

Marriage Retreat

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MFT 709

Marriage and Family Enrichment

Professor Dominique Sampson

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Marriage Retreat

This retreat is designed within the Christian faith and the practical information that can draw a couple closer to God and the Lord's desires for a divine married life.

Life has a way of getting in the way of romance and a couple's life. This retreat is designed with that in mind. Our focus is in reconnecting couples with that first feeling they had when they first met and to why they got married in the first place. Years of marriage, kids and everyday routine can make us lose the focus of the real priorities in our lives and to the feelings that make life worth living. Our mission is to guide couples through successful communication, teaching tools and techniques that are helpful, understanding what is not helpful and to leave the retreat feeling connected and appreciated by each other.

The retreat is a weekend long with a Saturday 8 am check-in time and Sunday 3pm check-out time.

The retreat will be broken down into

Group Session 30% of the time

Group separation, couples will be separated and have a lecture. 10%

Couple activity 20%

Group fun 20%

Free time 30%

First day of the retreat

Saturday

8 am, Breakfast and introductions

The day will start with a prayer.

Couples will introduce themselves, talk a little bit of why they are attending the retreat and what they wish to gain from the experience.

Speaker will introduce the retreat schedule and talk about the importance of God in a marriage. For now it is a three way relationship where to get close to God one has to give up any egoistic nature and give himself truly to his/her partner.

Love is like happiness, it is ever changing and ever evolving. It is a decision that requires daily commitment and effort. But its fruits are sweet and eternal and its seeds are strong and fertile.

God gives us the strength to overcome our limitations and the way to refine our lives.

9:30am Group session

"Speak only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, not your needs, that it may benefit those who listen" Ephasians 4:29

In this group session we will explore the love languages. Identifying your love language will give couples the tools and the understanding of how to connect with each other in a more effective way.

How many of us feel that no matter what we do it doesn't seem ever enough?

The problem is that it is not "how much" we say or do, it is, "what we say or do" and "who". If we use words of affirmation to a person that has acts of service as a love language it will have the

same frustrating effect as to speak english to someone that speaks chinese or any other language.

1- Words of affirmation, for the person whose love language is words of affirmation, listening to kind and genuine words of affirmation can make the partner feel loved, heard, and connected. This is not about showering your partner with compliments but the sensible "thank you", "you got this", or "I appreciate you" can really make your partner happy and meet their need to hear words of affirmation.

2-Acts of service, small things such as helping with the dishes, doing the laundry, grocery shopping. The little things that are done with spontaneity and can really make the life of your partner better.

3- Receiving gifts, this partner likes to receive tokens of appreciation, small things that show that you thought of your partner even when you were not together. The gifts are mementos that can be revisited and give a meaning to the relationship.

4- Quality time, It's all about being together and feeling connected, not just sitting next to each other looking at your phones but interacting and sharing a meaningful time.

5- Physical touch, Cuddling, hugs and touch is the language and it is not about being sexual but exchanging touch, feeling connected involves being close.

After the couples understand what love language is, they will take a quiz to find out their love languages and will engage in meaningful exercises to put into practice what they have just learned.

The first exercise will be to write down on a piece of paper what they think is their partner's love language. The love language will be reviewed at the same time and the couple will engage in a discussion about what they wrote and what the real language was.

For the duration of the retreat they will have to pay attention to when to use their partner's love language and to note how it made the partner feel.

Pause for lunch followed by couples activities. Building a sand castle together. Couple will have to plan the design and execute it according to the plans. Couples will take turns giving instructions and building the castle. Teamwork and communication skills are going to be the key element in this activity.

Afternoon lecture, Effective communication skills

We will have a lecture on what styles of communication are damaging to a marriage and what can be done to prevent that.

"Two people who do nothing but fight in their marriage and make each other miserable are not engaging in a helpful spiritual exercise". (Thomas, 2015, 125)

Engage in real communication, take turns talking and listening, use I statements, take breaks and use time out technique to stop an argument before it escalates.

Use the time out to meditate, listen to music, and read the scriptures.

We will have a couple's exercise, talking about an issue, using I statements, listening through, reporting how they felt.

4pm

After the communication exercise, couples will have a group fun activity, water sports, karaoke, beach volleyball.

6-7pm

Couples free time

7pm Dinner

Dining Room will be set with small tables, one per couple, with candle light, and a very romantic atmosphere.

Dinner will start with a prayer and couples will be encouraged to pray together and meditate about everything they have learned.

Dinner will be followed by a band playing romantic songs and couples will be encouraged to dance together.

Sunday 8am breakfast

9am Group will break from their spouses and engage in activities that will allow them to be in their partner's shoes.

Men will have to do chores, such as washing dishes, folding laundry and cooking a meal for their wives.

Women will have to build a box, research on the computer, and sell items over the phone.

12:00 pm Group will reunite, experiences will be shared and meals cooked by husbands will be served.

2pm Group gathers to talk about the experience they had in the retreat and to give feedback.

What worked, what needs to be implemented and if they feel that it added to their relationships and life.

Final prayers and good byes.

Putting this retreat together made me feel so happy. It made me appreciate all the hard work my husband and I put into our relationship and our spiritual relationship as well. I feel rejoiced and ready to share with other couples what this information can do for their relationship. I want to go to a couple's retreat!

References

Thomas, G. (2015). *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?* Zondervan.

Scriptures, Bible(The Holy Bible, English Standard Version). Copyright 2001, Publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.