

# Suggested Outline for Pulpit Talks Worldwide Marriage Encounter Trenton / Metuchen, New Jersey

## I. Opening

### A. Introduce and engage

Introduce yourselves by name and home parish then engage the congregation. People will form an impression of you in 18 seconds and decide in that time if they want to continue listening and whether they want to buy into what you are saying about Marriage Encounter. You are conveying you and your coupleness - that's what people will buy into.

What you say in these first 18 to 39 seconds is important to helping the people see that what you have to offer is something they want. Engage them with a sentence or two with why they want to listen. Often sales people focus in on why people *need* what they're selling. It's important to focus in on why they *want* to go on a Weekend. People don't want to hear why but there are sure a lot of wants in them that you can connect with.

So don't start out with statistics, facts, and figures. You can use them later to establish validity of the movement. Engaging their wants can be a sentence or two like, "Like us, maybe you want to have a marriage of lifelong romance, joy, and happiness (because they probably do). And like we once did, maybe you've concluded that such marriages are possible only in fairy tales - well we're here to tell you how to make that a reality in your marriage." Another opener could be "If we told you we've found the means to have a marriage of fun, romance, and joy again, would you be interested?"

### B. Introduce Marriage Encounter

Now that they are listening, introduce Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Here you can demonstrate that this is a successful movement by stating the facts and figures of the countries and couples, priests, and religious that have been encountered. Be careful that this isn't a stale recitation of numbers like from a box score. You can include testimony type statements from the Pope or local Bishop as appropriate. Conclude this section with a bottom line statement that Marriage Encounter works to make good marriages great!

Here you may want to ask if anyone in the parish has made a Marriage Encounter Weekend? The idea is that if people don't talk to you afterwards, they may notice fellow parishioners and ask them about it sometime later. Don't say that though.

## B. Their good marriage can be great

Finally, remind them that they probably have a good marriage but they could do much better than that; they could have a *great* marriage. Why settle for just good?

## C. Invite them

Specifically invite them to make a Weekend. Say it. Let them know when and where the next Weekend is. If you keep to mentioning only the next Weekend (and not the one after that and the one after that), you'll help maintain the sense of urgency to sign up. If they judge that there are a few Weekends later on, they may decide they can hang out and wait.

## D. Let them know you'll be at the back of the church at the end to hand out brochures and answer any questions.

## E. As your last words, thank them and reaffirm your desire for them to attend, as in "Thank you, we really encourage you to go on a Weekend"

## V. Notes -

- A. Keep it brief (3 minutes, or 4 minutes max). If you get the "after Communion" time, you don't want to become an annoyance that's keeping everyone from leaving. If you get sermon time, keep it brief too. Anything after 3-4 minutes could wear people out. Even if you *are* the sermon, keep it brief.
- B. Invite the priest after Mass - especially helper priests who have less schedule issues than the pastor. Give them a priest tri-fold.
- C. Ensure the pastor gets a Marriage Encounter information resource portfolio. Give them only one so be sure to coordinate with other pulpit talkers as to who will get and give the portfolio. Contact the pulpit talk coordinators to ensure someone has a portfolio.
- D. Enjoy it!