

## ***Be More: A Marriage Formation Retreat by Witness to Love Course Outline***

***Be More: A Marriage Formation Retreat by Witness to Love*** was developed to provide couples a pathway to grow in community, identity and understanding their mission. To each and every couple preparing to receive and live out the Sacrament of Matrimony in today's world - you were born for a time such as this and the grace of the sacrament is real and effective in our lives! Let us walk with you, your mentors, and your church community as you prepare to *be more* in Christ!

Meet the retreat presenters here: <https://witnesslove.org/be-more/>

*Be More* retreat format is divided into two sections: Theology and Life Skills Lessons. The Theology lessons will dive deep into the Sacrament of Marriage, the Grace of the sacrament and Church teaching in regards to marriage. The Life Skills lessons offer guidance and experience in various aspects of marriage and family life.

We encourage you to invite other couples to join you for your retreat experience- mentor couple, other engaged couples, family members, etc. Please complete the retreat at your own pace and do not rush through the lessons. *Be More* is an opportunity to address topics and have intimate conversations with your beloved that will bear fruit for years to come.

### **Theology Lesson 1-6:**

- **Theology Lesson 1: Belong- God's Image and Likeness and Being in Relationship**  
*Ryan and Mary Rose Verret unpack what marriage is and encourage you to discover the importance of growing in your marriage with other couples as one of the most important things you can do. When we are connected to each other, we grow as persons, as a couple and in community with other couples. Take the time to discover the art of relationship and cultivate a true sense of belonging. Remember that God is calling you, not to do more, but to be more.*
  - Ryan and Mary Rose Verret- Founders of [Witness to Love Marriage Renewal Ministry](#)
  - 18 minutes
- **Theology Lesson 2: Believe- The Grace of the Sacrament**  
*In this session, Fr. Ben Tran uncovers the beauty of the Grace of the Sacrament of Marriage. The Sacrament of Marriage is a supernatural calling by God for couples to strive to live holy, permanent, fruitful and life long marriages. The role of husband and wife in a marriage is to help one another on this pilgrimage through life to get to heaven.*

- Father Ben Tran- Diocese of Orange, CA
- 35 minutes
- **Theology Lesson 3: Become- The Church's Moral Teaching** *Our Christian faith is meant to change us. We are called to become holier and happier. To guide us in this growth process, the Church proposes specific teachings about how we are to live. Alex and Sarah Schimpf will explore the challenges of the Church's moral teachings, as well as how living them out is aimed at happiness.*
  - Alex and Sarah Schimpf- Alex is the Director of Marriage and Family Life Ministry for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, OK.
  - 29 minutes
- **Theology Lesson 4: Beatitude- Living as a Catholic Family** *At the end of your wedding ceremony, a blessing will be prayed over you that serves as a roadmap for the rest of your life together as a family. Jeff and Daniela will explain how the love you share as spouses, rooted in Christ, will flow into your family life, your friendships, and the world.*
  - Jeff and Daniela Mazzone- New York City, NY- Daniela is the Spanish Support Team Leader for *Witness to Love Marriage Renewal Ministry*
  - 32 minutes
- **Theology Lesson 5: Be Light- What is Domestic Church and How to Live it?** *Richard Budd on Domestic Church: What you are about to embark upon, this new kind of relationship, is considered a vocation and a sacrament. A vocation, because it is something you are called to, something God made you for; and a sacrament because this relationship will become a sign of something deeper than even yourselves. You were born for a time such as this and the grace of the sacrament is real! Go change the world.*
  - Richard Budd- Director of Marriage and Family Life Ministry for the Diocese of Lansing, MI
  - 30 minutes
- **Theology Lesson 6: Be Healed- Perfect Love Drives out Fear: Marriage Advice for Adult Children of Divorce or Separation** *Life-Giving Wounds is a Catholic ministry led by adult children of divorce or separation with the mission of helping adult children of divorce or separation find deep spiritual healing. Dan and Bethany Meola will share how trusting in God's abundant love and mercy, helps people from broken families transform through Christ their life-draining wounds into life-giving resources of faith, hope, love, and joy.*
  - Dr. Daniel and Bethany Meola- Founded [Life-Giving Wounds](#), Bowie, MD
  - 28 minutes

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## Life Skills Lessons 1-8:

- **Life Skills Lesson 1: Self Knowledge** *Tony and Liz Cotrupi will cover the topic of Self Knowledge, including: Giving of yourself to someone in marriage; Need to become more self aware to be able to live out your vows; Appreciate similarities and differences to grow in intimacy; We are a combination of nature, nurture, and true self.*
  - Tony and Liz Cotrupi- Liz is the Director of Family Life for the Archdiocese of Boston, MA
  - 30 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 2: Communication in Marriage** *How a husband and wife communicate with each other (verbally & non-verbally) is critical in marriage. Positive communication can benefit a couple in many ways including strengthening their relationship, aiding in decision making, and fostering intimacy. During this talk, Craig & Stephanie Rapp share an overview of what they have learned about communication in their marriage and offer their top five tips for couples to communicate effectively.*
  - Craig and Stephanie Rapp- Stephanie serves as the Director of Marriage & Family Life for the Diocese of Columbus, OH
  - 24 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 3: Grace and Conflict** *Dr. Bob Schuchts is the founder of the John Paul II Healing Center, where he and his team provide healing and equipping conferences for married couples, clergy, religious and lay leaders. Bob has been serving married couples for the past 40 years, as a marital therapist and conference speaker.*
  - Bob Schuchts (Ph. D.) is the founder of the [John Paul II Healing Center](#)
  - 42 minutes
  - This video is an interview with Dr. Schuchts, Ryan and Mary Rose Verret and is audio only.
- **Life Skills Lesson 4: Finances** *Finances are a normal and natural challenge in a marriage. Deacon Eric and Linda Paige will explore how we use the gifts God has given us through the lens of the four Cardinal Virtues, habits that help us make good decisions- Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.*
  - Deacon Eric and Linda Paige- Deacon Eric directs the Marriage, Family Life and Formation Department for the Archdiocese of Seattle, WA
  - 26 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 5: Marriage and Sexuality: What is the Church Doing in the Bedroom?** *This talk will explore the teachings of John Paul II and Theology of the Body -- focusing on the human person and the importance of our bodies in communicating. Dr. Kerry and Peter Pound will delve into the language of sexual intercourse, the “wedding vows made flesh”. After establishing this groundwork, they will examine*

*Humanae Vitae and its impact. Finally, they will discuss the biology of fertility awareness techniques as well as their effectiveness and benefits.*

- Dr. Kerry and Peter Pound- Boston, MA- Dr. Kerry Pound, MD is a Certified Medical Consultant for Creighton Fertility
- 28 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 6: Parenting Expectations** *Deacon Eric and Linda Paige reflect on the 5 Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary as a way to dive into the topic of parenting and see what God has planned for us in the life of a parent. We have an opportunity to grow in our love for God as we learn to love one another and our children.*
  - Deacon Eric and Linda Paige- Deacon Eric directs the Marriage, Family Life and Formation Department for the Archdiocese of Seattle, WA
  - 29 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 7: The Temperaments** *Together, the Bennett's have co-authored five books: *The Temperament God Gave You, The Temperament God Gave Your Spouse, The Temperament God Gave Your Kids, The Emotions God Gave You, and Tuned In: The Power of Pressing Pause and Listening.* Laraine also wrote *A Year of Grace: 365 Reflections for Caregivers.**
  - Art and Laraine Bennett- Art Bennett is the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Arlington, VA and Laraine Bennett is the Communications Manager for the National Council of Catholic Women
  - 17 minutes
- **Life Skills Lesson 8: Interfaith and Ecumenical Marriages** *John and Lauren Prust are active in marriage preparation and young family ministries at their home parish in California. They are passionate about helping engaged and newly married couples navigate the challenges and blessings of an ecumenical or interfaith marriage.*
  - John and Lauren Prust- John directs the Diocesan Family Life Office in San Diego, CA
  - 13 minutes
- **Final Survey-** Please complete the final survey and share your feedback with us! Be sure to input your parish or diocese marriage prep coordinator email address when prompted.

*Thank you for joining us for *Be More: A Marriage Formation Retreat* by Witness to Love. Please visit Witness to Love's [Resource Page](#) for more information and be sure to check out the FREE Courses/Series in the Open Registration tab of the app menu!*

*Want to help us support couples and parishes around the world? Donate to Witness to Love with Venmo [here](#) or on our website [here](#) today!*