



4: Small-Group Facilitation

Questions and suggested responses for facilitators

During the small-group discussion time, visit a few of the groups and listen to their responses. This page will provide you with some idea of what to expect and some sense of how you can bring the Church's teaching into the discussions. Of course, participants need not answer every question.

Please be aware that many attendees will have suffered through the trials of *divorce or unwed motherhood*. These adults and children are beloved by God, and they need to know of the Church's loving concern. Be sensitive to their presence and strive to address their particular concerns. See the "Separated and Divorced" section in your parish's Parish Resources for Marriage ring binder and the "God Will Not Leave Us: How Lifelong Married Love Shows God to the World" bulletin insert at www.MassCatholicMarriage.org for more information on the Church's teaching and on diocesan resources.

The first *answers* given below are possible initial reactions you may hear. The answers move with increasing complexity to answers most in harmony with the Church's vision of marriage. The bolded answers are the ones that you should seek to evoke or suggest. If difficult questions arise, do not be afraid to say that *you don't know an answer*. Refer such questioners to a priest and to websites such as www.MassCatholicMarriage.org and www.foryourmarriage.org. You are a facilitator; you are not expected to have all the answers.

What in this video was new? What was attractive to you?

[Particular points from the stories might be raised here.]

"The couples were a little weird; they were always doing churchy things."

"They prayed a lot; I haven't seen that in families before."

"They were realistic about the challenges of marriage, but they had Christ at the center of their lives, and He helped them. They were trying to live genuine Christian lives as married people."

How did the couples work on their marriages?

"They didn't work on their marriages; it just seemed like they were always happy."

"They walked a lot out in nature."

"They ate family meals."

"They played with their kids."

"They talked a lot."

"They thought about their marriages."

"They prayed with friends."

"They spend time together doing all of the above, which deepened their love. By praying with friends and with each other, they kept coming back to the most crucial reality of their marriages: God and His love for them."

Did the couples see their marriages as being only about the two of them, or did they think their marriages involved more?

“They thought mostly about themselves.”

“They thought marriage was about themselves and their children.”

“Marriage for them was about children, grandchildren, and friends.”

“They were open to God’s love in their lives. This made them open to having children and to raising them well. They saw marriage as involving the whole community and positively impacting the whole community. God was at the center of their marriages.”

What is the point of marriage?

“It’s just about love.”

“It’s about giving yourself to another person.”

“It’s about having children and building a home.”

“The point of marriage is to bring about new life, both physically and spiritually. The marriage of a husband and a wife is the best setting for raising children. For those called to marriage, it is the sure way for them to become saints, which is the ultimate point of any sacrament in the Church.”

What ideas from this presentation would you want to teach your children?
How could you teach your children and/or others about the vocation to marriage?

[Answers on the ideas to teach will vary. Any of the above points in bold could be emphasized.]

Possible answers for the “how” question:

“Send them to religious-education classes in the parish.”

“Show them the DVD.”

“Do some of the things the couples did: eat together, pray together, and so forth.”

“Model self-giving love and teach them by both words and deeds what God’s plan for marriage is. Keep God at the center of your household, and pray and receive the sacraments.”