

SHARING IN THE DREAM – 26.5 MIN.

OBJECTIVE: To motivate the participants to share themselves personally and financially in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter mission to renew the church and our dream to change the world and to help them realize the importance of this investment for the future.

INTRODUCTION: (CS: 0.5 min.)

Read as is:

This talk is “Sharing in the Dream.” We’re on page 55 in the workbook. The key concept is to “Share the gift of the weekend by inviting your friends and supporting the dream.” Lutheran Marriage Encounter, as part of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, has the mission and vision to renew the church and change the world. In the last talk we looked at keeping our covenant relationship alive and vibrant. Now we are going to let you know how you can help in our dream to change the world.

RECRUITING (Inviting)

I. A sense of mission (LH or LW: A. 2.5 min; CL: B. 2.5)

A. Mission (LH or LW: A. 2.5 min)

- 1. Explain the concept of “mission” using the definition in the workbook.**
In this section, husband or wife will introduce the concept of “mission” using the following definition: “Mission means ‘being sent.’ A mission is a call to achieve a special purpose.” If that is not printed in the Workbook, invite them to write it down.
- 2. Explain that WWME has a mission that is much broader than the experience they have shared together this weekend.**
Explain that Lutheran Marriage Encounter has a mission too, and it is much broader than the special experience they have shared together this weekend. Our mission and vision is to renew the church and change the world.
- 3. Read aloud the Mission and Vision statements below and then, using your own words, explain what the Mission Statement means to you.**
Refer to page 66 in the workbook. Then read both statements (printed below).

MISSION STATEMENT:

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live intimate and responsible relationships by providing an Encounter Weekend experience as well as ongoing community support.

VISION STATEMENT:

The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ.

4. We can change the world.

- *Be specific that we can change the world. This is not about good intentions! Their world has already begun to change, from their first decision to attend this weekend through the countless decisions to love they have made during their experience of each other in dialogue.*
- *Explain what it means to “change the world” and to “renew the church.” One way we do that is to strive to live “intimate and responsible” relationships, which is God’s desire. In living this lifestyle, we renew our marriage covenant, which creates renewal in our church.*
- *As we strive to live intimately and responsibly with one another, we transform the world into one in which love is the driving force within all relationships.*
- *We are making a huge impact on our world and on our church by making Jesus’ love come alive for others around us.*
- *Our presentation should be filled with hope and excitement for a dream and a mission that we passionately embrace! Our deep belief in our calling to be “prophets to the nations” should light up the room!*

B. Inviting (CL: 2.5 min)

1. We are calling them to join us in changing the world by using their unique gifts.

- *Inspire the participants with our dream.*
- *Call them to join us in renewing the church and changing the world by using their unique couple gifts.*
- *We need them to embrace this dream to change the world!*
- *As clergy, you have the special role of speaking to them as the representative of the Body of Christ, calling them to make a difference in our church!*

2. Explain that one role they have in this mission is inviting other couples (including clergy) to experience a WWME weekend.

- *One role they have in the mission is to continually invite couples (including clergy), to experience a weekend.*
- *Ask them to imagine what the world would be like if their families, friends, neighbors, and co-workers had the opportunity to experience a Marriage Encounter.*
- *Are they willing to allow other couples to live in the world today without the hope and joy of a weekend?*

3. Affirm them and let them know that they can do it.

- *Affirm them as modern day apostles who can make a powerful difference in the lives of others by inviting them to a weekend.*
- *Reinforce that it takes all of us to change the world!*

II. How and whom to invite (LH&LW: 4.5 min. total)

- Be specific about **how** and **whom** to invite.
- Emphasize to the participants that they are the best “advertisement” for the weekend because others will see a difference in their relationship and want what they have for themselves.
- Tell them that Lutheran couples are necessary for LME to continue, but let them know that other faiths are very welcome to participate.
- Tell them to invite their clergy, friends, neighbors, co-workers and family.
- Let them know local Marriage Encounter Community couples are available to assist them in inviting.
- Ask the participants to consider "How can I invite the people where I live and work at this time?" (e.g., military, office, mill, school, neighborhood, etc.)
- Speak of all the ways of inviting that you can think of, or have been involved with, like helping with church bulletins, romantic dinners, office newsletters, etc. as well of more one-to-one intentional invitations. Give a **personal current example** of a couple you invited to the weekend.

III. Specific recruiting (inviting) activity (LH or LW: 1 min.)

- Describe a specific inviting activity that has been planned to involve these couples so that they can do **immediate** recruiting. The inviting activity can be an information night in conjunction with community, a wine and cheese event at the home of one of the presenters' homes or in a hall. The inviting activity is left to the ingenuity of the presenters and/or community, but it has to be specific.
- Speak with the local hosting community well before the weekend to coordinate the planning of this activity and to make sure that informational flyers are created and available, if necessary.

IV. Starter list (CS: 2 min.)

- Explain and guide the couples through the preparation of a “starter list” of couples that they intend to invite when they get home.
- Tell them this list is for their **own private use** and we will **not** be collecting it. Encourage them to keep the list visible, active and constantly refilled.
- The starter list page in the Workbook should be used.

NOTE: It is acceptable to reverse the order of III. and IV. to accommodate the Local Area recruiting activity with the Inviting Starter List. If this is done, it **MUST** be coordinated with clergy to ensure smooth flow of the talk on the weekend.

FINANCIAL (Investing In The Mission)

V. Vision

A. Brief history of WWME and LME, emphasizing reach-out efforts (CL and/or CS: 2 min.)

- *After sharing the brief history (page 8) the remaining time needs to be spent telling about the sacrifices that many couples made in the early years of Worldwide Marriage Encounter in order to make it possible for the weekend to happen.*
- *No area was ever asked to pay to receive the weekend. They were simply asked to take this gift to a new area whenever they had the resources.*
- *Before you write this section, reflect on the history of WWME and LME, and ask yourself, “Who were those couples? What kind of people joyfully took this new weekend experience and spread it across the whole country in a matter of months - and then took it to over 80 countries! What kind of people were they?” The answer is, they were - they **are** - ordinary couples. They took it one weekend at a time, one city at a time. They had jobs, families, mortgages, and church responsibilities. They also had a **vision** of a world transformed by love and believed passionately in the **mission** to renew our church! Bring that kind of excitement and dedication to your presentation!*
- *Include stories of sacrifices made to reach out in other parts of the world. In a moment we’re going to ask them to sacrifice by giving of their substance. They have to know that others have sacrificed (and continue to sacrifice).*
- *Try to verbally paint a picture of what these early apostles were like and that they fully embraced the mission and gave their time and energy to renew the church by providing weekends.*
- *We have already introduced our mission statement, so you can refer to it. The focus of this section is not the dates and places! They should be shared only briefly. The focus is on the **dream** of those who came before us and how their belief was so deep that the weekend continues today.*

NOTE: Many stories of heroic reach out can be read on WWME’s eMatrimony.

B. Dream of changing the world (LH or LW: 3 min.)

- *Share how LME was brought to their Local Area, painting a picture of a seed growing and then blooming into an inspiring dream. (The Local Area Leaders should make available the information about how LME was brought to your local area).*
- *Tell them about some of the Local Area “apostles” who changed the world right in their own back yard. These were couples whose hearts had been touched and whose lives had been changed! They could not keep this renewing experience to themselves! They made a decision to love, trust, risk, and dream BIG - which is the reason all of us are sitting in this room today. They had a grand vision of a new world ignited with love, and that vision burns just as brightly in our own hearts!*
- *We hope it is beginning to burn in their hearts, too, and that they will share this gift with everyone they know. Speak of your dream of bringing the weekend to couples of all races, cultures and economic status - a big vision, but one that, with their help, will happen.*

VI. Cost of Weekend (LH or LW: 1 min.)

- *Introduce this section as another part of the mission - to invest in the dream not only by inviting others to the weekend, but by supporting it financially. This section is not about “paying” for their weekend! This sharing is about joining us in our mission to renew the church by bringing this weekend to as many couples as possible.*
- *Explain briefly the overall cost to continue to provide weekends “such as this one” and the key elements of that: meals, lodging, phone calls, supplies and other local expenses, presenter preparation and travel, planning meetings, church mailings, and many background things they don’t see.*
- *Give them the “Weekend Quote” as specified by the latest N.A.R. chart.*
- *Include in this section that we are a non-profit organization: **“Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a registered non-profit organization. We do not give to or receive from a Church body, such as the Lutheran Church. We rely on the donations of encountered couples like you.”***

VII. Giving from substance

- A. Ask them to donate from substance, not excess. (LH or LW: 1 min.)**
[Be sure to present this section in your own words. This should sound like you believe the dream of Marriage Encounter is worth some sacrifice, or it won't be effective.]
- *A gift from substance is one which cannot be given easily. It alters our lifestyle for a time, i.e., eating hamburger instead of steak, delaying a vacation or staying with dial-up internet service rather than converting to high speed cable for the computer.*
 - *Couples in today’s world may have difficulty grasping the concept of giving from their substance, so reinforce that it means sacrificing for the sake of the LME mission. This concept was introduced in section V., so it is not new.*
 - *Donating from substance means being good stewards of the gifts with which we have been entrusted. Point out that our material resources are not ours to keep and bury, but are meant to be invested and shared with others.*
- B. Tell them what we personally sacrificed in order to give from substance. (CL or CS: .5 min.)**
- *When talking about our own sacrifices, it would be effective to tell the participants specifically what we did in order to contribute to the dream.*
- C. This isn’t payment; it’s mission. (LH or LW: .5 min.)**
- *Tell them we aren’t asking them to pay for their weekend, we are asking them to sacrifice for the sake of other couples and to buy into our mission and our dream of changing the world.*
 - *Assure the participants that we trust that, whatever they give, it is from their substance. No one is judged on the amount of their gift, and no one is turned away from a weekend because they cannot afford it.*

VIII. Bringing the Encounter to new places (CL: 1 min.)

- Briefly identify new places/areas in which Worldwide or Lutheran Marriage Encounter is being introduced like inner cities in the USA, communist Cuba, the Pacific Islands, Africa, etc.
- This information can be obtained from WWME's Headquarters or from LME North American Region Executives.

IX. Being able to invite those who cannot afford the weekend (CS: 1 min.)**A. People on this weekend**

- Talk about being able to give the gift of LME to anyone who wants to go, regardless of their financial circumstances. This includes people on this weekend as well as those in the future.
- Place your emphasis on helping couples who are on **this** weekend. Talk of layoffs, downsizing and plant closings that have affected many of us. No one has ever been denied the opportunity to make a weekend because they could not afford it.
- That has only been possible because of the generosity of couples who have donated to LME from their substance - people like each of them.

B. People yet to come on a Weekend**X. Explanation of how to donate (LH or LW: 3 min. max.)**

- Tell the participants specifically how to donate; send them to their room to **discuss** and decide, "How much am I willing to share financially so that the weekends continue?"

A. Options for donations to LME (cash, check, credit card, etc.)

- Explain the options, including post-dated checks that are dated for special occasions, e.g., birthdays, anniversaries, etc. (up to maximum of 6 months out), as well as specific instructions that may be unique to the Local Area where the weekend is being presented.

B. Ask for gift from substance (twice the cost of the weekend)

- Whichever spouse presents this section must be comfortable with asking the participants to **make a sacrifice**. This section should be given in an alive and personable manner! Being a good steward is a joy-filled occasion, not a funeral!
- Ask them to give **twice the total cost** of one couple to attend the weekend and tell the participants the specific amount.
- Ask those who have been blessed financially to consider donating the cost of the **entire weekend** (give amount) or **half the cost** of the weekend (also give amount). Their donation is a gift from the heart and not the head.
- Make sure to tell the participants to return all the envelopes, because you are responsible for accounting for all envelopes. **DO NOT** say "because the one we're missing might be a check to cover the whole weekend" or anything that might indicate that we value one donation over another.
- Refer to the US or Canadian Tax statement which is to be enclosed in their donation envelope.

- *Tell them to make checks out to “Lutheran Marriage Encounter.”*
- *Tell them that their donation will not be public knowledge; remember to thank them for sacrificing to further the dream.*
- *Make sure when sending them off to make the decision about their donation that you explain that the question is a **discussion** question, not a dialogue question. Also give them clear directions on the process for going to their rooms and how they will know when to come back.*

C. Reiteration of mission and vision of LME — together we will renew the church and change the world! (CL: .05 min)

DISCUSSION Question:

How much are we willing to share financially, as a couple, so that the Dream and the Weekends may continue?

Discussion time: 15 minutes

Handout: Blank white envelope (one per couple)

SHARING IN THE DREAM
MENTALITY

Dialogue questions to help develop this talk:

1. WAMF when I hear the statement “calling others to the weekend is a real and worthwhile mission”?
2. How have I called others to the weekend? WAMFAMA?
3. How are we most effective in inviting others to attend a weekend? WAMFAMA?
4. Because of who I am, am I comfortable asking others to make a weekend? WAMFAMA?
5. What is my dream for Marriage Encounter? WAMFAMA?
6. To make my dream a reality I must _____? WAMFAMA?
7. How does our financial situation affect our relationship? WAMFAMA?
8. Is our checking account/savings account mine, yours or ours? WAMFAMA?
9. What is my initial reaction when asked to donate money to a group? WAMFAMA?
10. Because of who I am, am I comfortable asking others to donate money to Marriage Encounter? WAMFAMA?
11. In order to ask others to donate money to Marriage Encounter I need to _____? WAMFAMA?
12. When asked to donate from our substance I feel _____?
13. WAMF when I read Matt.25: 14-29?

Brief History of Worldwide and Lutheran Marriage Encounter

The story of Marriage Encounter began in 1952 when a young priest in Spain, Father Gabriel Calvo, began developing a series of conferences for married couples. Their focus was on the development of an open and honest relationship within marriage and learning to live out a sacramental relationship in the service of others. By 1967, the experience was taken to a Christian Family Movement convention at Notre Dame University. Fr. Chuck Gallagher and a few couples from New York were so excited that they began to spread the weekend at a fast pace, and in the fall of 1971, Worldwide Marriage Encounter began growing around the United States and to other parts of the world. Eventually, members of other denominations desired to provide weekends in their own faith expressions and WWME gave the gift to many denominations: Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Mennonite/Brethren, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist, and United Church of Christ. In 1975, the first Lutheran weekend was presented in Cheney, Washington by Lutheran couples who had experienced the Catholic weekend and received financial and emotional encouragement from WWME. Lutherans spread the weekends throughout the USA and Canada, and then to Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. New areas were formed through outreach programs operated by established areas. At no time was an area asked to pay back. They were simply asked to pass the dream forward whenever they could.

GENERAL FORMAT:

To know: they are part of the dream and they are needed; without their efforts to invite, Marriage Encounter will not continue; who and how to invite to the weekend; their financial gift will make a difference in the lives of another couple both on this weekend and on upcoming weekends.

To do: decide to invest their time and money in the dream; ask others to attend a weekend; contribute financially from their substance.

To experience: gratitude for the gift of their weekend; desire to pass on the gift; hope in the future because of their investment; openness to consider giving from their substance; being part of the Dream.

WHERE ARE THE COUPLES?

This talk is given right after lunch and begins the close of the weekend. The couples are upbeat but are beginning to get tired.

ADDENDA -- Financial Statements

The following information is to be placed in each envelope handed out to participants (use USA or Canada statement as needed). Note that the wording is changed slightly from the original statement. Be sure to add the correct weekend quote before copying:

ADDENDUM #1 – USA

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a registered non-profit organization. We do not give to or receive from a Church body, such as the Lutheran Church. We rely on the donations of encountered couples like you.

The Internal Revenue Service requires that we provide you with the fair market value of the weekend. The value is \$ _____. Anything given in excess of \$ _____ is considered a tax-deductible contribution. If you are giving a cash contribution, and wish to receive a receipt, please include your name and address inside the envelope. Consult your tax advisor for clarification.

ADDENDUM #2 – Canada

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a registered non-profit organization. We do not give to or receive from a Church body, such as the Lutheran Church. We rely on the donations of encountered couples like you.

We are a registered charitable organization. We would like to point out, though, that Revenue Canada will only allow us to issue official tax receipts, from identified donors, for contributions above the average cost of facilities across Canada. When making a donation by cheque, please make it out to Lutheran Marriage Encounter. When you are giving a cash contribution and wish a tax receipt, please include your name and address inside the envelope. Receipts for the current year will be issued after December 31.

The average total contribution needed to provide a weekend like this is \$ _____.