

Interfaith Day of Renewal

MENTALITY

This mentality is written for all three tracks in hopes that you will weave these concepts throughout your presentations. We suggest that you read this before starting to write your presentation. We also suggest that you dialogue on the questions contained in the outlines. This will bring the outline alive for you.

This is a skeletal outline. Your lived examples will flesh it out for the couples. The reason for this is so that you will have the flexibility to share yourselves/your own stories.

Each presentation will be followed by a dialogue and a small group sharing time. Please improvise on whether you judge your group needs a large group sharing at some point in your day.

Each of the convention talks will have these concepts woven throughout the presentation: balance/wholeness - journey - responsibility - and intimacy.

BALANCE/WHOLENESS: the story of the porcupine comes to mind in explaining this concept. Two porcupines cuddled together on a cold winter's night. As the two moved closer toward one another their quills would wound the other. As they moved farther from each other they grew very cold, the trick is to stay close enough as to not wound the other and not too far away as to freeze to death. There is a balance to everything. Some of us are content with just being (mary) and others are happy doing (martha). To achieve wholeness we must strive for a both/and approach rather than an either or approach. It isn't necessarily spending exactly the same amount of time doing as being, but being open to the spirit, being sensitive to others to know when to be and to do.

JOURNEY: We are each on an individual spiritual journey with God. This journey sometimes takes us onto paths that are not the same as our spouse's. This is okay. We are not joined at the hip. As on our weekend, we all began with encounter with self. With the awareness that our writing and self evaluation brings us we can then enhance our couple relationship with those awarenesses.

We journey as individuals and we journey as a couple. For example: I may have an individual spiritual journey. I can also have a sacramental spiritual journey which includes my spouse. One does not negate the other. They are both necessary and good.

RESPONSIBILITY: Whether we come to our spouse broken or whole, we each have a responsibility to our own physical, spiritual, and emotional health. This does not negate the fact that our spouse can elevate us, heal us, affirm us through his/her love. Our spouse's love can affirm us and give us strength our spouse can also encourage, support and invest in our being responsible. And vice versa, we support, encourage and elevate our spouse as well. Whether it's sharing a gift I have or confronting my boss or taking care of a health problem. It is our responsibility to be the best we can be. There is many times a false sense of autonomy that is really independence. When we use the word autonomy we are talking about integrity, being true to ourselves. This is not an excuse to act with attitudes and superiorities or independence. That is married singles. (interdependent vs. Independence and dependency.)

Dependency relies on the other for everything. There is also a lot of responsible for rather than responsible to. For example, if the husband is overweight, it must be the wife's cooking. Or, if the

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wife is distressed all the time, it must be the husband's fault for not providing what she needs. We are not being responsible for ourselves and to our spouses when we live this way.

INTIMACY: The latin derivative of this word is intimus. Pertaining to the innermost character of the thing; fundamental or essential; most private or personal; one's intimate feelings. We go into the innermost part of ourselves/the feelings we least want to share. We do this in order to share ourselves fully. We go into our fears and meet them head on. We do this with God's grace. Choosing not to risk puts up an imaginary wall and bars intimacy in our relationship.

Interfaith Day of Renewal The Role of the Christian Family in the 90's

Sub-Note: We have heard that by definition, a Christian is someone who dies often.

The purpose of these talks is to realize our part in the Christian family. After doing this, we want to explore the role our couple relationship plays in the Christian family. Finally, in looking at the role of the Christian family in the 90's, how can we best live those values.

PRESENTATION #1

I. ENCOUNTER WITH SELF H/W 6 min. each

- A. Scripture reading suggestions: Col 1:15-18/2 Cor 3:14-18
- B. What is my role in creating a Christian family?
- C. How am I being called to wholeness on my individual journey?
- D. What are the values, ideals, expectations that I bring with me as a result of my own background?
- E. Am I open and affectionate or private; Do I express my anger or keep it within; Do I praise or believe praise comes from action.
- F. Do I take the time and spend the energy to understand myself at my family's expense or for the good of our relationship and for my own health?
- G. Do I live my values or speak only of my expectations?
- H. Am I at peace with who I am? (Emphasize)

Dialogue & Sharing Question: What gifts and/or obstacles do I bring in trying to live as a Christian family? HDIF sharing this with you?

**Interfaith Day of Renewal
The Role of the Christian Family in the 90's**

PRESENTATION #2

I. AS A COUPLE

- A. What conflicts do we come up against in our Christian family? H/W 2 min. each
 - 1. Value Differences
 - a. Do I accept these differences or do I undermine them subtly or openly?
 - 2. Prevailing Attitudes
 - 3. Background and Cultural Differences
 - 4. Who is the model of Christian family for me/us?
- B. The couple is the heart of the family H/W 3 min. each
 - 1. Share how your couple love affects your family. (1 member share positive effects/other share negative effects)
 - 2. Do I become frustrated if I do not believe that I can see the effects that I want for our family, especially with my spouse?
- C. We want to model our relationship with our spouse after the way Christ loves the church. H/W 2 min. each
 - a. To be able to give and receive love. Striving for intimacy.
 - b. Do I believe I'm lovable by God/spouse? Do I reflect that love?
 - c. Daily re-evaluation to strive to live Gospel values. Striving for balance/wholeness.

Dialogue Question: Are we striving to live as a Christian couple for our family? HDIF sharing this with you?

Sharing Question: What is a Christian family and as a couple what is our responsibility?

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The Role of the Christian Family in the 90's

PRESENTATION #3

The Values of a Christian Family. (Share the joys and struggles of keeping these alive in your family.) Explain that Values are caught by our children as opposed to being taught to our children. If these values are present in the parents, the children will catch them. Note: An ideal is something that we would like to happen. A value is something we're willing to sacrifice for to make it happen. Give an example. H/W 6 min. each

A. Intimacy

1. Family Dialogue

a. Truth vs. lies/Clarity vs. deception/Sharing from the heart vs. painful silence.

2. Family Prayer

a. Parent with Child/Children praying/As a Family/Two Families

B. Belonging

1. Each individual is needed and appreciated and gifts affirmed as belonging to the whole as in The Body of Christ.

2. Affirming each member of the family for their gifts.

C. Healing and Forgiveness

1. Share a recent example of healing and forgiveness (involving your immediate family).

D. Responsibility

1. Who takes responsibility for the quality of our family life?

a. How can we become more co-responsible as a family? (try this as a family dialogue in preparation for the presentation)

E. Traditions "Do this in memory of me..."

1. How do we express our love for God and for others in ways that are meaningful to the family'

Dialogue Question: In our journey towards wholeness as a Christian family, what area needs our attention? HDIFAT?

Sharing Question: How do we express our love for God and each other in ways that are meaningful to the family? HDIFAT?

**Interfaith Day of Renewal
The Role of the Christian Family in the 90's**

PRESENTATION #4

I. OUR CHURCH/COMMUNITY H/W 10 min. each

A. What are the obstacles of living as a Christian family in the '90s?

1. What support do we/our children have to live this way?

2. A married couple with children, living Christian values are in the minority today.

HDIFAT

a. How can we help/strengthen our children to deal with the diversity of a counter culture?

B. Doing or Being: Are we doing too much as a family? Are we not doing enough? Are we listening to what God is calling us to do/be in Community/Church?

1. 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 We are the Body of Christ. Affirming the gifts in each member. Drawing those gifts out for the good of the church.

a. The value of giving as a family. In what ways is our family visible in the church? Is that consistent with the values we profess?

C. What is the value of Christian community to our children? Give examples.

D. What values are our children modeling in community? Give examples

E. What is the effect of our involvement in community on our children?

1. Do our children support our Apostolate? To what extent do we involve the children? Do they understand what we do?

2. Are they learning to sacrifice?

Dialogue Question: When it comes to Christian Community/Church, are we doing too much as a family? Are we not doing enough?

Sharing Question: What effect is our community involvement having on our children?

Interfaith Day of Renewal The Empty Nest

The purpose of this track is to help couples discover where they are with each other now that the children are gone. Then to aid them in discovering what they need to strengthen the bonds of their couple relationship

PRESENTATION #1

- I. Looking back, how did having the children at home affect our relationship? H/W 3 min. each
 - A. Share things like: time, money, conflicts about child rearing, involvement in their activities, nourishing our emotional needs through our children.

- II. What are my strongest feelings about not having the children at home anymore? Describe in loving detail. H/W 3 min. each,

- III. How has not having the children at home affecting our relationship? H/W 3 min. each
 - A. Look at ways you have had to adjust.
Consider:
 - In what ways are we using the time/energy that used to go into the children?
 - Are we coming closer or are we drifting apart?
 - How are we compensating for needs that were
 - Nourished by the children?
 - Describe loneliness (if present)

- D.Q. - What are my strongest feelings about not having the children at home anymore?

- S.Q. - In what ways are we using the extra time/energy now that the children aren't at home?

Interfaith Day of Renewal The Empty Nest

PRESENTATION # 2

1. Expectations / unshared dreams - H/W 7 min each
 - A. What were my expectations of having an empty nest?
 - B. HDIF now that these expectations are met/unmet??
 - C. What kinds of things have I put on hold until after the children were gone? Example:
travel/finances/where we live/hobbies/ retirement
 2. How has sharing these feelings about unmet expectations helped me to understand you more?
Have I listened to you with my heart? H/W 2 min each
- D.Q. - What kinds of things have I put on hold until after the children were gone? Hdifat?
- S.Q. - Share your awarenesses from your dialogue together.

Interfaith Day of Renewal The Empty Nest

PRESENTATION # 3

I. Share your story of how you have enhanced the intimacy in your relationship. H/W 7 1/2 min. each

Suggestions:

- Use the empty nest creatively
- Accept changes in environment
- Take time for passion/romance
- Dialogues
- Couple prayer
- Sexual relationship

II. Share your dialogue on: what are my dreams for our continuing journey together. HDIF sharing this with you? 2 1/2 min. each.

D.Q. - What are some of the ways I would like to enhance the intimacy in our relationship? HDIFAT?

S.Q. - Share the insights from your dialogue together.

Interfaith Day of Renewal The Empty Nest

PRESENTATION #4

- I. Share that the resulting joy of investing in your couple love has empowered you to share that love, H/W 2 1/2 min. each, e.g. More love for us = more love for others
 - A. More passion
 - B. More time
 - C. More spontaneity y
 - D. More understanding for others

- II. What are the new ways we have found to be life giving as a couple? (e.g.: reach out) Be creative 2 1/2 min. each

- III. What are the attitudes that I must overcome to be life giving to others? 2 1/2 min.

- D.Q. - What are the attitudes that I want to overcome to be more life giving to others?

- S.Q. - What are some of the ways we can be life giving to our community? Be creative.

Interfaith Day of Renewal Planning for the Future - Retirement

Presentation #1 - my job

- I. My job
 - a looking objectively, how did/does my job affect
 - 1. My self image?
 - A. Position?
 - B. Status?
 - 2. Our relationship?
 - A. Conflicts?
 - 3. Relationship with family/others?
 - A. Social interaction?
 - B. Emotional needs?
 - B. Looking objectively, how did/does my job affect the following?
 - 1. Time?
 - 2. Activities?
 - 3. Did/do I do certain things because of my job?
 - 4. Did I (or do i) not do "things" because of my job?
- II. What are my strongest feelings about retirement and its effect upon losing these things?
 - A. Share things like:
 - 1. Potential for losing "status"
 - 2. Potential problems with self image
 - 3. Change in "position"
 - 4. Worry about being "at loose ends"
- III. How does "not working" (retirement or spouse's retirement) affect our relationship?
 - A. In what ways are we using time/energy that used to go into work?
 - 1. More time?
 - 2. Time conflicts still existing?
 - 3. Are we closer or are we drifting apart?
 - B. How are or will we compensate for needs that were nourished by work?
 - 1. Planned activities?
 - 2. Involvement in other "things"?

Question for the group: How does (or did) my job affect my self image? HDIFAT?

Interfaith Day of Renewal Planning for the Future - Retirement

Presentation #2 - fears

- I. Am I (or was I) afraid to retire?
 - A. What are (were) the greatest fears when it comes to retirement
 - 1. Too much time on my hands
 - 2. Loss of closeness with colleagues and work friends
 - 3. Loss of status and position
 - 4. Getting old
 - 5. Loneliness and boredom
 - A. Describe loneliness
 - 6. Too much "togetherness"
 - A. Invasion of territory
 - B. How am I going to give my spouse space?
 - C. What "space" do I need?
 - B. How did my parents (or grandparents) enjoy (or react to) retirement?
 - 1. Am I concerned about repeating their history?
 - A. Did they have good health?
 - B. Enough money?
 - C. Travel plans
 - 2. How am I going to change our lives/my life in order to avoid their mistakes?
 - 3. In what ways can I learn from what they did "right" ?
- II. Am I afraid that retirement means the end of my life?
 - A. Is retirement the end of our life style as we now know it?
 - 1. Not enough time with friends from work
 - 2. Not knowing what to do with all the extra time
 - 3. Grieving for my former job
 - 4. Boredom
 - 5. Money problems
 - 6. Grieving for former mental activity involved in your job
 - A) vitality
 - B) adrenaline (deadline)
 - C) mental exercise
 - B. Is this the beginning of the end?
 - 1. Health
 - 2. Health of my spouse
 - 3. Death
 - 4. Mental incapacity

Question for the group: What are my greatest fears about retirement? HDIFAMA?

Interfaith Day of Renewal Planning for the Future - Retirement

Presentation #3 - expectations, unshared dreams, and needs

- I. Dreams
 - A. What were/are my dreams when I thought/think about the future?
 - 1. As a child
 - 2. As an adult
 - 3. As I approach this time in my life
 - 4. Retirement
- II. Expectations about retirement?
 - A. How much "free" time do I expect to
 - 1. Books
 - 2. Computer
 - 3. Travel
 - 4. What?
 - 5. Write?
 - 6. Studies
 - 7. Develop hobbies
 - 8. Help children
 - B. How much intimacy do I expect?
 - 1. Closeness with spouse
 - 2. With extended family
 - 3. With friends
 - 4. With former colleagues
 - C. What type of "job" do I want?
 - 1. Extra work - short term, long term
 - 2. Do I expect to work at all?
 - D. What type of things have I put on hold until "retirement" ?
 - 1. Time
 - 2. Travel
 - 3. Exercise
 - 4. Hobby- study- reading, etc.
 - 5. Second career (true career?)
 - 6. Self fulfillment
- III. Needs
 - A. What do I need to make me happy?
 - 1. Do I understand that I am responsible for my happiness?
 - 2. What can I contribute to my spouse's happiness?
 - 3. How much space do I really need?
 - 4. How am I going to let my spouse know what I need?
- IV. When sharing these dreams/expectations/ needs with you (spouse), have I understood you more? Have I listened to you with my heart?

Question for the group: What are my expectations for our future? HDIFAT?

Interfaith Day of Renewal Planning for the Future - Retirement

Presentation #4 - continuing journey

- I. Continuing journey
 - A. What does (or will) retirement give you in terms of:
 - 1. Time?
 - 2. Peace of mind?
 - 3. Intimacy?
 - B. What joys do you experience as a result of your current life style? (whether retired or not)
 - 1. Relaxation?
 - 2. Happiness?
 - 3. New talents uncovered?
 - 4. Giving to others?
- II. The ultimate end to our journey is death
 - A. What are my feelings when I think of our life drawing to a close?
 - 1. Loss and grieving?
 - 2. Cherishing the "now" time together?
 - 3. What would/will I do differently "now"?
- III. What am I going to do with the rest of my life?
 - A. What is meaningful to me?
 - B. What new challenges do I want to take on?
 - C. Spirituality?
 - D. Enhancement of our lives together?

Question for the group: What are my dreams for our continuing journey together? HDIFAT?