

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING YOUR WORLD MARRIAGE DAY THE BEST EVER

The following are only a few of the ideas that have been enacted over the years and should be considered as suggestions, not expectations. We hope these ideas act as a stimulus for you and your community to come up with even greater ways to celebrate World Marriage Day. Remember, celebrating WMD is one of the rare opportunities we get to share with the world the wonderful gifts that God has brought into our lives. It is another way to spread the Gospel.

Spreading the word. . . .

1. Create and distribute a flyer with information about World Marriage Day through the Catholic schools in your diocese and other local church organizations. Include information about the events you have planned such as a special Mass celebration, a dance for married couples, a family picnic celebrating marriage, etc.
2. Stuff your parish bulletins with a flyer on WMD that includes a collection of parish members' statements regarding why they personally believe in marriage. Don't forget to include comments from single members, widowed members, priests and nuns.
3. Produce and circulate a home activities brochure for parish families giving them suggested activities they can engage in on WMD and throughout the year.
4. Notify all of your local newspapers, radio stations and television stations about WMD and encourage them to join in the celebration.

Spreading the joy. . . .

5. Assemble a video of married couples and families from your parish and show the scenes in front of the church as people arrive for Mass, as a part of the homily/sermon, a post communion meditation, or at a reception after the services.
6. Display wedding pictures of parish members in a highly visible area, like the church foyer. Include pictures of your priests' ordinations as well. Identify each person in the photo and include dates.
7. Share different marriage customs with the parish by having couples from different ethnic backgrounds explain customs unique to their heritage.
8. Organize "couple" events such as bake sales, garage/yard sales, and car washes to raise money for charities - all in celebration of WMD.

Celebrating the love....

9. Plan and promote a diocesan wide (or city wide) essay writing contest about marriage. Recognize the winners at a special event with a unique prize. It's amazing how easy it is to compile an impressive list of gift prizes that local commercial businesses are willing to donate. The bishop or local political leaders could be asked to present the awards. Media coverage is a possibility. Utilize your church bulletins, neighborhood and local newspapers to spread the word. Don't forget to make provisions for elementary, junior high and high school contestants. In the lower age groups you may want to make it a poster contest. Remember, when the children are involved, so are their parents.
10. Promote a student "art show" of hand drawn pictures of the entrants' parents.

Display the works of art in your church foyer, hall or at a reception. Be sure to recognize the artists in some way.

11. Organize a couple and/or family bowling, skating party, swimming party, picnic, or some other event that will allow your community (encountered and non-encountered) to come together. These events could proceed or follow other WMD celebrations such as a special Mass.
12. Reserve pews in front of your church for couples married 25, 30, 35 or 40 years or more and give them a certificate, flowers, or some other remembrance. Invite them to receive communion as a couple. They may be part of the readings, processional or recessional.
13. Request that your priest recognize married couples present at Mass by having all married couples stand, then start seating them in increments of five years, until the couple married longest is left standing. After a round of applause, present that couple with a certificate, flowers, or a gift.
14. Reverse the above process to recognize the newest married couple in attendance.
15. Hold a reception for all parish members after services. Pictures of parish members' wedding ceremonies can decorate the room. Serve wedding cake and punch. Have the couple that has been married the longest cut the cake.
16. Organize a special afternoon Mass for your diocese to be followed by a "Sweetheart Dance". Serve wedding cake and display wedding pictures.
17. Encourage your pastor to incorporate the renewal of wedding vows into the liturgy on WMD for all married couples in attendance.
18. Encourage your Bishop to write a letter promoting marriage and family for World Marriage Day. Reproduce the letter in all parish bulletins or encourage that it be read during the liturgy on WMD.
19. Design a presentation (try PowerPoint) about the sacrament of marriage for your parish's CCE, RCIA, bible study, and other church sponsored educational programs. Present the topic sometime in the weeks leading up to WMD.
20. Organize a parish prayer vigil for the continued growth of marriage and family relationships, in your parish, your community, nationally and worldwide.
21. Encourage your pastor to relate how his parent's marriage may have played a part in his decision to enter the priesthood.
22. Encourage your priest to use the enclosed Sample Prayer Services & Liturgies for Masses on WMD, or to develop a special liturgy himself devoted to marriage.
23. Check out & download the WMD Sample Prayer Services & Liturgies World Marriage Day Web Site - wmd.wwme.org and share it with your local Church Parishes and Liturgy planning committee.