville's Discipleship Ministries, stems from the belief that healthy, biblical marriages don't just happen; they are crafted by the hands of the Almighty and cultivated through integrating biblical principles and seeking godly counsel.

At its core, Fit To Be Tied prepares and equips students to build marriages that adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "We believe that family is one of the greatest places to put the Gospel on display," explained Aaron Cook '99, Director of Discipleship Ministries. "It is the best atmosphere for human flourishing.

"As Christians, if we're going to cultivate culture, it has to start with the family," Cook continued. "Now more than ever, it is important for Christians to have compelling, Christ-centered marriages. We want to create a vision of what a biblical marriage should look like."

This year, 53 engaged or seriously dating couples participated in Fit To Be Tied. As part of the program, couples must first complete pre-marriage inventories,

staff members — with whom they meet between group sessions to discuss the topics. But beyond discussion, mentor couples have a deep desire to build into the lives of the student couples by modeling strong, growing, Christ-centered marriages. "We are blessed with so many servant-minded disciplers on this campus," Cook said. "It is the real strength of the program. I am incredibly grateful for those who partner with us."

And the students agree. "Talking to people with experience has been invaluable," explained Luke Tomlinson '16. "It is encouraging just to see people doing marriage well."

His fiancée, Kaity Kenniv '16, echoed his thoughts. "The best part has been talking with our mentor couple. They invite us into their home and share wisdom from their years of marriage," she shared. "Meeting with them has brought up different topics or potential issues that we hadn't considered before." Tomlinson and Kenniv plan to marry in June 2016.

Timothy Powers '16 credits the program with giving him and his wife, Trinity, a better understanding of what to expect after their May 2015 wedding. "Fit to be Tied helped me see the areas I needed to focus on to provide for my wife, and it helped Trinity to see those areas where she has been called to help me as her husband," Powers offered.

"Fit To Be Tied has helped us to talk about different topics that we may not have thought of before," said Amy Spranger '15, who participated in the program with her fiancé, Marcus Croll '16. "It has helped us learn how to work through different situations that will arise in our marriage, and ultimately, it has helped us remember to keep Christ at the center and to build our relationship on Him." Croll and Spranger plan to wed in January 2017.

Not all couples make it through the program to marriage, however. "We ask the really hard questions," Cook explained, "and some couples decide they just aren't ready."

But those who do make it through leave with a picture of God's intention for marriage — a reflection of His perfect love for His Church. "Marriage is awesome. We want them to be equipped to do the hard, messy work to enjoy it," Cook concluded.

Michele (Cummings) Solomon '91 is the Copy Editor for Cedarville University Marketing.



Kaity Kenniv '16 and Luke Tomlinson '16 meet with their mentor couple, Tom '80 and Amy Hutchison.

which help them identify personality differences and areas of potential conflicts.

Then, throughout the year, the couples attend five group seminars that introduce key marriage topics, which include:

- The Meaning of Marriage
- Personalities and Marriage
- Communication and Conflict Resolution
- Financial Management
- Intimacy in Marriage

As part of the program, each student couple is required to find a mentor couple — typically faculty or