

## Welcome, Introduction, and Feelings – about 63:15 Outline Only - Common Protestant Outline

Part I – 2<sup>nd</sup> set Lay couple (Total time 24:20)

<b>I. Warm welcome and introduction</b> (Total time: 3:40)
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- A. Thank & affirm them for coming** (CL or CS: 0:20; LH or LW: 0:20)
- B. Team explains their role** (Lay who gave A: 0:30; CL: 0:30)
- C. Nuts and bolts** (Lay who did not give A and B: 2:00)
  - 1. Facility**
  - 2. Marriage Encounter experience details**
  - 3. Workbook**

<b>II. Why we (the couples) are here</b> (A-D: CL and/or CS: 1:00)
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- A. Make our marriage better**
- B. Improve our communication**
- C. Deepen our intimacy**
- D. To be alone together, away from children and other distractions**

<b>III. Communication exercise</b> (Total time: 2:40)
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- A. Exercise**
  - 1. Transition** (CL or CS: 0:15)
  - 2. Share “A quality of yours that I appreciate is....”**  
(LH & LW and CL & CS: 0:10 each)
- B. Ask couples to write a quality that they appreciate about their spouse in their Workbook** (LH or LW: 0:45; instructions, 0:15, exercise, 0:30)
- C. Ask couples to share what they have written with each other**  
(LH or LW: 0:30)
- D. Wrap up: Why we did this exercise** (CL or CS: 0:30)

<b>IV. Freeing self to experience the Marriage Encounter program</b> (Total time: 4:45)
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- A. Avoid distractions**
  - 1. Give guidelines** (LH or LW: 1:30)
  - 2. Don't compare with other experiences** (CL or CS: 1:00)
- B. Presenters share what they have to let go of in order to be fully present here** (LH & LW and CL & CS: 0:15 each)
- C. Ask the couples to write down their obstacles and worries in their Workbooks** (LH or LW: 1:15; instructions, 0:15; writing, 0:45; exercise, 0:15)

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**V. Motivation** (Total 2:00) (LH or LW and CL or CS: 1:00 each)

**VI. Questions** (Total time: 9:00)  
(CL or CS: 9:00; instructions, 1:00; writing, 5:00; reading and discussion, 3:00)

**Why did I come here? What do I hope to gain?**  
(5:00)

**Part 2 – 3<sup>rd</sup> set Lay couple** (Total time: 38:55)

**VII. Transition from Part 1 into Feelings** (LH or LW: 0:30)

**VIII. Our feelings as we began our Marriage Encounter experience**  
(Total time: 2:00, LH & LW and CL & CS: 0:30 each)

**IX. Feelings introduction** (Total time: 13:55)

- A. Definition of feelings** (LH or LW: 0:10)
- B. Give three simple and relatable examples of each of the following feelings** (3:30 total for all presenters)
  - 1. Happy** (LH or LW who gave A: 1:00)
  - 2. Sad** (LH or LW who did not just speak: 0:45)
  - 3. Afraid** (CL or CS: 0:45)
  - 4. Angry** (CL or CS who did not just speak: 1:00 including wrap-up)
- C. Explain the difference between thoughts and feelings** (LH or LW: 2:45)
  - 1. Difference between thoughts and feelings**
  - 2. Explain the “I think vs. I feel” test**
- D. Feelings exercise, in place**  
(CL or CS: 2:30; instructions, 0:30; writing, 1:00; name feeling, 0:30; sharing, 0:30)
  - 1. Recall a situation when you have had a strong feeling, an inner reaction. In one or two sentences describe the situation in writing.**
  - 2. Name the feeling you experienced at the time of the situation and write it in your Workbook where it says, “I felt....”**
  - 3. Tell the couples to read what the other wrote**
- E. Communication example, thoughts vs. feelings** (Total time: 1:45)
  - 1. One spouse describes a situation using thoughts, no feelings**  
(LH or LW: 0:45)
  - 2. Other spouse describes the same situation, but using feelings instead of thoughts** (Other Lay spouse: 0:45)
  - 3. Clergy points out the difference** (CL or CS: 0:15)

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- F. Common misunderstandings about feelings** (Total time: 3:15)
- 1. Feelings are unimportant** (LW: 0:45)
  - 2. “Real men” don’t have tender feelings** (LH: 0:45)
  - 3. Some feelings are wrong or bad** (CL or CS: 1:00)
  - 4. Others are to blame for my feelings**  
(CL or CS who did not do 3 above: 0:45)

**X. Identifying and sharing our feelings enriches our communication**  
(Total time: 2:00)

- A. What are the results when I share my feelings with my spouse?**  
(LH: 1:00)
- 1. I know myself better**
  - 2. There is more to me than my brain**
  - 3. We gain a better understanding of each other**
  - 4. There is greater closeness in our marriage**
- B. What are the results when I don’t share my feelings with my spouse?** (LW: 1:00)
- 1. Misunderstandings**
  - 2. Unshared feelings result in inappropriate behavior**
  - 3. It puts a wedge between us**

**XI. Introduce and briefly teach the dialogue process** (Total time: 15:15)

- A. Introduce** (LH or LW: 0:30)
- B. Teach steps** (LH or LW [1-6]: 3:30; CL or CS [7]: 1:00)
- 1. At the end of each presentation we will give a question about our relationship, and we will separate to write.**
  - 2. First answer the question in 2 or 3 sentences sharing just thoughts. Then, reflecting on the answer, we get in touch with our feeling(s) about the question.**
  - 3. Name the feeling(s) and write it/them down.**
  - 4. Describe your strongest feeling in writing.**
  - 5. Next, we will exchange what we have written in the privacy of our room and read twice what our spouse wrote to us.**
  - 6. Pick the strongest feeling from the two reflections and help each other to clarify the feeling.**
  - 7. Importance of writing** (CL or CS: 1:00)
- C. Sample dialogue on: “What is my strongest feeling as we begin this Marriage Encounter experience?”** (LH & LW: 8:00)
- D. Clergy wraps up the sample dialogue** (CL or CS: 0:45)
- E. Give helpful suggestions for dialogue** (CL or CS: 1:30)

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**XII. Motivation to share feelings** (Total time: 2:00)

- A. Remember dating and early marriage and all that you talked about. It can be as good as that, even better** (LH or LW: 0:45)
- B. What we are going to share with you may make it possible to expand, enhance, enrich or deepen your marriage** (CL or CS: 0:45)
- C. Clergy provides further motivation** (CL: 0:30)

**XIII. Wrap up and dialogue question** (Total time: 3:15)

- A. Wrap up should include:** (LH or LW: 1:00)
  - 1. Flow of the Marriage Encounter experience**
  - 2. Procedure to call them back to the conference room**
  - 3. Wake-up procedure**
  - 4. Any other relevant announcements**
- B. Worship details and closing prayer** (CL and/or CS: 1:30)
- C. Read (and teach) the questions** (CL or CS: 0:45)
  - 1. What qualities do I appreciate most about you? How do I feel as I write this to you? Describe the feelings in full detail.**
  - 2. What qualities do I appreciate most about us? How do I feel as I write this to you? Describe the feelings in full detail.**

Writing time: 10 minutes

Dialogue time: Open

Husbands stay in the conference room to write (recommended).