

THIRD PRESENTATION: IN A SERIES OF THREE

“Angels Rejoicing...Where Do We Go From Here!?”

This presentation is to follow the “Commitment” and the “We Got Two - Did You?” presentations throughout all groups/spirals/ love circles/ or communities in your area.

As with the previous presentations you are encouraged to duplicate, change, and personalize to suit your individual style or preference. Preparation should take approximately 3 hours and allow 10 - 15 minutes plus a 10 & 10 for the presentation itself. If you feel inclined to have an open sharing please allow extra time as it may become very personal to those attending.

This presentation is a reminder that Inviting is not the end result, but only the beginning and without “Commitment” and “follow-up” our dream for Marriage Encounter will not continue to grow, but remain only a dream and not a reality!

We encourage you to dialogue and pray together during your preparation of this talk. Who knows! Maybe your guardian angel will become more apparent to you and reveal himself through your sharing!

ENJOY!

Angels Rejoicing.....Where Do We Go From Here?

I. Introduction of presenting couple.

A. Personal tidbits.

1. Encountered where and when.

a. Commitment to Marriage Encounter.

1. Loving tasks, etc.

II. Title of talk.

A. “Angels Rejoicing...Where Do We Go From Here?”

III. Who/What is an angel?

A. Personal Definition.

1. Explain what an angel means to you.

B. Personal Experience.

1. Give an example of an “angelic experience” in your life.

IV. What role do they play in Gods’ plan?

A. Purpose

1. Messengers of God.

2. Biblical background.

a. Matthew 1:18-25

V. How are we like angels?

A. Calling/mission.

1. What is our message?

2. Inviting.

a. As examples

b. As friends

3. Rejoicing.

a. As prayer couples.

VI. Our role is over now...or is it!?

A. New relationships.

1. Remembering your first time at community.

2. Loving task angels.

a. Welcoming

b. Mentoring

B. Role Model

C. Decisions

1. Become new angels for others or be content.

VII. 10/10 question.

VIII. Optional Open Sharing

Angels Rejoicing.....Where Do We Go From Here?

ROGER

When someone mentions angels to me, I think of “rejoicing”, “praising”, and “message bearers”. In the Bible stories that I remember as a child of angels, they were happy and cheerful. The announcement of Jesus’ birth to a young Mary, or the “multitude of angels” singing and telling the awe-struck shepherds about the birth of a great King.

Angels were traveling companions of God as described in Genesis when Abraham and Sarah entertained some visitors. They also are depicted as being very strong and enforcers of God’s will. The ultimate army, willing to defend God and carry out His commands without hesitation. The vision that Elishas’ servant had in II Kings 6:16-17 when his eyes were opened up and he saw the horses and chariots of fire ready to defend the city of Dothan, brings vivid pictures to my mind of angels in full battle gear. Their loyalty to God in praise and action always seemed to be what a good Christian should be like.

Many people will talk about guardian angels and wear pins on their lapels. We hope that we have our very own guardian angel that has been assigned to us to protect and keep us out of danger. Like a good fairy, but with a little more clout and muscle.

My guardian angel let me sleep after I got hit by a car at the age of 5 and not wake up until my body had already started healing and I wasn't in pain anymore from the broken ribs and other internal injuries. Some people might say that my angel was sleeping on the job to allow me to be hit in the first place, but I felt cared for and loved during my stay and even enjoyed a memorable birthday.

Jean

When I think of angels, I think “pure”, “radiant”, “helpful”, guardians of all. Psalm 91 vs.-11 says “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways”. What a comforting verse.

My guardian angel was with me on the way home from work one day. I was driving along and looked ahead to the left and saw that traffic was stopped coming out of an office building. Still accelerating I looked ahead and to my horror saw traffic stopped right in front of me. There was no way I could stop in time and there was traffic on my right. I slammed on the brake and don't know how or why, but I ended up safely but very shaken on the right shoulder.

Roger

If angels have a purpose it seems to be messengers of God. Whether it was a vision or a dream, they become lifelike and make a memorable impression on whomever they encounter. Old and New Testament stories make it clear that the recipients know that they have seen an angel, and the message they receive changes their lives dramatically as in Matthew 1:18-25. (Read)

Jean

Are we messengers of God? If we believe in “Gods’ Plan” for us in Marriage Encounter we certainly are. He tells us to “Love one another as I have loved you”.

To me this means sharing the special love, joy and excitement of a weekend with other couples. Inviting them to experience a weekend conveys this message.

Roger

I like challenges and when someone asks if “I got two, did you?” I want to be able to say “Same to you and many more!” I don’t believe God has to challenge his angels to spread a certain message but being human it takes special motivation or commitment on our part to accomplish Gods’ will.

Have you ever thought of yourself as being an angel? Our parents may have wished us to be more like little angels, but to actually be an angel may be a little hard to imagine. Have you ever had a lasting effect on someone that has dramatically changed their life? If you’ve enjoyed the experience of someone coming to Christ because of your witness, or as in the first talk, “We got two - did you?” shared in the excitement and joy of a couple coming off a weekend because of your direct influence, then maybe you too can relate.

Jean

I can think of at least two couples that wouldn’t even hear of going on a weekend. In both instances it took years of gentle and sometimes not so gentle nudges by others in our

community. Sometimes they had to back off awhile. Finally, miracle of miracles, they agreed to go on a weekend. Their weekends weren't perfect, one couple almost left more than once, but by Sunday it all came together for them. What joy we felt on Sunday when they said "I don't know why it took so long for us to do this". There were tears of happiness all around.

Roger

All we can do is be the "message bearers" and living examples, not by supernatural appearance or revelations. How does it make you feel when a husband or wife comes up to you and asks you "what secret do you have?" because of the way you relate to each other and treat each other in public. "Shining examples of God's love!" How simple can it get?

Jean

As we live God's plan it not only affects us as a couple, but our family as well.

Our love for each other and the way we act and react as a couple shines through in everything we say and do. Our daughter has already told us that after she and her fiancée get married, they are going on a weekend.

Wouldn't it be great if all recruiting was that easy?

Roger

You can wear your "we got 2-did you?" pins proudly by encouraging or even sponsoring a couple on a weekend by paying their registration in the form of a gift certificate. The

next step would be to be a prayer couple, buy a special candle and decorate it for them, write a special prayer letter for them, attend the sing-off, wait in the hallway with eager anticipation of the looks, smiles and tears of that special couple. The “circle of four” group hug while you reminisce about the similar experiences you both had on the weekend. The laughter of sharing the reactions to the 90/90 and the amazement of time going by so quickly. Then by sharing a pot luck or cake and coffee and get to know this special couple even better and feel closer to them. It doesn't take long for a warm glow to envelope you completely.

Jean

The first time we were a prayer couple it was for someone we know who happened to be a member of the team that weekend. It was sure simple enough - no follow up, no inviting to community - piece of cake! The next time it was for a couple we had never met. Not so simple this time. I wasn't very aggressive with strangers so it was difficult to call and invite them to community. Things sure have changed over the years. Now when given a choice, I always pick someone we don't know. One time we even arranged for our daughter to baby-sit with a couples' 3 children and a dog so they could attend the weekend.

Roger

Once you've got that couple on the weekend, than you can just sit back and relax. Bask in the satisfaction of accomplishing the goal you set out to do, bragging to others of what you've accomplished and give advice to others less gifted as you. **WRONG!** It's just begun. It can be as demanding and rewarding as being a first time parent. Do you

consider yourself a guardian angel of that newly encountered couple by making sure that they get to community every month, or encourage them to volunteer for that perfect loving task that they're just right for? That could get a little stressful at times and would take a lot of work on your part. It may even strain that new relationship.

Jean

After our weekend we were invited to community by our prayer couple. Since we were unable to attend our rookie renewal, I told Roger that we HAD to go. I was nervous, I didn't know who would be there. No one ever talked about Marriage Encounter, it was a big secret. To top it all off, our prayer couple didn't make it because of an emergency with their dog! I was very surprised to see so many couples from our church there that night. I wasn't sure about hugging anyone other than Roger but I tolerated it. As time went on I looked forward to seeing my M.E. family and came to "love those hugs". As we became more involved in M.E. it became easier and easier to share myself and my feelings with my encountered friends.

Roger

The first time I was scheduled to attend a community I had all kinds of reasons why I shouldn't go and a multitude of procrastinated projects that I suddenly felt like starting. But, I would go just this once to prove to Jean that I was right. Besides it was geared for old people with nothing better to do on a weekend night out. Boy was I ever wrong! Right from the start the "old people" welcomed me as I was...a hesitant, awkward hugger, who sat close to the door and ready to bolt at the first sign of commitment. I was accepted for what I was. I sure was disappointed, now I probably had to stay the rest of the evening

(as long as they didn't expect me to hug them the next morning in church). The evening sure didn't live up to my billing. A couple I recognized, but didn't know personally, gave a sharing of their personal feelings that really touched me. Here I was, ready to blackball the whole group, and they were sharing their innermost thoughts with me. By the time the snacks came out I was hooked and Jean had to encourage me to leave since we did have to attend church the next morning. Well, church was okay as I had mastered the pat on the back, look around that no one was looking hug, and I could save my dignity for one more week.

By the next month I had fallen back to my mumbling and grumbling of "better things to do" but I went anyway. I think I even held the car door open for Jean as I was secretly looking forward to going as I knew the hosting couple a little better and I was curious as to what their house looked like. Every month got a little easier and before I knew it, the second Saturday of the month was reserved for our encountered friends.

Jean

It's sometimes very difficult to get rookies into community. Work or family commitments interfere, or maybe they're not really sure about all these couples who seem to have a special bond. It is sometimes very difficult to join an established group. We, as a community, must welcome and encourage them to attend and find their place in Marriage Encounter. We must also respect the fact that not everyone has the same priorities as we do.

I really had a problem with couples who didn't come to community, especially the ones who came and then stopped coming because something on television was more important to them. What could possibly be more important than their marriage? I had to learn to accept them as they were. If they only come to special functions such as Anniversary dinners or Epiphany parties, that's O.K..

Roger

How about trying the team approach? Welcome them into the LME Team Angels and treat them as the “first draft pick” or “rookies of the year!”

It may very well take a combination of being a guardian (or use the mentoring approach) and encouragement as a “Team Angel”. If our coach is God and we're all equal in his sight then it simplifies our role and focuses our attention to be “Shining examples of God's love!” Love our new team angels simply and openly. Be available when they need us and rejoice in all their accomplishments both great and small. As a team we all have our own special gifts and talents and should encourage everyone to use them to the best of their advantage.

Our special angels are a couple that has done exactly that. Just accepted us for what we are and showed us the path to follow. Encouragement to join in the community and be a part of the team by open arm welcomes and warm hugs whenever we meet them. A familiarity and freshness that seemed to be so deep, like a warm shower on a cold morning. They guided us on the right path when we got side-tracked by the “business” of

community instead of focusing on the sharing and 10 & 10 at our monthly get togethers. Without hesitation, invited us to reunions to enjoy the warmth, love, and messages shared by the presenters, and nurturing and guardianship of the rest of the angelic team from all over the world. Whenever we have a question, idea, or need, they're there for us and for many others in their long and involved marriage encounter history. They treated us as equals right from the start and when you admire someone and their relationship, that means so much. Do they think of themselves as angels? Probably not! Do they rejoice and spread the message of Marriage Encounter? Without a doubt! If you're as fortunate as we are in joining up with such blessed team members "Hallelujah!". If you ARE that blessed team member "Glory to God in the Highest"

Don't give up! Take a breather, encourage others to participate by one ringers, love notes, whispered thanks during hugs and silent prayers for M.E. to continue in the new hands of couples being encountered. Remember your first time, relive your experiences and angelic encounters with other couples, share at a community, recommit to inviting and stay connected to the fabric of Marriage Encounter.

Now that you've gone full circle, from being invited... to inviting; being encouraged ...to encouraging; being prayed for... to praying for others; being welcomed... to welcoming; ad infinitum... Is this what happens in the heavens if and when new angels are born? Are we those potential new angels that get to meet our guardian angels face to face in the new revelation? It's an interesting concept, both exciting and intimidating. Is that how we're

expected to be “Christ Like” on earth? Any encountered couple will tell you wonderful stories of chance meetings and brief encounters with other M.E. couples. The warmth, the love, the open arm helping hands, support and feeling that you’ve known them forever isn’t just coincidence. Gods’ love shines through so many couples, from so many weekends, from so many places than ever before. It truly must be his team of angels on earth.

10/10: What position or positions do you play on Gods’ team of angels? Describe in loving detail.

Optional Open Sharing