

What is a Marriage Encounter?

Worldwide Marriage Encounter offers a weekend experience designed to give married couples the opportunity to learn a technique of loving communication that they can use for the rest of their lives. It's a chance to look deeply into their relationship with each other and with God. It's a time to share their feelings, hopes, and dreams with each other.

The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter weekend is on the communication between husbands and wives. The weekend provides a conducive environment for couples to spend time together, away from the distractions and tensions of everyday life, while encouraging them to focus on each other and their relationship.

It's not a retreat, marriage clinic, group sensitivity, or a substitute for counseling. It's a unique approach aimed at revitalizing marriage.

This is a time for you and your spouse to be alone together, to rediscover each other, and together focus on your relationship for an entire weekend. Every marriage deserves that kind of attention!

What you may not know, but is so important:

- **Periods of disillusionment are normal in every marriage.** Keeping them to a minimum is what makes for a successful relationship! Our decision to love will help us break out of disillusionment. Today's "Married Singles" lifestyle tempts us to put our relationship on the back burner.
- **Listening is the key to communication!** When we experience what our spouse is feeling, then we know that we have listened with our heart. This is not to imply that we need to understand and agree with what they are feeling. Do not listen just to hear the words, but to accept the person to whom you are listening. Make what your spouse is saying as important to you as it is to them.
- **Marriage is a living sign of God's love.** We did not receive a Sacrament on our wedding day, we became a Sacrament. What kind of a sign do we want to convey to others? True happiness comes when we live intimately and responsibly in our relationship. By being intimate, we are open to love and to be loved. By being responsible, we are living out the decision to love in our daily lives.



Pope John Paul II

"I place much of my hope for the future in Marriage Encounter."

Who is Marriage Encounter for?

Any married couple who desires a richer, fuller life together. A marriage can never be too good. Marriage Encounter is designed to deepen and enrich the joys a couple share together, whether they have been married for only a short time, or for many years. Priests and other religious are also welcome and encouraged to attend!

Why would priests or other religious attend?

The Marriage Encounter weekend is designed in such a way that both priests and religious can participate fully. The principles of love, commitment, and effective communication translate quite readily to the relationship between a priest and his parish, or any group to whom he ministers, as well as to a religious community. Priests who have made a Marriage Encounter weekend call the experience "life enhancing." Worldwide Marriage Encounter invites you to attend. Please take advantage of our networking process by which we can help you get a replacement for the weekend you choose to attend.

Is there a specific religious orientation to the weekend?

Marriage Encounter does present God as a focus for successful marriage. There are many faith expressions of Marriage Encounter weekends - Catholic, as well as several Protestant denominations. While the weekend may be presented in a given Faith expression, each is open to couples from other orientations. The opportunities of the weekend go beyond the boundaries of any one expression.

What happens at a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend?

A series of presentations are given by a team of married couples and a religious in the particular faith expression (priest or minister). Each presentation allows you and your spouse a rare opportunity to look at yourselves as individuals, then to look at your marriage and relationship to one another, and finally to look at your relationship to God and to the world. The weekend starts at 8:00 on Friday night, and runs until about 5:00 on Sunday afternoon. Meals are provided.

Does the weekend respect the couple's privacy?

YES! The weekend is oriented strictly to each individual couple. You concentrate on your spouse to such an extent that you are hardly aware of the other couples present. The presentations are given to the group as a whole. After each presentation, the husband and wife have time in the privacy of their room for their own personal discussion.

How does a Marriage Encounter enhance a marriage?

The encounter weekend teaches a communication technique that permits each couple to explore important areas of their relationship in a spirit of love and understanding. By continuing the newly acquired technique begun on the weekend, husbands and wives continually grow closer together to live more joyful and purposeful lives.

While not an essential part of the experience, the availability of a community of others who have shared the weekend and who share similar values provides a supportive environment for even further growth.

How much does the weekend cost?

On the weekend, you will be asked to make a donation. This donation will cover the expenses of lodging, food, and materials for the weekend. A **non-refundable registration fee** that varies from \$25-\$100, depending on the location of the weekend, is required to confirm your reservation, food, and lodging. There is limited capacity, so early registration is encouraged. No couple is ever denied the chance to renew their marriage because they are facing financial difficulties. This concern should not influence your decision to attend a Marriage Encounter weekend. Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a tax-exempt organization. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that donations made in connection with the weekend, including the non-refundable deposit mentioned above, are deductible only to the extent that the contribution exceeds the amount of goods and services received. Information as to that amount will be given to couples attending the weekend. Contributions made on or in connection with the Marriage Encounter weekend are made confidentially.