

Section 11 Inviting Challenge is On!

By Nick & Lori Jurado

Section 11 is entering the last month of a six month "formal" inviting challenge to our eight encounters in CA, NV, and AZ. In January, we mailed a packet to our Executive Teams, with a challenge to increase our inviting across the board and thereby, increase our couple counts on Weekends. The packet included many resources including our Inviting Prayer, Inviting Goal Setting & Planning Chart, Sample Inviting Council Structure with Goals & Responsibilities, Marriage Encounter Quiz with the upcoming Weekend Dates to be added to it by each area, and Small Group Formation ideas on Inviting from Secretariat Meeting. (these resources can be found on the ERL site.)

Executive Teams have been challenged to fire up their communities to increase our inviting activities in the areas of Church Contacts, Personal Invitations, Military Contacts, and "Out of the Box" ideas. "Scorekeeping" has been our loving task as each month execs send us a report of the inviting activities for the previous month. We have shared some of these ideas at our Section Meetings and via e-mail and we are happy to report an increase in inviting and a corresponding increase in our weekend counts. We see continued growth in our Church Contacts and an exciting increase in our "out of the box" category too. For some great ideas you might be inspired by, read the Out of the Box summary sheet.

Of course, we have one month to go and we are praying for continued enthusiasm and inviting to God's Weekend. We know at this date that what counts most is when all of us remember that our inviting efforts are one giant way to give back a little of what we have been given.

We will have an Inviting Presentation at our Section 11 Convention in July and of course we all know who the winners will be- all the smiling faces who've made a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend! More Inviting means more sacraments experiencing the Weekend means more smiling faces means more of God's Love in the World and for the World!

Attached is a list of activities reported that were each rewarded an "Out of the Box" point for creativity and effort! If you would like to know more about our implementation and scorekeeping, we would be glad to share with you. Drop us a note or, take the idea, and go with it...

We love you WWME,
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ME Out of the Box Inviting Ideas to share- from Inviting Challenge Reports 2006

- Set up information tables outside church after pulpit talks. Handed out brochures and also had a list to sign if couples are interested in more info. Followed up with personal phone calls and info talks to increase desire to sign up for weekends.
- One area does information talks and invites couples just off the Weekend to bring both family and friends to that talk.
- One area handed out brochures at an Engaged Encounter Weekend to the couples for the purpose of taking them to their friends and families. (great idea to save one for their 1st anniversary!)
- A very visible member of the ME Community was the guest speaker at the Catholic Men's Fellowship at their church. He was asked to talk about how ME helped his spirituality, his faith and his relationship with his spouse and with God.
- An active couple in one Community is hosting a pulpit talk writing workshop and inviting new pulpiteer couples and others to attend.
- At one parish, the local leadership were the Speakers for their version of WMD- 'Celebrate Marriage.'
- Informational, inviting letters were sent out to each parish in a large area AND they were co-signed by the local leaders and the Bishop. Has already opened the door to parishes they have not been in...
- In one area, being very visible means having ME displays at different parishes, a ministry fair, the Sweetheart Ball and a "mom's group" talk.
- One area lists the Weekend dates on the Diocesan online calendar.
- One area checks parish literature racks for brochures and videos.
- In looking at the registrations and final Weekend list, one area had 13 couples who were there from personal invitations. Giant jump in inviting due to conscious effort to invite and not for just one weekend.
- One area handed out brochures at a Marriage Prep class for couples who are working to have their marriage blessed in the church after civil ceremonies. (through Archdiocese Office Family Life)
- Identified a "neglected parish" in their area and personally delivered brochures to that parish.

- Many Special celebrations were planned by ME for World Marriage Day and also served as special inviting tools- wedding cake served, pictures were taken of sacraments, “marriage certificates” were given to married couples of parish, handed out bookmarks that were made with ME dates and World Marriage Day symbol, chocolate roses for married couples...
- ME brochures were distributed together by both Spanish and English Encounters at one parish.
- As a prayer offering, each team couple is saying a rosary with the intention of filling our weekends.
- In one area, the Rosary was said by all 13 team couples prior to a Weekend and each couple was assigned a day to say the Rosary with the intention of inviting.

WHAT A GREAT LIST OF IDEAS AND ACTIONS TO BE PROUD OF, INSPIRED BY, ADD TO!

WE ARE ALL TRULY BLESSED BY THIS MINISTRY AND OUR LOVE...

- This sharing is a result of the eight areas that make up Section 11. (Inviting Challenge on Jan-June 06)
Compiled by Nick♥Lori Jurado Section 11 Weekend Pillar Couple