



The gift Exchange

Vol II • Spring 2019

MARRIAGE PREP — LIFETIME LEARNING

Ruah Woods is a house built on marriage. Through the exploration of Theology of the Body, our hearts beat to an excited rhythm of learning about our true human dignity, created in God's image as male and female. The more we value the gift of marriage, a sharing in God's divine plan, the more we are able to experience an exchange of love so profound, it becomes part of creation.

...OUR HEARTS BEAT TO AN EXCITED RHYTHM OF LEARNING ABOUT OUR TRUE HUMAN DIGNITY...

Supporting a healthy embrace of marriage and family is really at the core of all we do. This commitment is obvious in the introductory Theology of the Body courses we've been teaching onsite for a decade and especially our outstanding programs for newly engaged couples – *God's Plan for Love* and *Life Skills for Couples* that prepare couples to more fully understand and live their vocation to love. You can also see this underscored in the family healing ministry we offer through our Psychological Services (see the *Healing Hearts* article in this issue about the highly acclaimed Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy we provide).

But, to be sure, learning about our vocation to love starts long before the decision to slide on that diamond ring. Remote Marriage Prep is part of a continual process that evolves over the course of one's life. In *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope St. John Paul II reminds us,

66. Remote preparation begins in early childhood, in that wise family training which leads children to discover themselves as being endowed with a rich and complex psychology and with a particular personality with its own strengths and weaknesses. It is the period when esteem for all authentic human values is instilled...

Throughout the themes and lessons in our *ROOTED: K-12 Theology of the Body Curriculum*, we help educators, catechists and parents explore with the child the meaning of relationships, formation of character (virtue), rightly ordered desire (self-mastery), the male-female



PHOTO CREDIT: *Called to be More* photography by Corynne Staresinic

difference, and other concepts that form the very foundations of a person's capacity to view marriage (and its mirror: priestly and religious life) as a glorious vocation and mission. Total gift of self is the only way to achieve happiness in this life AND forever in the next.

Help us build a culture of life across the US and around the world. Visit ruahwoodspress.com for the first step.



Healing Hearts, One Marriage at a Time

by Dr. Andrew Sodergren

At Ruah Woods Psychological Services (RWPS), we seek to help people overcome difficulties in living out their vocation to love. One way we do this is by empowering spouses to live their marital vocation more fully and joyfully. In fact, providing high quality marital therapy, informed by Theology of the Body, is one of our top priorities.

As Catholics we believe that when a man and woman enter the Sacrament of Matrimony, an **indissoluble bond**, sealed by Christ, comes into existence. However, living out this bond is the challenge! In order to live out this calling to life-long spousal love, the sacramental bond has to be

supported by the development and nurturing of a **secure emotional bond**. Nearly all marital difficulties stem from insecurities or wounds in this emotional bond. Unfortunately, such wounds and insecurities are far too common, resulting in struggling marriages and much pain.

To respond to this crucial need, all three of our RWPS therapists have received advanced training in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT), which is the most effective form of marital therapy identified by researchers. The central focus of EFT is working through the wounds and insecurities that block spouses from feeling secure with one another and sharing their hearts with each other

fully. EFT helps them learn to give and receive love more fully. How awesome is that?!

EFT has the power not only to heal the marital bond, but also many of the individual wounds that we bring with us into our marriages. We are proud to offer this service, integrated with the beauty of the Catholic vision of marriage. If you or someone you know could use some help in living marital love more fully, give us a call at **513-407-8878** or visit us at www.RWpsych.org. (Be sure to check our **new blog** too, "Healing to Love | Loving to Heal.")



ROOTED BY THE NUMBERS:



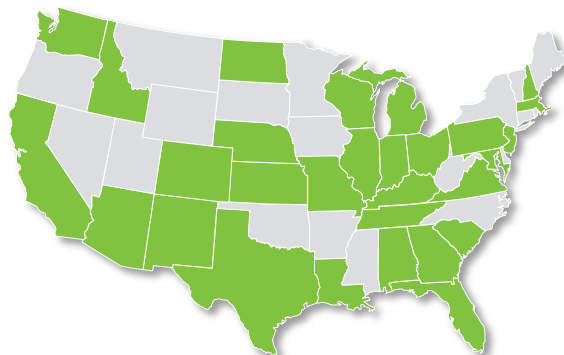
ROOTED taught in over 30 states



RWP has hosted live teacher training events in over 20 US cities



RWP has offered over 125 hours of live teacher training since 2017



AROUND THE WORLD

Rooted is being taught in Canada, Ireland, Japan, China, Australia, and Slovakia



CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Rooted has received an endorsement from George Weigel, acclaimed biographer of Pope St. John Paul II



CLASSROOMS EQUIPPED WITH
ROOTED: TOB CURRICULUM



STUDENTS LEARNING TOB
VIA **ROOTED: TOB CURRICULUM**



GRADE 6-8 STUDENTS
PARTICIPATING IN PILOT
PROGRAM ACROSS 27 STATES

ROOTED: K-12 THEOLOGY OF THE BODY CURRICULUM BY THE NUMBERS

RuahWoodsPress.com



Marriage: The Window into Heaven

One of my close friends is expecting to ask his girlfriend to marry him in a couple of weeks. Curious about his insights, I asked him, “Why get married?” His initial response, without delay, was an emphatic, but humorous, “Don’t!” To which both of us heartily laughed. However, shortly thereafter, his demeanor became more pensive, as he shared, “I desire to get married because no one can get to heaven on their own; I want someone to journey there with, and who will call me on to perfection and holiness, as we aim for our goal.”

My friend is right: marriage ought to lead us to heaven! In the *Theology of the Body*, we understand that marriage is an *icon*, or window, into what heaven will be like, which is often referred to as, “the wedding feast of the Lamb”. Marriage is a foretaste of what is to come – communion with the Divine Bridegroom. This “marriage of Genesis”, the marriage between a man and woman, is not the end, but

is only just the beginning. It reveals so much of who we are, what we were made for, and where we are heading.

In order to help engaged couples embark on a marital journey that is lasting and fulfilling, and which adequately aids their preparation for marriage, Ruah Woods provides a marriage prep course that teaches the Catholic vision of marital love, through the lens of Theology of the Body (TOB). We use the program called, *Joy Filled Marriage*, published by Ascension Press, which “offers a comprehensive approach to marriage preparation that covers not only the sacramentality and theology of marriage (*God’s Plan for Love*), but the practical life skills necessary to live out the rich Catholic vision of marriage (*Life Skills for Couples*).” *Joy Filled Marriage* is one of the approved pre-Cana retreats supported by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and is offered on the first weekend of each month.

One objective for the program, is

that couples will walk away with an appreciation for what the Church teaches and why. This is extremely important for couples today who are preparing for marriage. Julie and Chris Kiefer, a witness couple for Ruah Woods’ marriage prep program, relay “Twenty years ago we were not blessed to have the beautiful ‘whys’ behind what the Church teaches (TOB themed marriage prep), which is now readily accessible to engaged couples.” Julie and Chris are not the only ones who have shared this same sentiment. Many have shared, “Why has no one ever told me this!?” This very question drives our work here at Ruah Woods, because we have heard too many people say it. We strive to get the message of TOB into the hands of every person – married, single, or consecrated – because we all need it in order to live holy and joyful lives.

Please pray that we may continue to equip souls in this journey, as they aim for heaven together, and with your support, assist them as they strive to obtain their eternal reward.

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY FOR TEACHERS: INTRO WORKSHOP

Three Days to Transform
Your Teaching and Life!

Teachers, D.R.E.'s, catechists, youth ministers and educators will be given the tools they need to engage young people with St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

June 24-26 or Aug 5-7

Monday thru Wednesday
9:00am - 4:30pm daily

For information or to register:
ruahwoodspress.com/training
DJHueneman@ruahwoods.org
513-407-8672

Cost \$155

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Special Topics in
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for Teachers:

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**Gender and
Sexual Identity**

June 27-28 or Aug 8-9
2019

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Register early. Space limited