

Dialog Workshop

First Session

Purpose of Presentation: To bring to the Image groups the techniques of dialog. To encourage each couple to make a commitment to try 10-10 for a one month period until the next Image meeting.

Preparation for Meeting for Presenting Couples

Method:

1. We used two presenting couples in each group. These couples dedicated themselves to finding out as much as possible about dialog (see following materials) and committed themselves to daily 10-10 for the month before they were to make the presentation. Thus they had first hand experience of what they were talking about and were able to witness what it did for them.
2. After studying all available material on dialog and putting it to the test each couple fits their experiences of and feelings about dialog into the following outline.

The Meeting

Dialog question for Image meeting 10-10. How do I feel about getting to know you better through 10-10 during the next month? *10 min. of personal reflection and 10 min. of conjugal dialog for the Image group.*

Sharing Question (Use this Sharing Question in place of sharing on the 10-10.) "How do I feel about committing myself to 10-10 for the next month? *Couples should discuss this for 3 min. privately before sharing.*

Challenge the Image group to dialog until the next meeting.

Suggested Scripture Reading Genesis 3: 23-24 "This is it!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own bone and flesh! Her name is woman because she was taken out of a man." This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife in such a way that the two become one person.
Group sharing on scripture.

In Milwaukee we experimented with running a dialog workshop through the Image groups. We decided to plan the workshop to cover two successive Image meetings so that couples could have a chance to commit themselves to daily dialog for a month and then share their findings on the joys, struggles, growths and difficulties they experienced.

We were amazed by the very enthusiastic response we had from the groups. Many couples felt that they really hadn't understood how to dialog before. They pointed out that on the weekend they were hit by so much material at once that they hadn't fully absorbed the "how-to-do-it" of dialog.

Outline of Talk

I. Purpose of the Dialog Training Session

Why have a dialog workshop? Explain in your own words. Where does couple strength lie? (In unity) One way to achieve unity is through 10-10. If you don't fully understand 10-10, how can you practice it?

II. What is Dialog?

Definition: Dialog is a deep sharing of ourselves with our spouse through the exchange of our FEELINGS. Explain in your own words and give personal examples. (For the purpose of this workshop we are defining dialog as 10-10).

Explain why it helps to **write** feelings for 10 minutes minimum. (Chance to discover real feelings. Time to concentrate on own feelings rather than preparing self for countering spouses feelings. A chance to encounter myself.)

Why do we share the conjugal dialog for ten minutes maximum? (Beyond that it becomes a discussion).

III. Why Do We Need Dialog? Why Is It Important?

Explain and give personal examples.

IV. Techniques For Successful Dialog (10-10)

Use personal examples. Refer to the handout included. Distribute handout to each couple after the presentation. (You'll have to make copies of the "Techniques for Successful Dialog" before the meeting.)

V. Shared Dialog

As an example of 10-10 share one of your particularly meaningful dialogs. Read your personal reflections and if you can, also share your conjugal dialog. We found this actual example of a couple reaching for the understanding of each other's feelings was very effective and helpful.

Dialog Workshop

Second Session

Purpose of Meeting: A chance for the couples to share the joys, struggles, successes and failures that they have experienced in their daily 10-10 during the past month, to examine some of the pitfalls to dialog and give helpful hints on their remedy, and to remind ourselves that dialog is a tool we use to build our unity and that unity is God's Plan for our marriage.

Method: Instead of a presentation, this month's meeting will be run as a group sharing session directed by the two presenting couples.

- A. Presenting couples summarize things said on 10-10 in previous session. Emphasize that dialog is a tool to help in building couple unity. We can't expect to use it effectively unless we practice it and keep sharpening our dialog techniques.
- B. 10-10 questions to be given to group.

"How did I get to know my spouse better through our 10-10 in the past month and how has it affected our unity?"

After personal reflection and conjugal dialog — group sharing on the 10-10 question follows.

- C. Sharing question.
What are my feelings about dialog? Is it worthwhile? Why? (Give couples 5-10 minutes for couple dialog before group sharing.)
- D. Presenting couple goes over structure of 10-10 form of dialog. (We've found this to be the most effective method — if you agree, tell why.) Discuss other forms of possible dialog if applicable.
- E. Pitfalls to dialog.
From the couple sharing you will notice the problems they have encountered and which are problems for us all. Lack of prime time, no privacy, lack of motivation on part of one spouse, etc. are common difficulties. Share methods that can be used to overcome them.
- F. Summary
Couples will hopefully see the value in some commitment to 10-10. Where do you intend to go from here with your dialog? Presenting couples share their plans and group sharing follows.
- G. Scripture.

PROCESS OF REFLECTION AND DIALOG

1. The tendency to go back into the past.
2. Very deep questions most of the time.
3. Questions worded in such a way that they demand a decision or a solution.
4. Confusion of toleration with acceptance. Toleration means putting up with the other's feelings and leaves me uninvolved. Acceptance means that I try to reach out to feel and value my spouse's feelings as much as I would my own.
5. Getting bored with the fact that we write the same things most of the time. This may be due to the fact that you really are not getting at feelings, just skimming the surface of your thoughts.
6. Refusal of one spouse to dialogue further — or start a fight — as you both begin to break through to deep feelings.

Reflections can become true love letters the more I lovingly accept my spouse and reveal myself to him or her.

Building trust and confidence takes time. We have to remove the masks that we've become accustomed to using. As we remove them, we feel naked and often ashamed.

Growth in dialogue should be a two-way street. The more I reveal myself to my spouse, the more my spouse should be able to reveal him/herself to me. As we both share our feelings, we will begin to have confidence in each other, and then build up this mutual trust. And gradually we will lose the feeling of nakedness and shame. Because, really there is nothing to be ashamed of when you get down to the real me and the real you, is there?



Purpose of Presentation: The President of the United States issues a State of the Union message every year, the Russians have their 5-year plan and this month the Image Groups will examine "The State of Our Unions". We will ask ourselves — where is our marriage now? What are the strong and weak points of our relationship at this moment? What things would we like to change and how can we go about doing it?

Our Marriage today — Where are we now? Where are we going and how? That's the purpose of this talk.

State Of Our Unions

Preparation for Meeting

- A. Dialog on all these questions. You may have to spend several days on some of them but it will really give you a chance to dig into your marriage and see where you are right now. Really get out those feelings on each question. Ferret out definite examples of events in your marriage which show what is good or demonstrate a weak spot. For example, if you think that your trust in each other is a strong point in your marriage, describe events when that trust has been made evident to you.
1. What areas in our marriage are good and how do they make me feel?
 2. What areas in our marriage are poor? How do I feel about them?
 3. What is it that makes us feel most united or coupled? HDIF?
 4. What is it that divides us and causes us to become "married singles?" How does it make me feel?
 5. Do we accept each other as we really are or do we try to remodel each other to our own standards?
 6. How is our sex life? If unsatisfactory, what can we do about it?
 7. What is our relationship to God? Do we wish to deepen the experience of God in our marriage? If so, how?
 8. What direction are we heading?
 9. If No. 8 is not what we really want, how can we change our direction?
 10. How has our marriage changed since our Marriage Encounter? How does this change make me feel?
 11. How have I changed since our Marriage Encounter? How does this change make me feel?

The Meeting

Dialog Question: Have couples choose one question from the list of ten questions above which you will pass out at the end of your talk. You'll have to make copies. Explain that they are to take the sheet home and use it as a source of dialog questions for the rest of the month as they assess the state of their marriage and decide what they are going to do about it.

Sharing Question: Where is our Image Group right now? What do we think an Image Group should or should not be? (Give couples about 5 minutes to get their feelings together before starting a discussion led by you).

Scriptural Reading: 1 Corinthians, 13. (Read through the complete chapter and then repeat verses 12 & 13).

Outline of Talk

- I. Introduction — (3 min.)**
- A. Each spouse shares how he feels about looking at his marriage now.
 - B. What fears do you have? What hopes?
 - C. Do you think it's a good idea to dig into your marriage to see where you are and where you're going? Why or why not?
- II. Body — (12 min.)**
- A. Each spouse shares an example or two of a really positive aspect of his marriage. Describe the aspect fully. How does it make you feel about yourself, your marriage? Give details.
 - B. Each spouse shares an area or two which he finds is a weak spot in his marriage. Why? How do you feel about it? What causes it?
- III. Ending — (5 min.)**
- A. Each spouse shares where he would like to see his marriage heading. What must you do to get it going in the direction you want? How does that make you feel?
 - B. Do both spouses agree on common goals for the marriage? What are they? How do you plan to work toward them? How does it make you feel?
 - C. How do you feel about God's Plan for Marriage — Unity?
- Now write out your Image talk incorporating your examples and feelings. Good luck! Remember, if you are honest about yourself and share your deep feelings your talk will be great.