

CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY – 34 Min.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage the participants to make the Worldwide Marriage Encounter experience a way of life by embracing the mission of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, by sharing their love with others, and by journeying with couples who share their values.

I. Introduction (*LW: 0.5 min.*)

“This talk is Continuing Our Journey. The key concept is that by sharing our love as a couple with others, we can renew the church and change the world. We're on page 59 in the workbook. In the last talk, we shared how we can support the mission of Lutheran Marriage Encounter by inviting others to experience the weekend and by sharing our material resources. In this talk, we are going to look at other ways our love as a couple can make a difference in the world and how we can continue the journey we began this weekend.”

II. We can change the world (11.5 min. total)

A. Affirm the couples by sharing how their love has affected you throughout the weekend. (*CS & CL: 2.5 min.*)

1. Define “couple power” and how you are witnessing it in the couples right now. *CS: 1 min.*)

- *Affirm couples by telling them how their determination and excitement to live an intimate and responsible relationship has affected you throughout the weekend.*
- ***In your own words***, define “couple power” and describe the power of love that you are witnessing right now. (“Couple power” refers to the love between a husband and wife that has a power to make more love happen in the world around them. It is the power of Jesus’ love working through their relationship. “Couple power” is attractive, uplifting, life giving, and healing; it mirrors the gifts of their couple love.)
- *Sharing their love with others is yet another way they can influence change in the world and support the mission and vision of LME to renew the church and change the world. When they go into the world together as a couple, they harness an incredible power for the benefit of the world, both locally and globally.*

2. Referring to the LME Mission and Vision Statements, tell them **they can change the world!** (*CS: .5 min.*)

- *Refer to the beginning of our Vision Statement “The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ....”*
- *When we say “we” will renew the church and change the world, it’s not a reference to just the four couples who are presenting the weekend. “We” doesn’t refer to only the couples in this room today. “We” is **all** the couples around the world who believe in this vision and who use the power of their love to change the hearts of those around them. “We” is all of us in union with the Body of Christ. This is why we can say with such conviction “**WE** can renew the church and change the world!”*

- Tell them they can change the world with the power of their love! This is not just a hope or a fragile dream, but our deep conviction that they can make a **difference** in our church and in our world by reaching out to others with their love.

3. God’s desire for them is to live a “radical” lifestyle of intimate and responsible relationship; call couples to take their “couple power” out into the world. (CL: 1 min.)

- Since the clergy gives this section as a representative of the church, he/she should make it clear that this call to take their “couple power” out into the world is a call from God and from our church—to be used for the church to help others experience God’s love more deeply.
- It is not a coincidence that they are here on this weekend. God has brought them here to share this good news with them. And now, He is calling them each by name to share the good news with others, just like the apostles of Jesus.
- Emphasize that this is a call to live a “radical” lifestyle of intimate and responsible relationship. That is very different from what most people experience in today’s world. The word “radical” means “to depart from the norm.” We are calling them to depart from the self-centered, “married single” independent behaviors that are the “norm” in many marriages. We call them to live a new lifestyle that reflects God’s desire for their love and to bring that kind of radical love into the lives of others.
- We are calling them to a life of service by harnessing their incredible “couple power” for the sake of our church and our world. We are calling them to be a people of mission and to make Jesus’ love understandable and present in the world **now**.

B. Sharing our love as a couple with others - and its effects. (6.5 mins total)

1. Share two or three specific and relatable examples of how we share our love with others and the effects on others that we have witnessed. (LH or LW: 2 min.)

- Give two or three specific, relatable examples of how you share your love as a couple with others, in the church, the school, or the community at large, and the effect you have witnessed in the lives of others.
- Our goal is to encourage couples to use their “couple power” in the church (to renew the church) or in the community in which they live (to change their “world”).
- One example may be about your investment in LME, perhaps as a Prayer Couple, carrying bags for couples on Friday night of a weekend, or presenting information/pulpit talks to invite couples to the weekend.
- This sharing demonstrates the **transformation** of “you and me” into “us” and going out into the world with the gifts of our couple love. Your example of ways you are using your “couple power” will challenge the couples to begin thinking about how they can go out into the world and make a difference, too.

- *This sharing is not just a “laundry list” of your good deeds, but should show how your efforts truly make a difference in the lives of those around you—lives changed in big or small ways.*
- *In the next section (II.B.2.) you will share about how you continue to overcome barriers/obstacles to using your “couple power” so some examples should be related to that.*

2. Share how we continue to overcome obstacles to sharing our love with others. (LH & LW: 3 min. total)

- *Each spouse shares how he/she overcomes obstacles and barriers that keep us as a couple from embracing the mission and going out to make a difference in the world.*
- *Often the biggest barrier can be how we see ourselves as a couple, believing that we do not have anything special to offer others. Perhaps we are fearful of failure, or of being seen as “different” by our family and friends. We may believe we do not have time to share our love with others because of our pursuit of career/job, involvement in sports, pursuit of physical fitness, hobbies, leisure time activities such as camping, boating, golf, bowling, watching TV, or participation in other organizations, even worthy, Christian ones.*
- *These should be **current** obstacles/barriers you are struggling with as individuals and as a couple. Be certain you share obstacles to using your “couple power” to make a difference in the church and in the world — not obstacles to finding more time for each other.*
- *Reflect on the excuses, fears, habits, assumptions, and judgments that limit your openness to sharing your love as a couple.*

3. Clergy shares one or two examples of witnessing the power of a couple sharing their love with others and its effect on his/her ministry. (CL: 1.5 min.)

C. Encourage couples to live a radical lifestyle and to use their “couple power” to share their love so they can to change the world! (LH or LW: 1.5 min.)

- *Let couples know that their love and passion for one another give us hope for the world and that their willingness to live and love **radically** in the world will be a beacon of light for their family, friends, and community.*
- *God is sending them forth to share their love with others, armed with the power of their couple love. Ask them to turn their love into action, to use their “couple power” to influence those around them and become people of mission, renewing the church and changing the world!*
- *This is not a “we” sharing by the Presenting Team. We **convince** them that they are **empowered** by their couple love to live a radical lifestyle and to use their “couple power” to renew the church and change the world!*

D. Point out that each couple’s love is unique and irreplaceable. (CL: 1 min.)

- *Tell them that each couple shares a unique and irreplaceable love relationship. Together, they are more powerful than either of them individually—the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It’s their unique*

and unrepeatable combination that has the power to touch and to change the lives of others.

- *Empower them to take their unique love into their congregation and their community.*

III. Importance of journeying with couples with similar values (Community)
(5 min. total)

A. To keep your love growing, we invite you to share your journey with other couples who strive to live the values you have learned on the weekend (CS: 1.5 min.)

- *Tell the participants that, to keep their love growing, we invite them to share their journey of love with other couples striving to live the values they have learned on the weekend.*
- *The strength and support of the LME community will make the weekend more than just a pleasant memory. Your emphasis in this section is on the compelling importance to counter-balance the strong worldly pressures that pull us away from true spousal relationship, of investing our time in this truly worthwhile and long lasting value of being an active part of community.*
- *The LME community is a group of local couples committed to the values of the weekend and the support of daily dialogue.*
- *Living a radical lifestyle, including daily dialogue, is made easier when we share our journey with others.*
- *Share your desire for each couple to make a decision right now to be part of their local LME community. Their decision will lead to continued growth and intimacy in their relationship and connect them with others who share their commitment to their vocation. Be passionate!*

B. Describe your local LME community and its effects on you and your marriage. (LH or LW: 2.5 min.)

- *Describe your local LME community, including some of the couples in it and the impact your community continues to have on your relationship.*
- *With conviction, share how necessary it is that they chose to participate in their local LME community. Stress that what they have begun this weekend in their relationship is only the beginning of learning to live a radical lifestyle as they continue their journey.*
- *Specifically ask them to continue building on the investment they have made in their marriage on this weekend. Share how the LME community makes a positive difference in your life.*
- *This should be shared from personal experience, so those on the weekend can get a taste of the joy and importance of community.*
- *Let them know that being part of the LME community is another decision to love they can make for the sake of their relationship.*

C. Invite couples to attend their LME Weekend Reunion or next scheduled community event, if applicable. Other spouse: 1 min.)

- *Other spouse begins this section by telling them that this weekend is just the beginning of a journey, and the next stop on their journey is the ____.*
- *Extend a warm and **excited** invitation to the _____. Ask them to put the date on their calendar and plan to be there.*
- *As applicable, let them know the Weekend Reunion will be a great opportunity to get to know some of the other couples who have shared this weekend with them. Mention which Presenting Teams will be there and how much we look forward to this chance to be with them again because they matter to us.*

IV. Open sharing (CL: 15 min. average)

- *The open sharing question is found on page _____ of the workbook.*
- *Clergy gives the participants a minute or two to write their answers to the questions in the workbook. After they have written, ask them to share what they wrote with their spouse.*
- *Invite them to share their answers aloud with the group, if they desire.*
- *Tell them that what they say can inspire or motivate another couple.*
- *Remind them that this is not a time to thank the Presenting Team or to comment on the weekend*

Question:

(1) Your most endearing quality is _____.

(2) Something meaningful that happened in our relationship this Weekend is _____.

V. Closing details (LH or LW: 2 min.)

A. Weekend Packet

- *Husband or wife delivers the closing details briefly and crisply. Then review a few items in the take-home packet that represent our willingness to journey with them, such as the Weekend Reunion flyers, names of the Presenting Teams (with their address, email, phone numbers) and dialogue questions. Mention “one-ringers” as a way to support their dialogue; demonstrate the sign language “I love you.”*
- *The important point of the weekend take-home packet is that the Presenting Team is willing to **continue the journey** with them; the contents are symbolic of all the couples in LME who are also sharing the journey.*
- *Do not try to cover everything in the take-home packet!*
- *Don’t break the mood created by the open sharing — focus on our desire to journey with them in living a radical lifestyle.*

B. Dialogue question for Monday

- *Tell the participants the dialogue question for Monday is found on page 60 of the workbook.*
- *Remind them that making a decision to dialogue on Monday is a decision to love that validates what they have done on their weekend.*
- *You might mention the “90 day guarantee.”*

VI. Worship and renewal of vows (40-60 min.)

- *The closing worship service is for the weekend participants only.*
- *The renewal of the vows must be part of the worship service.*
- *Open sharing by the participants will not be used in place of the homily.*
- *The Presenting Team clergy should focus his/her homily on the Sunday scripture and relate the scripture to the experience of the weekend, including the call to couples to live their covenant marriage in service to others and to join our mission to renew the church and to change the world (see Mentality for Presenting Team Clergy Homily at Closing Liturgy below).*
- *We want this Worship service to be a meaningful conclusion to their weekend experience.*
- *Be aware of time. Generally, the local LME community is waiting to greet the couples at the end of the closing song “There’s A New World Somewhere.”*

Mentality for Presenting Team Clergy’s Homily at the Closing Liturgy:

The LME Presenting Team clergy’s homily at the closing liturgy of the weekend offers a special opportunity to reinforce the mission of LME as well as a commissioning of the couples to send them forth in our mission to renew the church.

The call to renew the church and to change the world that has been introduced to couples in the Dream presentation and continued in Journey can be further strengthened by the Presenting Team clergy at this most opportune time. The clergy, representing the whole Body of Christ, has a unique influence in giving this call to the couples. It is an opportunity that we urge all LME Presenting Team clergy not to miss!

Developing this homily to reinforce this call to mission means that the Presenting Team clergy will need to review the Sunday scriptures prior to the weekend to discern how the scriptures can be brought to bear upon this call to renew the church and change the world. At times, the scriptures will lend themselves easily to this development, while at other times, it will demand some insight and creativity.

The call to the couples should be an invitation to join the clergy and the other members of the Presenting Team in taking up this mission. Jesus asks us as couples to take up the work of the Gospel and to make his Body more visible in our world. For the couples, this will be the last message of the weekend they will hear. If they leave the weekend convinced of the power they possess in their couple love and recognizing how much the church needs them, there is a greater likelihood that they will be willing to join us in inviting, in becoming involved as couples in their congregations, and in spreading the “Good News” of the LME weekend to others.

GENERAL FORMAT:

To know: that “couple power” is a reality and can change the world; that they are called to live a radical lifestyle, that they can overcome obstacles to sharing their love as a couple; that they will find support when they continue their journey with others in a LME community that shares their values.

To do: use their “couple power” to help renew the church and change the world; decide to continue their journey and to become part of their local LME community; decide to attend their LME Weekend Reunion.

To experience: an awareness of how unique and irreplaceable their love is in the world; a desire to use their “couple power”; a sense of being part of a community that loves them and wants to support their relationship.

DIALOGUE QUESTIONS TO HELP DEVELOP THIS TALK:

1. Our love is visible. WAMFAT?
2. WAMF when I read Matt.5: 13-16?
3. How has our love as a couple affected others? WAMFAMA?
4. What are my barriers to sharing our love as a couple? WAMFAMA?
5. An obstacle to sharing our love as a couple is our self-image as a couple? WAMFAMA?
6. WAMF when I hear the statement “the love of a couple reflects the power of Jesus working through their relationship”?
7. How **specifically** are we sharing our love as a couple? WAMFAMA?
8. How does our LME community support our relationship? WAMFAMA?
9. How have we been impacted as a couple by involvement in community? WAMFAMA?