

Start Smart: Level 3 Blessing Education seminar for engaged couples

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“We had a great experience. We were able to connect with each other on a deeper level than before, which was amazing. The content helped us understand what to expect in our married life and how to manage some possible challenges ahead” said one participant in the Start Smart: Level 3 Blessing Education seminar for engaged couples.



20 engaged couples from across the United States gathered in New York at the Unification Theological Seminary from December 18-20 to participate in the seminar hosted by the Blessing & Family Ministry. The content of the seminar was designed to help engaged couples prepare for the Marriage Blessing and their married life together. The curriculum featured valuable insights into the value of the Marriage Blessing and practical guidance on building one’s relationship, communication, male-female differences, and building intimacy. The content was presented by Unificationist Counselor and Marriage

Educator, John Williams, and Marriage Educator and Relationship Coach, Debby Gullery.

On Saturday night, two Blessed Couples candidly shared their experience with the Marriage Blessing and married life. Branch and Naria Gaarder shared about the first few years of marriage, and then Victor and Andria Quesada shared about the growth of their love and connection over the years.

“It was a wonderful experience” said several of the couples. Much joy, laughter, and insights were shared between the couples and between the other participants throughout the weekend.



Here's What Some Participants Had to Say

“This workshop was very useful for me. Being here together with my match was essential for me because I had so many questions that came up and just being here together with her made the experience very fulfilling.”

“It was an engaging and fun weekend experience with my match. The atmosphere was great because everyone was also a couple. I really liked that. It made me feel like I was connected to something bigger.”



“The workshop was great. The information given was useful, applicable, and relevant, and I had a lot of fun learning it and experiencing it all with my fiancé.”



“I really enjoyed this Level 3 Blessing Workshop. It was really nice to meet different couples going through the same things and to develop a deeper relationship with my spouse.”



“This was great. Initially, I felt that I would have already heard everything at some point in the past, that the requirement for the Blessing was arbitrary, and that I could spend the time and travel money on something better. But I had a life-changing time. I loved the talks, and I loved spending time with other soon-to-be couples. I feel revitalized in both my relationship with my fiancé and my faith in the Unification Church.”



“I had a wonderful experience at this Blessing workshop. The content was extremely relevant and useful, even when it didn’t yet apply to us. There were many things that I had wished to discuss before, but didn’t know how to approach the topic, or simply needed to have validated and reaffirmed. I felt that all the presenters were sincerely offering their real and practical experience. I also really valued the time to get to know other couples; it creates a sense of unity and bonding within our Blessing group, which in turn gave me a great sense of the beauty and potential of our movement’s future.”



“My impression is that our church as a movement believes in and celebrates couples receiving the Blessing. It is the beginning of new families, growth, struggles, and victories centered on our faith and love for God and True Parents. Navigating through it is a big deal and it won’t always be easy. So I’m grateful that we’ve had this opportunity to receive guidance and tools, as well as meet other couples who will be going through it as well.”



“Everything was so clear and based on reality. I learned many important things before receiving the Blessing. It was a great time to honestly discuss many things with my spouse.”