

Worldwide Marriage Encounter now has an outstanding web site, the Encounter Resource Library (ERL), available on line at [erl.wwme.org](http://erl.wwme.org). Below is an example of how a couple in need of a presentation was able to use this resource to help them put together an inspiring presentation. If you have not done so, please visit [erl.wwme.org](http://erl.wwme.org). The presentation below is taken from the Community Pillar section of ERL. Browse through each of the sections of ERL - they are extremely informational and helpful.

## *A Weekend Reunion Sampler*

**Following is a presentation given by John & Belinda Brasley, team presenting couple and former Rochester Area Leaders at the August Weekend Reunion on September 8, 2005 at St. Louis Church in Pittsford, New York. John & Belinda wrote and adapted this presentation from an outline in the WWME archives found in the ERL files.**

**Husband:** The title of this presentation is, *“What is a CORE Group?”*

**Wife:** Mother Teresa of Calcutta once spoke these words: “God does not ask us to be successful; God only asks us to be obedient and faithful.”

**Husband:** Mother Teresa spoke these words to a U.S. Senator, at a reception given in her honor in Washington after her address to Congress. The Senator was asking Mother Teresa how she kept going with what she was doing. It seemed like she wasn’t making too much of a difference – there were still thousands of sick and dying in the streets of Calcutta. She replied: “In our ministry to the sick and dying, God does NOT ask us to be successful, but to be obedient and faithful. God has asked us to take care of the ‘Poorest of the Poor,’ and we have faithfully obeyed.”

**Wife:** Mother Teresa’s *Missionaries of Charity* still provide an active ministry in the Church, taking care of the “Poorest of the Poor.” The Church has many ministries to meet the spiritual and sacramental needs of all people. **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** is one ministry within the Church, a ministry whose mission is to nourish and meet the spiritual and sacramental needs of married couples.

In **WWME**, we have a special call; our own unique ministry. And every couple who has ever experienced the weekend is an important part of our ministry.

Each of us has our own unique talents; and it takes all of our gifts to make the ministry of ME complete. As a part of this ministry, your gifts are special, and we need you to be a part of the Marriage Encounter movement. God is calling each of you today to a new role in this ministry. Without you, we will be incomplete!

**Husband:** So now, we understand that we are all a necessary part of a very important ministry; which is desperately needed by the Church. The question is: What is the ministry and mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter?

Our Mission Statement explains what we are all about:

***Worldwide Marriage Encounter’s Mission of renewal in the church and change in the world is to assist couples and priests to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing them with a Catholic “experience” and ongoing community support for such a lifestyle.***

In other words, our ministry offers couples a way to experience God's Desire for our Marriages; it renews the Church and it changes the World; and it provides a loving, supportive community, one that lives out and supports the radical new lifestyle we learned about on the Weekend!

Our focus today is on the ME Community, which begins to form on the Weekend.

Our experience of Community continues at the Weekend Reunion, which you are experiencing right now, and it welcomes us as we move into the CORES, or Sharing Groups, which we are inviting you now to join and to become a part of.

**Wife:** What is a CORE Group?

A CORE is a group of married couples who get together to support one another, to share our joys and struggles, and to live out our sacramental vows as husbands and wives. Each CORE is a part of our larger ME community.

The CORE meetings are Mini-Weekends, to renew our Sacrament of Marriage. They provide us with the support we need for our dialogue; they let us share our couple love with the world by supporting the Weekend. CORES enables us, as a couple, to live in today's society in the radical way which was presented to us on the Weekend. CORE is like a pause in our hectic lifestyle, to remind us of what is really important in our life as a married couple. CORE meetings give us time to refocus our marriages; to rekindle the magical experience of our Weekend.

So let's close our eyes for a minute and think back to where we were before our weekend. What brought us there? We knew that we wanted something more, something better. We were thinking, "Is this all there is to married life?" "Do all married couples experience these same disillusioned, lonely feelings?" So we came to the Weekend ... longing, searching, needing, and hoping.

**Husband:** So let's pause, reflect, and think back to our weekend!! And let's ask ourselves this question: How did the Weekend begin to change us?

The first change was through our Dialogue. The teams were modeling for us, through their Dialogue, how to openly communicate and not judge each other!

In Dialogue, we began to communicate on a whole new level, sharing our feelings, with no judgments or disputes, just listening. In this new way of communicating, we began to see our relationships more clearly. I saw that **(wife's name)** was a gift, offered to me in our dialogue, and because of her acceptance of all of me and my feelings, I began to believe again that I was special and needed. Openness and honesty, and being able to share feelings that had been difficult before, helped us to become more trusting and more intimate.

Why do we dialogue and share feelings? Because feelings are a major part of who we are. If we're going to achieve the oneness that God calls us to, we'll want to share all of who we are, including our feelings. We know from past experience that unshared hidden feelings are a block to our intimacy. Sharing our feelings openly and honestly enhances and deepens our relationship.

**Wife:** What else did the Teams teach and model for us?

First, to trust. The Team taught us to trust – to trust God, and to trust our spouse enough to begin honest and open sharing.

The team taught us that Goodness & Love are rekindled when we decide to trust and when we begin to honestly share and accept each other's feelings. It was evident in the Teams as they shared their lives with us.

And the team gave us permission to take time for each other. We were really that worthy and important to each other and to God! We learned how much God wants us to take the time we need to be close and intimate and in love!

**Husband:** After we began trusting through Dialogue, something magical began to happen.

Our Sexual Relationship took on a whole new dimension. It was suddenly special again, and even sacred, and we felt connected, as one body. Our sexual intimacy became a great healing tool in our relationship.

Another area where our Weekend had a big impact was in our prayer life. Before the Weekend began, the couples in the Community were given our names, and they started praying for us. They prayed for us and they loved us and cared about our marriages even before they knew us. We even had one special prayer couple praying just for us throughout the entire Weekend. This inspired us to begin to pray as a couple, to pray together, to pray for each other and for others!

**Wife:** After all the things that we experienced on our Weekend, the next logical step was to realize that we are called as a couple to be a Sacrament for others, not just for ourselves. We realized we wanted to be a part of a group of couples who lived with a focus on relationship, faith, and family. We wanted to stay involved, so that others could help support us to live this new and loving way!

The Weekend gave us the tools;... it encouraged and inspired us to be passionately in love with each other; and it helped us to better understand our Sacrament. We knew we would need the support of regular CORE group meetings to help us to continue the process we had begun on the Weekend.

**Husband:** A CORE meeting has 3 parts: It starts with an Opening Prayer.

**Wife:** The second part is "the Presentation and Dialogue." This is like a mini-weekend. One couple gives a presentation. There is a 10 and 10 based on the presentation, and there is an opportunity for open sharing.

In a CORE, we focus on our couple spirituality, and wonderful things happen:

The love between us grows. The CORE becomes a Community of Believers, who love and support each other. Each couple understands that the gift of the Weekend must be shared with others, so we constantly invite every married couple we meet to experience an ME Weekend for themselves.

**Husband:** The end of a CORE meeting is our social time together. We keep the snacks and refreshments simple, so our focus can continue to be on all the couples getting to know and accept each other better.

**Wife:** As members of a CORE Group, what is our role as a couple? All of us here are an important part of this ministry. Our gifts and talents belong to us, but ultimately they are wanted and needed by God and by the ME Community to make the whole ME ministry work! Without your gifts, we are incomplete!

The CORE Groups play a vital role in making the Weekend happen. Without the CORES, who would carry the bags on Friday night? Without CORES, where would we get our Prayer Couples? And where would the couples go to find the community support they need to continue living this new and exciting lifestyle?

**Wife:** Our ME vision, our call, is to love one another as God has loved us. We can best understand this by remembering Mother Teresa's words: "God does not ask us to be successful, God only asks us to be obedient and faithful."

Let's be faithful and obedient to God, to the call of the Weekend, to the desire of our hearts, and to the hope of our dreams! Let's be the best couples we can be!

**Husband:** We have a dialogue question for you:

**What are my feelings about us sharing our gifts with the Marriage Encounter Community?**  
*(writing 10 minutes / dialogue 10 minutes)*

### ***Guidelines for Sharing***

- Open sharing is voluntary.
- Everything shared is confidential, it doesn't leave this room. What happens here, stays here.
- Please don't comment on someone else's sharing.
- When you share, stick to the sharing question, don't get sidetracked.
- Share for yourself, with I or me messages.
- Please don't interrupt or finish someone's sentence.
- Please don't offer solutions. This is a time for listening & understanding – not for fixing someone else's problems.
- Avoid saying I agree or disagree. Please don't judge a sharing.
- Avoid witty remarks or comments in an attempt to ease the tension or change the subject.
- Avoid preaching, using "you should" or "you can't" statements.
- Try to be comfortable with periods of silence. Some personality styles need time to process or
- formulate what they want to share before they speak.
- Be brief if you are the kind of person who tends to talk a lot.
- Make an extra effort to share if you are the silent type – remember how others are enriched or challenged by our sharing.