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## **Eight Dates Program Inspires, Nurtures Over 100 Married Couples**



The Family Wellness Ministry and the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministries for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco combined forces to host ten 75-minute marriage sessions bimonthly on Thursday nights, starting on Thursday, October 15, 2020.

This complimentary series was led by the Metropolis of San Francisco Family Wellness Ministry Team, and was designed to strengthen couples' commitment to one another and to God. The program featured topics from the popular lifestyle book *Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love* (Workman, 2019) by award-winning authors and psychologists Drs. John and Julie Gottman, and bestselling authors Doug Abrams and Rachel Carlton Abrams, MD.

Each session was carefully designed to engage couples in essential conversation on key topics of importance within their marriages: trust and commitment; addressing conflict; sex and intimacy; work and money; family; fun and adventure; growth and spirituality; hopes and dreams. The goal was to give couples eight fulfilling, enlightening, and spiritually nurturing dates for improved communication and connection.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos regularly participated in these sessions, and

offered these remarks upon the conclusion of the program, “Your journey on these eight dates is not over, my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is just beginning. Follow the road map you have been provided. Do not just put it on a shelf and collect dust. There is yet much more to be discovered on your journey through marriage and I hope and pray that you will continue to find joy, fulfillment, and most of all – love – as you continue to explore the uncharted waters of your future.”

Though the original target audience for this program was young married couples within the Metropolis of San Francisco, this program attracted 220 registrations from different Orthodox jurisdictions across the country as well as from Canada, Australia, and Romania. Many of the couples were young marrieds, while others were engaged couples and long-term married couples. The Eight Dates Marriage Program provided a balance of vibrant content, integration of the Orthodox faith, and opportunity for small group discussion, and conversation face-to-face and heart-to-heart for the individual couples. Participating couples were provided weekly thought exercises and intimacy boosters to complete together for additional value outside the scheduled meetings. Ultimately the goal was for each couple to equip themselves with the resources necessary for strengthened commitment to one another, as well to provide an expanded Orthodox community of supportive peers in the process.

The Eight Dates program will be offered again in the Fall of 2021. More details will be available in the coming months at [www.sanfran.goarch.org](http://www.sanfran.goarch.org) and [www.familywellnessministry.org](http://www.familywellnessministry.org). Please contact Presvytera Donna Pappas with any questions.

Watch The Eight Dates Reflection Video

[goarch.org](http://goarch.org)

# Saint Joseph the Hesychast

