

Marriage Ministries – The Best Way to Operationalize the Gospel!

Dennis Stoica DJStoica@gmail.com

2019 NACFLM Conference – Denver, Colorado

Summary: Jesus commanded that we love one another. Marriage Ministries operationalize that Gospel message by teaching couples “how to” love one other. In addition, Marriage Ministries create numerous opportunities for Catholic Dioceses and Parishes – opportunities for evangelization, discipleship, and the practical application of the Gospel. In this presentation Dennis will review those opportunities, share his perspective on promising practices and introduce a new funding source for innovative diocesan marriage initiatives. This keynote will be a “call to action”, highlighting tools and resources available to act upon that call.

Key Scripture Passages

John 13:34-35 ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Matthew 22:36-39 ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the great and ^[a] foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’”

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 Love is patient, love is kind, etc.

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keep the law, happy is he”.

James 2:15-16 “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and you say to them, “Goodbye and good luck! Keep warm and well fed”, but do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that?”

Matthew 28:16-20 – The Great Commission

Why Marriage Matters in America

Social Health

Better Health – Physical & Mental
Less Injury, Illness, Disability
Longer Life
Children Physically Healthier
Children Emotionally Healthier
Lower Infant Mortality
Lower Child Abuse
Lower STD Rates

Children's Achievement

Greater Overall Success in School
Better Reading Abilities
More Likely to Attend College
More Likely to Get High Status Job
Less Likely to Divorce When Married
More Likely to Marry

Overall Social Impact

Better Parent/Child Relationship
Lower Crime Rates
Lower Domestic Violence
Lower Teen Pregnancy
Lower Juvenile Delinquency
More Educated Citizens
Higher Home Ownership
Higher Property Values
Higher Income and Savings

Marital Success

VS

Marital Failure

Social Health

Higher Teen Alcohol/Drug Rates
More Domestic Violence
More Sexual Assault
Teens More Sexually Active
Teens More Likely to Smoke
Teens More Likely to Use Drugs
Greater Overall Violence
High Stepparent/Other Sexual Abuse
Greater Depression
Higher Rates of Suicide

Children's Achievement

More Likely to Repeat a Grade
More Likely to Be Expelled
More Likely Developmental Problems
More and Worse Social Problems
Lower Reading, Spelling & Math Scores
Low Self-Confidence & Self-Esteem
Difficulty with Peer Pressure Relationships
More Likely to Drop Out of School

Overall Social Impact

Increased Out of Wedlock Births
Higher Delinquency & Crimes
Higher Risk of Being Crime Victim
More Violent Crimes
More Teens Carrying Weapons
More Crimes Leading to Jail
Increased Need for Social Services
Higher Risk of Poverty



healthy
relationships
california

www.RelationshipsCA.org

Source: Administration for Children and Families, Health and Human Services,
Washington, D.C. www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/benefits
Copyright © 2007, 2010 Healthy Relationships California

To be most effective, marriage ministries should be balanced....



Vision

*God's plan and
teachings for
marriage*

Examples:

- "Love one another....."
- Unconditional Love
- Marriage as a Sacrament
- Indissolubility of Marriage
- Covenant versus Contract
- Mutual Submission
- Forgiveness
- Leaving and Cleaving

Examples of Types of Skills Taught in Adult Marriage Education Programs

MK	MDK	A	B	C	#	How To.....
					1	Speak effectively - in a way that will increase the chances of being listened to
					2	Listen effectively – in a way that shows your spouse that you truly understand them
					3	Show your spouse how, specifically, you appreciate them
					4	Apologize – and ask for forgiveness
					5	Forgive each other
					6	Jointly solve problems – in a way that the needs and desires of both parties are met and satisfied
					7	Resolve conflicts
					8	Understand each other’s core emotional needs
					9	Meet each other’s core emotional needs
					10	Show love in the ways that matter most to our spouse
					11	Show respect to and for our spouse
					12	Pray together as a couple
					13	Cherish our spouse
					14	Change our own habits
					15	Support our spouse in their desire to change (without nagging)
					16	Follow through on decisions which were made
					17	How to make a request (as opposed to a demand)
					18	Change a criticism into a “complaint with a request for change”
					19	Parent effectively
					20	Co-parent effectively (after divorce/separation)
					21	Understand how I am feeling
					22	Communicate to my spouse how I am feeling
					23	Understand how my spouse is feeling
					24	Understand what my spouse is thinking, is feeling, is concerned about, and desires
					25	Develop a budget – and operate with a budget
					26	Do financial planning – for the future
					27	Develop and show an interest - in the people and things that our spouse is interested in
					28	Regulate our own emotions
					29	Express anger and/or frustration and/or disappointment – in a healthy way – without damaging the relationship
					30	Bond deeply with our spouse
					TOTALS	

A MODEL FOR TEACHING SKILLS (IN A GROUP SETTING)

1. Present the theory behind the skill
2. Provide step by step instructions
3. Demonstrate/model the skill
4. Process the demo (answer questions, etc)
5. Participants practice the skill – instructor observes and gives feedback (coaching)
6. Process the practice (additional teaching opportunity)

PLAN - A SIMPLE, 4-STEP LISTENING SKILL

1. **PAY** close attention to your partner
2. **LISTEN** intently to what your partner says
3. **ACKNOWLEDGE** your partner's experience by providing them with head nods and frequent, empathic, content-free sounds
 - Examples: Head nods, "Uh-huh", "Hmmm", "Wow!", "Geez!"
4. **NAME** their feeling(s), starting with something like...
 - "How _____"
 - "Sounds _____"
 - "You seem (or sound) _____"
 - "You feel (or felt) _____"
 - "I can see how _____ you are"

Pope Francis on communication....

Take time, quality time. This means being ready to listen patiently and attentively to everything the other person wants to say. It requires the self-discipline of not speaking until the time is right. Instead of offering an opinion or advice, we need to be sure that we have heard everything the other person has to say. This means cultivating an interior silence that makes it possible to listen to the other person without mental or emotional distractions. Do not be rushed, put aside all of your own needs and worries, and make space. Often the other spouse does not need a solution to his or her problems, but simply to be heard, to feel that someone has acknowledge their pain, their disappointment, their fear, their anger, their hopes and their dreams. How often we hear complaints like: "He does not listen to me." "Even when you seem to, you are really doing something else." "I talk to her and I feel like she can't wait for me to finish." "When I speak to her, she tries to change the subject, or she gives me curt responses to end the conversation".

Amoris Laetitia #137

Support

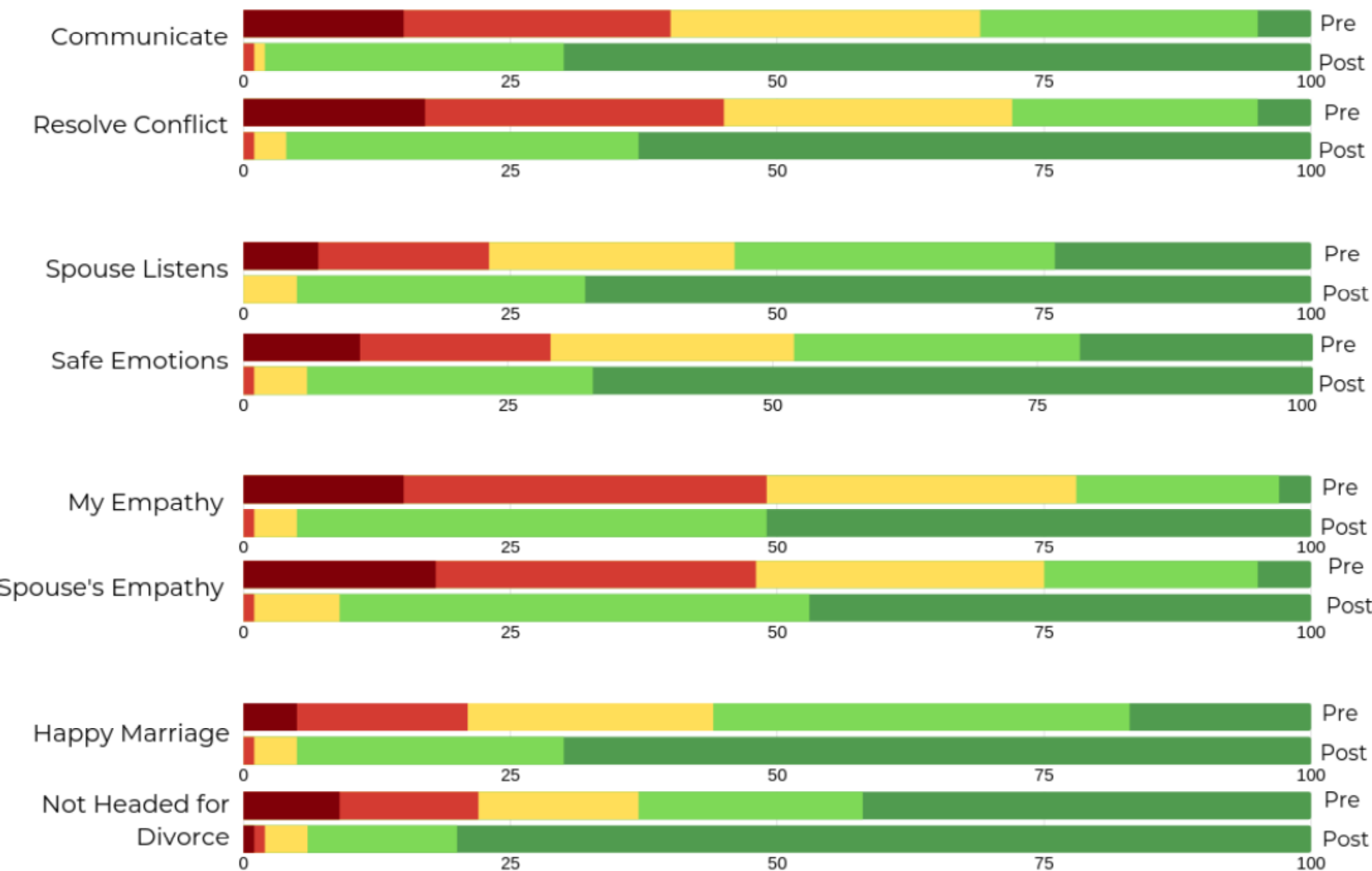
Examples:

- Mentor/Sponsor Couples
- Skills Coaches: In-Class, Follow-up, Phone
- Initial Contact for Crisis Couples
- Knowledge of Other Resources Available
- After-Care
- Small Groups
- Accompaniment

What Score Would You Give Your Parish/Diocese in Each Category?

	Vision	Skills	Support	Overall
Youth/Young Adults				
- Middle School				
- High School				
- College / Singles				
Marriage Preparation/Formation				
- Pre-Marriage Preparation				
- Newly Married Couples				
- Convalidation				
Established Marriages				
- Marriage Enrichment				
- Troubled Marriages				
Grief Recovery				
- Divorce Recovery				
- Widows				
Overall				

Results of Marriage Education in the Air Force



Results from Adventures in Marriage Program conducted by Live the Life 2017-2019 n=1578



February 14, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we celebrate World Marriage Day today, our diocese begins a unique journey to promote, support, strengthen and protect marriage as the foundation of every Christian family. Our diocesan vision statement recognizes that the "Family is the basic unit of the Church where faith is transmitted. It realizes that family relationships shape the direction of one's life more than all other experiences." Also, the National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage from the U.S. Catholic Bishops calls our attention to the meaning and value of married life for the Church and for society.

In response, we, the Diocese of San Bernardino see the need for a more specialized attention to the vocation of marriage. Today, we are officially launching a five year Marriage initiative through the diocesan Office of Catechetical Ministry. Our goal is to become a "Marriage-Building Church" by promoting a comprehensive approach to ongoing education for the vocation to the Sacrament of Marriage at all stages of life. By doing this, we hope to create a culture in which Christian marriage education is seen as an integral part of people's lives in becoming the domestic church.

We understand the need to include our youth, young adults, singles and couples in this discernment process. In the future months you will be invited to participate in communication skills workshops, to study the Pastoral Letter on Marriage, or to take the Marriage Specialization Course. I urge you to respond with generosity by attending any or all of these educational opportunities to discover the divine plan for marriage, to create stable and healthy marriages to impact family, neighborhood and society so that people's lives are filled with hope.

My blessings and prayers are with you all.

Yours in Christ,

Gerald R. Barnes

Most Reverent Gerald R. Barnes
Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino

On February 14, 2010, World Marriage Day, the Diocese of San Bernardino launched the Marriage Initiative throughout the diocese. Every parish read this letter from Bishop Barnes at all Masses. It announced a five year marriage plan for the initiative, and encouraged all to participate in some way.

MARRIAGE INITIATIVE

This is the type of Bishop Support the CMI Fund is looking for in its Level 1 Projects