

## **10 Great Dates: Updated Resources for Marriage Education and Enrichment**

Claudia and David Arp have updated their classic *10 Great Dates* resources again, making them more relevant and appropriate for current generations and diverse groups of couples. The updated and expanded 2016 edition of the couple workbook, with its more generic cover art and the new video “date launches” with Josh and Christi Straub, will appeal to and resonate with younger couples, especially those dealing with parenting issues, as well as couples at different life stages. This resource is especially valuable for single pastors, as it may be led by a lay couple with a growing marriage. Visit this web address to see a sample video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Z1x1aiJUjg&feature=youtu.be>

As with previous editions, this resource provides a non-threatening and flexible opportunity for couples to explore and share what is really important to them. Ten chapters address such topics as appreciating our differences, experiencing God, and facing the storms of life. In each chapter, the authors share their thoughts and experiences related to the topic, then offer suggestions for a “Date,” along with two copies of a tear-out worksheet outlining a recommended conversation for the participating couples. Couples are encouraged to read the chapter and fill in their worksheets individually before the date, then to choose a pleasant setting away from distractions in order to focus on the conversation. A brief “Chapter Summary” in the most recent update simplifies the process for those who do not like or don’t have time to read the chapter. “Post-Date Applications” suggest ways to build on the conversation.

Although couples may use the workbook on their own, a richer experience can be provided when a church or other organization hosts and promotes a group experience. The host purchases or borrows the video curriculum and schedules ten gatherings at which participants watch a ten-minute “date launch” video. A Leader’s Guide, which may be downloaded free from [www.10greatdates.org](http://www.10greatdates.org), suggests ice-breakers, group guidelines, activities, prayers, and group discussion starters to use as well. Couples then go out on private dates, taking the tear-out exercise pages from their workbook to guide their conversations. Host churches can solicit discount coupons from popular restaurants and offer child care to make this activity more manageable for couples. Alternatively, couples could be encouraged to read the chapter and have their conversation before coming together as a group. Sessions could be scheduled weekly, bi-monthly, or in clusters – such as five weeks in a row, then the other five after a break. Or some or all of the sessions could be combined into a retreat day or weekend.

Previous *10 Great Dates* resources still available include the following:

*10 Great Dates to Energize Your Marriage* in Spanish, Korean, and German

*10 Great Dates Before You Say “I Do*

*10 Great Dates for Empty Nesters*

*10 Great Dates: Connecting Faith, Love & Marriage*

*\$10 Great Dates: Connecting Love, Marriage, and Fun on a Budget*

These resources offer easy-to-lead, proven, effective, and fun experiences for helping couples learn to communicate more effectively and connect more intimately, while learning more about themselves and each other and developing confidence in their relationship.

**Jane P. Ives, United Methodist Marriage and Family Ministries Consultant (6/26/17)**

10 Quaker Lane, Portland, ME 04103, 207-797-8930, [Janepives@gmail.com](mailto:Janepives@gmail.com)

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