

Living Our Covenant – maximum 90:00

Outline & Mentality - Common Protestant Outline

Objective

- to inspire the couples to be modern-day apostles, to passionately live their marriage covenant in order to make a difference in the Church and in the world
- to assure them that it is possible to make their dreams come true if they keep their relationship a top priority, make the values of Worldwide Marriage Encounter a way of life, and journey with couples who share those same values
- to invite them to invest personally and financially in the dream of Worldwide Marriage Encounter to change the world, and to help them realize the importance of this investment for the future

Goals of this presentation

To know

- they are called to share their love with their families, their neighbors, their Church, their community, and their world so that many will experience God's love through them
- there are five tools that will help them to keep their love vibrant and growing

To do

- to support the dream of Worldwide Marriage Encounter
- to be open and apostolic with their love and to take their relationship out of their homes and into the Church and the world
- to continue the journey by attending the Renewal/ Reunion where they will learn more about the tools to keep their relationship a top priority in their lives (although not every Area plans such a follow-up event)
- to become part of a WWME sharing community when they return home
- to invite others to a WWME experience
- to contribute financially by making a sacrificial donation so that WWME can continue to offer such experiences

To experience

- a sense of wonder and awe as they begin to realize the greatness of their marriage covenant
- a sense of hope for their own future and the future of the world
- a hunger/desire to continue the journey so that they will make every effort to attend the Renewal/Reunion or other events and be part of a local sharing community when they return home

Flow of the presentation

We begin by sharing our personal reflections of the extended dialogue on our own WWME experience. We want them to sit on this mountaintop for a while and to realize that their spouse's love enables them to get a glimpse of God's love. We invite them to share their hopes for their relationship as a result of their WWME experience so that others in the room can

experience the power of couple love. As usual, while a conventional Weekend format is assumed, presenters should be aware that some terminology will need changing on other formats.

We move into mission by reading Luke 24:30-33. We invite them to identify with the disciples on the road to Emmaus whose hearts were burning within them; they couldn't help but share their love with others. We urge them to be "open and apostolic" – to go out into the world as a couple with the mission to make Christ's presence alive in the world. "Open" and "apostolic" are defined. Lay and Clergy couples share their awareness of being sent out two by two after their WWME experience and how they used their "couple power" to reach out to others. We let the couples know that their love is unique and irreplaceable. It's not only for their happiness, but it is also for the good of our Church and our world. We inspire them to believe they can change the world with the power of their covenantal love. Christ's presence in their relationship empowers them. We encourage them to live passionately and to generously share their love and unique gifts. We give them an opportunity to list ways they might be open and apostolic with their love when they return home, and we invite them to decide together on one or two they might try.

We share with them the tools that we have found to help us keep our love vibrant and growing. We caution them that while they have changed, the world has not. We briefly introduce the first four tools, ending with the invitation to join with other couples who are striving to live and share their commitment to their marriages. We invite them to the Renewal/Reunion in one to four weeks where we will offer them some very specific ways to keep their experience alive for them. We end with the tool of re-evaluation as an important key to making positive changes in their lives. In a short exercise we ask them to identify changes they wish to make in their lives and to identify behaviors and attitudes that they need to re-evaluate in order to make those changes.

Then we move into asking them to give the gift of this experience to others by inviting others to attend one and by investing financially in the dream of WWME.

There is no dialogue question during this presentation, as the couples have had their peak dialogue experience. There is a large group sharing, a short time to write/discuss ways they can be open and apostolic, and the changes they want to make to keep their relationship a top priority. They have time to write names of those they plan to invite to a future WWME experience, and a discussion time to decide on and prepare their financial donation.

Connection with other presentations

This may be last presentation of this WWME experience (there is also an outline for a "renewal" or "reunion"). In it, the couples will get a glimpse of the five ways they can keep their relationship healthy and vibrant, both for their own good and for the good of the Church and the world.

This presentation flows right out of the Marriage As Covenant presentation and encourages them to live their marriage covenant by using the tools they have learned. It also urges them to take their couple love out to their Church community and to their world so that it might bear fruit that will last.

NOTES:

The actual talking time for this presentation is about 40:00 (the rest of the time is for songs, activities, and discussion).

The logistics for this presentation must be worked out ahead of time. All presenting couples will share different parts. It is important to create a sense of community. One way to do this is to have the presenters not sit behind the presentation table, but form a semi-circle of chairs facing the couples. Or, if space allows, you could form all chairs into one large circle, with presenters sitting inter-mixed with the couples. If this arrangement is chosen, it would be helpful to have your papers in a binder, not loose, with the entire Template or Outline to follow along as others speak. A simple nod of the head to the next speaker can acknowledge that you have finished your portion. There are some downsides to the circle arrangement (loss of table and skirting, difficulty holding papers, etc.).

If there is a platform or riser in the room or there is not enough space to have the presenters sit in a circle, you might have to be a little creative. The couple coming to the table to speak should be ready to pick up where the others left off. While use of the PowerPoint will eliminate the need to refer to the Workbook except for the written exercises, a circle might also make it hard for all to see the screen. You might place your presentations on the floor or on your lap with the Workbook open on top to minimize "juggling" the Workbook and your papers. It has worked well to place any candle on a small table (with a basket for the donation envelopes) in the middle of the circle or to the side of the semi-circle of presenters.

Whatever the plan, it should be carefully considered ahead of time and carried out with a minimal amount of distraction.

Throughout this presentation, avoid being too theological or abstract. We want to be real and relatable. We need to realize that the couples will be in varying places in their relationship. Some might be ready to go out and be modern-day apostles; but there are also those who have been away from Church for some time, as well as some who are "un-churched." We do not want to short-change our call to mission – that is what makes WWME different from other marriage enrichments – but we want to provide them with practical and relatable ways that they can make a difference in the world through their unique couple relationship.

Ist Set Couple

I. Introduction, optional opening prayer, and song

(LW: Total time: 5:00, with song)

Read as is:

The title of this presentation is "Living Our Covenant." It can be found on page ___ of the Workbook.

Opening prayer (optional):

Suggested wording:

Gracious God, we come to you now in awe of our love for each other and the dreams we have for our marriage covenant. We ask you to open our hearts and our minds to ways that we can keep our love vibrant and alive for ourselves, our families, our Church, and our world.

Suggested transition:

We have been sharing parts of the play "Man of La Mancha" with you. There is a point in the play when Don Quixote proclaims that, with his Dulcinea beside him, he can do quite anything. Perhaps you have sensed this power that comes from loving and being loved. We are each like Dulcinea, but we are also each like Don Quixote – dreaming big dreams for our lives. We all want to make a difference in the world. We want to leave a lasting legacy. With the transforming love of our spouse to energize us, we can begin to rethink what is possible. With this in mind, let's listen to a song. You can follow along on page _____.

Play "The Impossible Dream" (2:15)

II. Experience of our covenant (Total time: 20:00 max)

II A. Share our hopes and dreams for our relationship as a result of our extended dialogue (LH or LW and CL or CS: 0:45 each)

One of the Lay couple and one of the Clergy couple briefly shares the joy of your extended dialogue focusing on the feelings you experienced as you grew in intimacy.

What hopes and dreams for your life together did you discover or rediscover? In your sharing reference some of the words of "The Impossible Dream" that may have inspired you at the time (or since).

This should be a joyful, hope-filled sharing, close to what we hope the couples are experiencing at this very moment. Share your thoughts and your feelings. In preparation for writing this section, re-read the letters you wrote to each other during the extended dialogue period of your original WWME experience to get in touch with what you were experiencing then. Do not read from your love letter during this presentation. If your first extended dialogue was not a joyful

experience, you can choose to share from your overall experience of your WWME experience or an extended dialogue from a later one.

What you share will set up the open sharing, so it is important to be specific in naming your hopes and dreams and in describing the feelings you were experiencing. You have only 0:45 each; there is no time for stories from your extended dialogue. You have to focus on the significant changes of attitude that were occurring in your relationship and the feelings of joy and hope that surfaced as you discovered or rediscovered your dreams. If you share only in shallow and vague terms like “joyful” or “more loving,” then the couples' sharings will likely be shallow and vague. A non-specific sharing could also lead to fewer people sharing because of reluctance to repeat what has already been said.

II B. Open sharing (CL and/or CS: 0:30 introduction, 1:00 writing, 1:00 sharing with spouse, and 10:00–12:00 open sharing)

Direct the couples to the question in their Workbook. Read the question given below.

What are my hopes and dreams for our relationship as a result of this Marriage Encounter experience? How do I feel about that?

Tell the couples to write a brief response.

Allow 1:00 to write.

After they have written, ask them to share what they wrote with their spouse.

Allow 1:00 to share.

After they have shared with each other, invite them to share their answers aloud with the group – either what they wrote or what is in their heart. Tell them that this sharing is voluntary and what is said in this room stays in this room. What they say can inspire or motivate another couple.

Allow 10:00-12:00 for open sharing.

NOTE:

It is important to be patient and allow time for the couples to collect their thoughts and to find the courage to share. Pauses in the sharing are natural and could be used as a time for the presenters to silently pray for the couples. Don't rush to draw the sharing to a close. At the end of the open sharing, look out at the couples and thank and affirm them for sharing. If appropriate, you could state that you have just experienced a glimpse of God's love. This should not be read. It must be a heartfelt response to the beauty you have witnessed in them!

III. Continuing the journey (Total time: 7:15)

III A. Luke 24:30-33 (LH or LW: 1:45 for transition, reading, and suggested wording)

Suggested transition:

Many of you are familiar with the Easter Season reading of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were returning to their homes discouraged about the events of Christ's passion and death when they encountered a stranger. He walked and talked with them quoting many different scriptures that helped them understand the true meaning of the preceding days. As we begin this reading from Luke, the two disciples are sharing a meal with the stranger.

Luke 24:30-33 (New Revised Standard Version):

When he was with them at table, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

Suggested wording:

Just as the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, perhaps you recognized Him as you broke open your hearts and minds to each other in your love letters during this Marriage Encounter experience. Perhaps you encountered the Divine in your relationship, and this brought the meaning of your passionate love more clearly into focus. Perhaps you are like those two disciples on the road to Emmaus whose eyes and hearts were opened to the bigger picture of God's plan. When our hearts are on fire we see the world differently, and we can't help wanting to share the good news with others.

III B. Being open and apostolic (Total time: 5:30)

III B 1. Define open and apostolic (CL: 0:30)

Suggested wording:

There is a greater purpose for our love than simply our own happiness. As encountered couples who understand the covenant nature of our marriage, we are called to be open and apostolic. To be open is to be receptive to hearing God's voice speaking in our hearts and speaking through the voices of others. To be apostolic is to respond to God's call – to go out and spread the good news.

Formation:

To be open is to put aside our own expectations and desires, so that we can truly listen to God's call, whenever it comes and wherever it leads. To be open is to hear the needs of God's people and to be ready and available to respond. To be apostolic is to respond to Christ's call today just as the apostles did 2000 years ago. The mission of Christ continues today. As encountered couples who recognize that our marriage is a covenant, we are sent out two by two to share in Christ's mission. We are called to spread the good news of loving relationships by our words and actions. Each time we offer a selfless gift of our love to others, we become bread broken and blood outpoured for others.

III B 2. The other-centeredness of marriage and the call to ministry (CL and CS: 1:30)

Suggested transition:

Both marriage and the call into the ministry are covenants of relationship. As a pastor/ priest, I am called to be other-centered, to be open and apostolic as I seek to build up the People of God. I accomplish this, not in a vacuum, but in relationship with the people whom I have been called to serve, as well as in my relationship with my spouse.

- How does being in relationship with God's people enable, encourage, or energize you to reach beyond your comfort zone to lay down your life and carry the message of salvation to others as the apostles did?
- What are the emotional rewards you receive when you stretch beyond your comfort zone?
- Illustrate by giving a personal example of serving your people by being in relationship with them.
- Refer to the points in III B 3 b. to include ways that you and your spouse share your unique couple love as a Clergy couple. Your spouse can share this writing.

Formation:

Marriage and the call to ministry are both vocational covenants designed for service. They are primarily other-directed, meant to focus on the other, not on themselves. Marriage not only seeks the good of the spouse, but, like the call to ministry, it also seeks the good of family, friends, the Church, and the world. Marriage is looking together in the same direction to see what the world might become. Each vocation is called to build up the people of God and has a common call to holiness. Our Church needs us to live as Christ's modern-day apostles to help to build up the Body of Christ. When we love our spouse as Jesus loves us, we become a beautiful sign of God's love for others. Our love bears fruit for the Kingdom of God when it overflows from the love of our marriage covenant into our family and into the world. Being open and apostolic is recognizing that we are empowered by this love to step out in faith to help carry out the mission of the big Church. When we are faithful to that mission we realize our deepest joy. The love of Christ that we have been given in the gift of our marriage covenant is not ours to hide; it is ours to give away. We are called to go out into the world and proclaim His love and to live our covenant love as an open and apostolic couple.

III B 3. Couple power

(Total time: 3:30: One Lay spouse: a, b & c; other Lay spouse: d)

III B 3 a. You are empowered by the love of your marriage covenant (LH or LW: 0:15)

Suggested wording:

We are also called to be open and apostolic to build up the People of God and to light the way for the world. The love of Christ present in our relationship is our “couple power.” This incredible gift is meant to be shared with a world that is longing for hope. Our “couple power” enables us to respond to God’s call and step out in faith together in ways that might challenge us as individuals.

III B 3 b. Share two brief, specific examples of being open and apostolic by sharing our love as a couple

(Same Lay spouse: 1:00)

Suggested transition:

(Spouse's name) and I have experienced this “couple power” first-hand.

Share two examples when you were open and apostolic by sharing your love as a couple. Then briefly suggest other ways they might share their couple love that might be especially appropriate in their local neighborhood or congregation.

Some ideas you might consider for your examples:

- serving on a church committee as a couple
- joining your spouse for a regular time of prayer or Bible study
- assisting during worship as a couple (as ushers, readers, communion servers, etc.)
- taking communion to the sick or homebound together
- teaching religious education or singing in the choir as a couple
- helping prepare engaged couples for marriage
- working together in a soup kitchen, food pantry, or other local initiative
- volunteering to work with children or support local school functions
- working together in a nursing home or hospital
- opening your home to foster children

NOTE:

These should be examples to which the couples can relate. Do NOT talk about your call and discernment to become WWME presenters.

III B 3 c. Briefly address our re-evaluation of attitudes and behaviors to make ourselves available to others (Same Lay spouse: 0:45)

Give two or three examples of changes you made in order to be open and apostolic with your couple love. What were the attitudes/behaviors that you re-evaluated? Some ideas you might consider for your examples:

- How you spent less time watching TV, shopping, reading, golfing, social networking, etc. (Attitude: "I deserve my time.")
- How you planned ahead to make things happen, became more intentional with your love (Attitude: "If they need me, they'll ask.")
- How you became better at balancing your time and setting priorities, saying "no," in order to say "yes" to share your love as a couple (Attitude: "If I don't do it, no one else will" OR "No one can do it as well as I can.")
- How you risked trying something new (Attitude: "I don't want to step out of my comfort zone." OR "I don't have anything to offer.")
- How you re-evaluated both the activities of your children and your involvement in those activities (Attitude: "My children deserve every advantage this world has to offer" OR "If I don't do it for my children, who will?")
- How you put limits on the amount of time spent working (Attitude: "I have to keep up with the Joneses." OR "I don't have a choice.")
- How you re-evaluated time spent separately doing hobbies, or civic and church volunteer work (Attitude of independence, avoidance, or self-centeredness.)

NOTE:

We deliberately avoid using the words "barriers" and "obstacles." We want them to see this as a positive effort to make changes that will allow them to use their couple power more effectively.

III B 3 d. Share the effects on us when we live an open and apostolic lifestyle

(Lay spouse who did not share III B 3 a-c: 1:30)

Some ideas you might consider for your examples:

- How is being more open to giving your love away changing your lives?
- What happens to you when you live out Jesus' command to love one another?
- Does it motivate you to continue to step outside of your comfort zone to be open and apostolic?
- How are you becoming better role models for your family?
- You may want to reference the Emmaus story – Are your hearts on fire? Do you recognize Jesus in others?
- How is your life being affected because you are open to hearing God's voice speaking in your hearts?
- Are you open to listening to God speaking through others?
- What is different in your marriage because you are apostolic in responding to God's call to spread the good news of loving relationships?

End by describing your feelings when you believe you are making a difference in the lives of others.

IV. We can change the world

(LH or LW and CL or CS: Total time including the exercise: 5:00-7:00)

Suggested transition: (Lay spouse who did not share III B 3 d. above: 0:30)

We look out at you today with wonder and awe. Your love is visible to us. We hope you will return home feeling happy and confident that your marriage is grounded in unconditional love. But what is truly amazing is that God has bigger dreams for your marriage than simply your own happiness. His power has been unleashed in you, not just for yourselves, but for all those whose lives you will touch. In fact, your love can change the world!

IV A. You have the power to change the world

(Same Lay spouse continues: 1:30)

NOTE:

This section is not a personal sharing; it is directed toward the couples. Do not just string together the points below; unless it is expressed in your own way, it will not inspire the couples to believe they have the power to change the world!

Points to consider:

- Just as each of you is unique and irreplaceable, your couple relationship is also different from any other.
- Because of the unique gifts you have, you can make a difference in the world that no other couple can make.
- When you share the unique gifts of your marriage covenant and couple love, you change your world. Your love is like a pebble dropped into a pond. The ripples you create touch many other lives around you.
- You have the power to make a difference in your family, in your neighborhood, and in your church.
- When you live your marriage covenant intentionally and with passion, you are the best example you can be of God's love for the world.
- Be open to the opportunities God places before you to share your love.
- We are all sent out two by two, to make Christ's presence among us known through our own unique witness of love.
- Together with all the other apostolic couples, we become a mighty force for changing the world.

IV B. Activity on being open and apostolic (CL or CS: 3:00-5:00)

Invite the couples to make specific decisions to reach out with their love. Refer to the worksheet in the Workbook. Direct them to page _____ and instruct them to complete the worksheet and share their responses in place with their spouse.

Allow 3:00-5:00 to complete and discuss the worksheet.

Announce a break (optional).

NOTE:

This break (meant for bathroom only) is left to the discretion of the presenters. While the decision need not be made in advance, it would be wise to discuss in advance the pros and cons, duration and nature. The decision can be based on the length of open sharing, the urgency presenters are sensing from couples to get on the road, etc. Consider quickly stating how long it will be until the end and giving the group the choice: omitting the break without discussing it might lead to multiple trips to the restroom which could be more disruptive than a break. If you choose to give a break, give the specific time the couples need to be back in the conference room to continue.

2nd Set Couple

Before beginning section V, allow 5:00 to introduce and sing "There's a New World Somewhere." You might explain that this is sung by couples around the world in many many languages. The details are left to the discretion of the presenters whether to play as couples are returning from a break, during a short stretch, in a loop, or to introduce it before playing it, etc. Sing it at least one time through.

V. Keeping our relationship a priority in today's world

(Total time: 18:15 including activity)

V A. Brief overview of the tools for keeping our relationship a priority (LH & LW share V A. 1-4; Total time for A: 8:30)

Suggested transition: (LH or LW: 1:00)

We are on page _____. You may have changed in the last few days, but sadly the world has not. You will likely discover that the same things that pulled you away from each other before will be there to greet you when you return home. We have discovered some tools to help keep our relationship at the top of our list of our earthly priorities. They include:

- *Attention to our communication in and out of dialogue;*
- *Couple prayer;*
- *Attention to our sexual relationship;*
- *Being involved with the Worldwide Marriage Encounter community; and*
- *Re-evaluation.*

We need all of these tools in our quest to be the best married couple we can be.

V A 1. Attention to our communication in and out of dialogue
(Same Lay spouse continues: 1:00)

Include: *daily* dialogue, attentive listening and active communication in all areas of our relationship every day. Mention the importance of non-verbal communication. Personalize this section by briefly mentioning areas in which you are striving to improve your communication with your spouse.

V A 2. Couple prayer (LH or LW: 1:00)

Motivate the couples to invite God into their relationship through couple prayer. Some ideas you might consider for your sharing:

- Prayer is communicating with God, listening and responding to Him.
- Couple prayer draws us closer to each other and helps us to recognize that God will not lead us where His grace cannot sustain us.
- Share your personal journey with couple prayer
 - Was it easy/difficult? If difficult, how did you overcome this?
 - Did you begin by praying for each other, praying silently together, and finally praying aloud together?
 - Do you bless each other or have other traditions?
 - Do you have a special prayer routine or style?
- Emphasize that prayer styles are as different as the individuals here and that our loving God welcomes them all.

V A 3. Attention to our sexual relationship (LH or LW: 1:00)

Suggested transition:

You have learned that your sexuality involves your total relationship – how you interact with each other as man and woman. _____ shared that your lovemaking is a very holy part of your marriage covenant. It is also an important aspect of a healthy relationship that should be a priority.

Tell the couples how you are paying attention to your sexual relationship. Some ideas you might consider for your sharing:

- making time for romance
- being more aware of the impact of the sexual signals you send each other all day
- prioritizing your lovemaking
- being open to initiating lovemaking

Caution:

Be sure that this sharing does not repeat what you shared earlier in God's Desire for Marriage. The focus in this presentation is on the need to invest more of yourselves in your lovemaking.

Formation:

In his Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul II stated that “the most profound words of the spirit – words of love, of giving, of fidelity – demand an adequate language of the body. Without that they cannot be fully expressed,” (Theology of the Body Part 2 The Sacramentality of Marriage)

Sexuality in marriage is “sacred body language” because it communicates our couple love. Yet in today’s busy world, husbands and wives often put lovemaking last on their list. It can too easily become an activity, either a chore or a luxury that is sacrificed because of other needs. This leads to loneliness and isolation in marriage. Our sexual intercourse is intensely private, but the message of our lovemaking contributes to a much bigger picture that affects our couple power and the quality of our sign as a covenant marriage. It is the physical expression of our vows, the body language that cements our belonging intimately to each other.

Our lovemaking as husband and wife should be at the top of our list. Our gentleness, tenderness, attentiveness and presence to each other through our sexual relationship fills the deep desires of our heart to love and be loved and helps us to generate the energy we need to reach out to others. “The language of the body institutes the visible sign itself of the covenant and of grace which, going back to its origin to the mystery of creation, is continually sustained by the power of the redemption of the body, offered by Christ to the Church” (from the Theology of the Body Part 2). Our sexuality is not something that can be compartmentalized. It is part of the expression of our holiness as married couples, a mutual gift of self that puts a seal on our whole life.

**V A 4. Being involved with the Marriage Encounter
Community** (Total time: 4:30)

Suggested transition: (LH or LW: 1:00)

The tools we have just shared with you, Communication, Couple Prayer, and Sexuality help us to be more intimate and responsible so we can grow in our love for each other. Right now your love is like a hot coal, giving off heat and energy. Alone, that hot coal will slowly diminish in heat and light. To be the best we can be, we need to be around other people who are striving to keep their love burning brightly.

Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we need the support of others who are willing to journey along with us. That is why in Marriage Encounter we have groups of couples who meet regularly to strengthen their relationships and grow through dialogue. Marriage Encounter communities are unique in our Church and our society. We know of no other community that challenges married couples to grow as intimately in relationship through the use of dialogue.

V A 4 a. Share our experience of Community support (LH or
LW and CL or CS: 1:00 each)

Other Lay spouse and either CL or CS share how being a part of the Marriage Encounter community has helped you to be the best couple you could be – to keep your coals burning, and to be open to sharing and receiving love as modern-day apostles.

Consider:

- how you were welcomed in the Marriage Encounter Community
- how you were inspired by another couple
- how you were supported by another couple
- how you offered loving support to another couple in your Marriage Encounter Community
- your feelings as you offered support or were supported by your Marriage Encounter Community

Both speakers should end with their reasons for continuing to remain involved with a Marriage Encounter Community.

NOTE:

To avoid confusion, please refer to “*Marriage Encounter Community*” in this sharing. Afterwards, you can refer to it as a Love Circle, Spiral, Image, Dialogue Support Group, Flame, Renewal, etc.

Formation:

This may be the couples’ first introduction to WWME community. We need to be inviting without overwhelming them. Many may be reluctant to openly share details of their marriage and/or their feelings with anyone except their spouse. The couples have also been looking at the busyness in their everyday lives; they have just spent significant time away from their family, work, and churches. It is important that we describe community as a tool to keep their relationship a top priority and that they not see it as a "social club." There are many avenues through which they can seek support within our Church and society, but WWME provides the rare and valuable support that is specific to the couple relationship. During this talk/presentation it is important that we present community as an essential tool for support and continuing the growth that they have begun here. We want them to see it as an obvious choice, just like the other four tools. They don’t need an overly enthusiastic "sell job."

V A 4 b. End with an invitation to continue the journey

(Other Lay spouse: 1:30)

Tell them that the tools you have just described to help keep their relationship alive and vibrant are discussed in greater detail in the Workbook. Tell them they will learn about these tools in greater detail at the Renewal/ Reunion (or other events) as they continue the process that they have begun here. Give the details of the Renewal/Reunion:

- Date, time, location
- What to bring: nametags, dialogue books, etc. (traditional options)
- Child care, if available

Mention they will receive a packet with this information, and encourage them to attend the Renewal/Reunion where they will experience a warm welcome from the Marriage Encounter community.

V B. Re-evaluation (Total time for V B: 9:45, including activity)

V B 1. Re-evaluation of attitudes and behaviors in order to commit to using the tools (LH or LW: 0:45)

Suggested wording:

We have one final tool to offer – re-evaluation. It can help you use the other tools to make decisions to love and to change your lives one day at a time. When used with the other four tools, re-evaluation helps you address issues or challenges that you may have put on the back burner. You will hear more about it at the Renewal/ Reunion. We offer you a package deal – attention to communication, couple prayer, attention to our sexual relationship, involvement with the Marriage Encounter Community, and re-evaluation. They work in sync with each other to help you keep your relationship your top priority. Without re-evaluation, it could be a real struggle to find the time and motivation to make all of these tools an integral part of your marriage.

V B 2. Example of re-evaluation to make a change in our lives
(Other Lay spouse and CL or CS: 1:30 each)

Share a recent example of how you used re-evaluation to make a change in your lives.

- Describe the situation.
- Name the attitude or behavior that you needed to re-evaluate.
- Show how you used one or more of the following tools: dialogue, couple prayer, the intimacy in your lovemaking, and/or community support to help you make and sustain the change you desired.
- Describe your feelings when you used these tools to make this change.
- Describe the effect of this change on your relationship with your spouse.

V B 3. Couple exercise on re-evaluation (CL and/or CS: 6:00)

Suggested transition:

We've just shared with you some examples of re-evaluation. This is a tool that we use often to keep our relationship our highest priority. We now have an opportunity for you to use this tool of re-evaluation. Please turn to page ___ and write your answer to the question. We will be sharing these with our spouse only.

Read the question as it appears in the Workbook.

What, specifically, am I going to do in order to make our relationship a top priority? What attitudes and/or behaviors do I need to change to make this possible?

Allow 3:00 to complete the exercise.

Now go ahead and share your writing with your spouse.

Allow 2:00 to discuss with their spouse.

VI. Sharing in the dream by inviting others to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter experience (Total time: 6:30, including activity)

VI A. Our dream to change the world (CL: 1:00)

Suggested wording:

You just discussed choices you are willing to make to keep your relationship a priority. And this is so important because you are part of a much bigger picture. Worldwide Marriage Encounter has a dream that extends far beyond this time and place. Our dream is to renew the Church and to change the world with the power of love. We are here today because through the years, many dreamers – couples like you, like us – stepped out in faith, believing they could make a difference, couples who dared to be open and apostolic and to live the values and lifestyle that we have been talking about today. We hope you will join us in keeping this dream alive by telling others about your experience here.

VI B. Inviting (VI B 1 - 4: 5:30)

VI B 1. Why invite? (LH & LW: B 1-3: 2:00)

Tell them one way they can keep the dream alive is to invite others to attend a WWME experience. What might the world look like if it were filled with couples who had experienced such a gift? Encourage the couples to tell others about the impact this experience has had on their relationship.

VI B 2. Whom to invite?

Give them some suggestions: their friends, neighbors, co-workers, family, and pastors/priests. They all deserve the gift of relationship. Tell them that _____ (Faith Expression sponsoring this program) couples are needed for _____ (Faith Expression sponsoring this program) Marriage Encounter experiences to happen, but assure them that couples of any faith expression (and of no faith) are welcome to participate.

VI B 3. How to invite?

State that the Workbook has many ideas for inviting on page _____. If your Area has a specific inviting tradition or a planned inviting event you may mention it here. Describe a recent personal effort you made to invite a couple. (The focus is on how you invited; success is not required.)

VI B 4. Starter list (CL and/or CS: 3:30)

Wrap up the discussion on inviting by giving the couples some general tips on inviting:

- Tell them that others will see the difference in their relationship and will want that for themselves.
- Remind the couples not to tell others that they “need” this Marriage Encounter experience – they are already good couples who “deserve” it!
- Tell them they will be given brochures, tri-folds and/or pamphlets, and other resources in the take-home packet.

Use the tips as a transition and ask them to create a "Starter list." Refer the couples to page _____ in the Workbook and invite them to create a starter list as a couple. Encourage them to include family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, members of their congregation, and pastors that they plan to invite. Mention that this is for their use only - we won't be collecting it.

Give them 2:00 to begin their list.

Then ask them to:

- post this list where they can see it
- invite the people on their list
- pray for the couples on their list, and
- invite them frequently!

Tell them it may take more than one invitation by more than one couple to get a "YES!"

VII. Sharing in the dream financially

(8:00 presentation; 10:00-12:00 discussion time; travel time will vary)

VII A. Vision and invitation to invest in the dream (CL: 2:30)

Suggested transition:

We mentioned to you our dream of renewing the Church and changing the world. It is through your love that this dream can become a reality. The vision of Worldwide Marriage Encounter is "Love One Another As I Have Loved You." This vision is truly worldwide. We have an active presence in over 90 countries around the world because couples like all of us sacrificed to make it happen.

Tell them that Worldwide Marriage Encounter has a rich history which is detailed in the Workbook. Then share a very brief history of the Faith Expression sponsoring this experience and of the Area, with an emphasis on how couples just like them and us "dreamed" it into being. Encourage the couples to read through any hand-outs that hold more information than time allows to be detailed here.

Explain how the WWME experiences are still being brought to new places. Use specific examples when available, e.g.:

- Couples who have connections in other countries initiating outreach
- Current outreach to new countries, new places (refer to ELF under the World Council tab of WWME's website www.wwme.org)
- Outreach within North America in some new areas, cultures, and languages

End with the invitation to share in the dream financially.

Suggested wording:

We need you to help us keep our dream alive. We need you to invest in the dream. You can do that by sharing your love as a couple. You can do that by inviting others to experience this. And you can do that by giving your financial support. All three ways are necessary if we are to realize our dream.

VII B. Cost of this Marriage Encounter experience (LH or LW: 1:30)

Suggested transition:

You can start by helping to financially support the very next Marriage Encounter experience. We are not asking you to pay for your experience; we are asking you to sacrifice for the sake of other couples who are yet to attend. We need you to help us pass this gift along.

Give the cost of this experience per couple and mention key elements of that cost (i.e., meals, lodging, supplies, administrative fees, training and travel for presenters, etc.), but do not give the actual price for each item. (An exception would be any “big ticket” items, like airfare.)

Joyfully state that WWME (or the Faith Expression sponsoring this program) is a non-profit organization that exists solely on donations from couples like them, like us.

Formation:

While there is variety among the Faith Expressions affiliated with WWME, the purpose of this section is not to convey statistics so much as the truth that WWME does amazing things with the resources entrusted to it. People often ask charities "what are your administrative costs?" Ten percent or less is considered the "gold standard." This is the maximum reported by WWME in North America. WWME is active around the world, carrying out its ministry in 90 countries with only a few paid clerical employees, and no funding from the Church body.

NOTE:

When explaining the expenses, it is not appropriate to mention things like pulpit supply reimbursement as there is no time to explain it properly and we do not want them to think that we are paying for clergy presenters.

Suggested conclusion:

We are giving you the opportunity to search your hearts and invest in the dream. We have shared with you the cost per couple for this Marriage Encounter experience. We invite you to consider giving even more.

VII C. Giving from substance (Other Lay spouse: 2:00)

Share your yearning to continue to bring such WWME experiences to couples regardless of their financial situation. Ask the couples to consider giving from their substance by donating twice the cost of their experience so more couples can attend. Give them the dollar amount that twice what the cost would be.

Elaborate on the concept of giving from substance.

- Giving from your substance is a gift from your heart.
- Donating from your substance means being good stewards of the gifts with which you have been entrusted.
- Explain that a gift from your substance is one that cannot be given easily; it alters your lifestyle for a time. It might mean eating at home instead of dining out, delaying a vacation or an upgrade (car, TV, home remodel).
- Point out that your material resources are not yours to keep and bury, but are meant to be invested and shared with others.

Give a personal example of how you invested in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter experience by giving from your substance.

Tell them we aren't asking them to pay for their particular experience; we are asking them to sacrifice for the sake of other couples and to invest in our dream of changing the world.

Suggested conclusion:

For those of you who may be financially blessed we'd like you to consider donating the entire cost of this Marriage Encounter experience, which is _____, or half of this, which is _____. We want to make it very clear that we are not asking you to pay for your experience. We're giving you an opportunity to invest in our dream of changing the world, to sacrifice for the sake of other couples so that they can experience this gift.

VII D. How to donate (Spouse who shared VII C continues: 1:00)

Tell them how they can donate: cash, check, post-dated check(s), credit card. Based on the decisions and definitions of the sponsoring Faith Expression, inform them that any amount donated above ____ (room and meals, for example) may be tax deductible. If there is a printed explanation provided to them, refer to that. Tell them how and when they will receive their tax receipt. Hand out the envelopes with the credit card slips enclosed (and finance couple's name and address and any other information required by the Faith Expression sponsoring.) Individualize this section to meet the tax requirements for your country and, where possible, refer to more detailed wording that can be included in the envelope.

Caution:

This is not a time for jokes or "gimmicks" to encourage the couples to give more.

Suggested conclusion:

Whatever amount you give, we trust that it is a gift from your hearts and your desire to invest in the dream.

VII E. Discussion question (Other spouse: 1:00 to introduce, 10:00-12:00 for couples to discuss their donation, travel time will vary)

- Tell them where they may go to determine their donation (this will vary according to facility, check-out times, etc.)
- Give them the specific time you want them back in the conference room. Allow them 10:00-12:00 to determine their donation as a couple.
- Let them know that you are responsible for all of the envelopes, so they must return theirs, with no names or room numbers written on the outside. Tell them where to put their envelope when they get back.
- Tell them we have a discussion question to help determine their financial donation.

Read the question.

How much are we willing to share financially so that the dream and mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter may continue?

Allow approximately 10:00-12:00 for the couples to discuss and prepare their gift and return to the conference room.

NOTE:

As couples return, one of the presenting couples might stand next to the basket and thank each couple sincerely for their gift.

VIII. Wrap-Up (LH or LW: 2:00)

VIII A. Thank the couples

Share your heartfelt thanks on behalf of the entire presenting team for living the WWME experience. Personalize briefly.

VIII B. Take home packet

Tell the couples that they will receive a packet of information and inviting supplies at the end of the closing worship service. It includes an invitation to the Renewal/Reunion and contact information for the presenters, plus Faith Expression and Area traditions, such as CEUs, certificates of participation, WEDS Manuals, etc.

List things only; do NOT go over the contents of the packet but stress the importance of their reviewing it all as soon as they can.

VIII C. Dialogue question for Monday

Direct the couples to the Workbook page and read the question for their dialogue on Monday. If they have been given a separate dialogue Notebook, ask them to write the question in those for their dialogue on Monday. Remind them that they will be joining hundreds of other newly encountered couples writing on this question.

**How do I feel about continuing the journey we've begun through our dialogue at home?
Describe the feeling in loving detail.**

VIII D. Preparation for the closing worship service

If the Workbooks or Notebooks will be part of the closing worship service, show the couples how to put them together with names visible on either side so that they can be returned to them and explain the procedure. Include any other helpful details now.

IX. Closing worship service with renewal/reaffirmation of vows

How we live out the concepts of this presentation:

We live out the concepts of “Living Our Covenant” by continuing the journey we began on our WWME experience. We are open to hearing God’s call and apostolic in responding to that call by going out to spread the good news of loving relationships. We understand that we are NOT volunteers! We use five tools to keep our relationship a top priority. We invite couples at every opportunity. We continue to give from our substance, financially, and spiritually. We use our “couple power” for the sake of our dream to renew the Church and to change the world through the power of love. We are invested and involved in the life of our WWME community and our Church.

An assessment for us as a couple:

- Do we share deeply and intimately in our extended dialogue when we present?
- Do we see ourselves as missionaries, open and apostolic in responding to God’s call to spread the good news of loving relationships in our words and actions?
- Has our couple power enabled us to share our love with others in ways that may have been too daunting for us as individuals?
- Are we continuing to make changes NOW to keep our relationship a top priority?
- Does our communication outside of dialogue model the same attentiveness to each other as we have in our dialogue?
- Are we sometimes too tired/busy/stressed/indifferent for lovemaking?
- How are we growing in our prayer life as a couple?
- Are we visible in our Worldwide Marriage Encounter community, striving to form relationships with our companions on the journey?
- Are we committed to using the tool of reevaluation on a regular basis?
- Are we sharing in the dream by continually inviting couples to a WWME experience? When was the last time we invited a couple?
- Am I confident in asking couples to invest in WWME financially?
- Are we committed to supporting and investing in the lives of the couples we pray for?
- Do we instill a sense of belonging in encountered couples by staying in personal contact with them afterwards and encouraging them to become part of community?
- Do our actions demonstrate a sense of belonging to our dialogue sharing group?
- Do our actions show that Worldwide Marriage Encounter is our primary ministry?
- Do we model belonging to our Church by being supportive of our pastors/priests and visible in our congregation?
- Do we understand that WE ARE NOT VOLUNTEERS, but have been called by God to a life of service?
- Do I believe we have been called by God to the WWME ministry and to share in the dream to renew the Church and change the world through the power of relationship?

Living Our Covenant
Outline & Mentality - CPO

29. What are the attitudes and fears that limit my inviting efforts? HDIFTYT?
30. What is my initial reaction when asked to make a financial contribution? HDIFAMA?
31. HDIF when we are asked to give from our substance?
32. What attitudes or fears inhibit me from asking couples to invest in WWME financially?
HDIFTYT?
33. Do I see this as a money talk or a vision talk? HDIF?

WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Exercise for Couples

How do I hear God calling us to be open and apostolic in sharing our love as a couple? Consider one or two examples. Some ideas are listed below.

Consider doing together an activity that you already do individually:

- receive communion side by side as a couple
- serve on a church committee as a couple
- join your spouse for a weekly hour of prayer or Bible study
- shop together, work out together, etc.

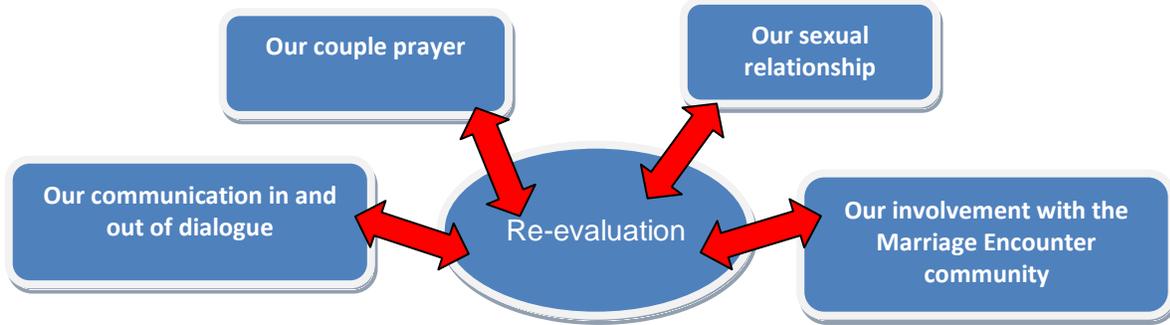
Consider a new area of ministry in your church:

- assist with the worship service as a couple (as ushers, greeters, readers, etc)
- take communion to the sick or homebound together
- teach religious education or sing in the choir as a couple
- be a contact couple for Marriage Encounter
- help prepare engaged couples for marriage
- ask your pastor about the needs in your congregation for more ideas

Consider volunteering as a couple in your community:

- work together in a soup kitchen, food pantry, or other local initiative
- volunteer to work with children or support local school functions
- work together in a nursing home or hospital
- open your home to foster children

Living Our Covenant
Outline & Mentality - CPO



Exercise on Re-evaluation:

1. What, specifically, am I going to do in order to make our relationship a top priority?

2. What attitudes and/or behaviors do I need to change to make this possible?

Attitudes to consider:

- I deserve my time.
- Let someone else do it.
- If they need me, they'll ask.
- No one can do what I'm doing now as well as I can!
- I don't want to leave my comfort zone.
- I don't have anything to offer.
- My children deserve every advantage this world can offer.
- If I don't do for my children, who will?
- I have to keep up with the Joneses.
- I don't have a choice.
- I'm a private person and I don't do group sharing.
- My prayer is between me and God.
- I've always done it this way.
- What will others think of me?
- But I have to... stay fit, stay current with news, get ahead in my job, etc.
- I have to work overtime, we need the extra income.

The Impossible Dream

From the Broadway Musical The Man of La Mancha
Lyrics by Joe Darion

To dream ... the impossible dream ...
To fight ... the unbeatable foe ...
To bear ... with unbearable sorrow ...
To run ... where the brave dare not go ...
To right ... the unrightable wrong ...
To love ... pure and chaste from afar ...
To try ... when your arms are too weary ...
To reach ... the unreachable star ...

This is my quest, to follow that star ...
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far ...
To fight for the right, without question or pause ...
To be willing to march into Hell, for a Heavenly cause ...

And I know if I'll only be true, to this glorious quest,
That my heart will lie will lie peaceful and calm,
when I'm laid to my rest ...
And the world will be better for this:
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage,
To reach ... the unreachable star ...