



## Mission Grant Report Form

Iowa District West

Grant recipients are asked to complete and submit the report form within one month of the completion of the effort or, if a continuing ministry, by January 31 of the following year in which the grant is received. Please submit any pictures, as well, that would help to share the story with other congregations to encourage them in their ministry.

1. Please provide a brief overview of the effort.

This is a continuing ongoing ministry. Calvary and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches have worked together over the last five years to create a marriage retreat and Date Night that would benefit the marriages of Siouxland with the help of Jesus Christ. We have sought out quality speakers, entertainment, food, and venue to prove that the church is serious about tackling the struggling institution of marriage.

The other goal of Sioux City Date Night is to provide quality resources for encouraging marriage "Date Nights" for Siouxland couples. There are devotions, help-lines, and information about marriage on the web: [www.sioxcitydatenight.com](http://www.sioxcitydatenight.com)

2. What goals were established for this effort; that is, what did you hope to accomplish?

Our goals for this year's marriage retreat were to make it even more practical, to send couples home with concrete resources to put to work in their marriages right away. Dr. Thad Warren achieved this with the use of a shortened version of Meyers Briggs Personality Inventory. I believe the retreat was very successfully and achieved this first goal. Dr. Warren helped couples see how each person is made unique by God and how their differences like two rocks can file each other down and make one another smooth. In other words, differences in personality do not need to destroy a marriage. Certainly, marital stresses can be caused by sin, but other issues are caused simply by two different people running up against each other! The retreat's content was an overwhelming success. Participants really enjoyed the activities, meal, entertainment, and Thrivent's Hospitality Room, etc.

Our second goal was simply to bring more people to the retreat so that they could take advantage of the tremendous resources available for marriage. This goal was not achieved in the way we expected. Our past retreats had drawn 60 plus married couples. This year's retreat drew 31 couples. Ironically, Calvary as a host congregation usually only sent three couples to the retreat. This year we had 12 couples. Likewise St. Paul's had six (a good turnout) at the retreat. We had less couples from other churches; it is hard to know why. The following are speculations: 1. Some people think a marriage retreat is only for problem marriages. 2. November, farmers are out combining, everyone else is out enjoying the good weather. 3. We did not advertise as well as we had hoped. Admittedly we did our normal amount of advertising, but we did not use the funds for larger scale advertisement (i.e. TV commercials, Radio Spots, News Paper Ads). Again, we needed to have a person dedicated to these tasks and we did not.

I feel the main contributing factor of not doing more advertising was that we did not have enough lay people on board to do some of the extra work.

If we do this again, we will wait about two years when we can hopefully convince more of the regular faithful enthusiastic marriage retreat attenders to come and likewise invite others and help with the advertising. As written earlier, we would not change the program – people liked the event, the difficulty is getting people to attend the event.

3. Did you achieve your goals? If not, what do you think were some of the contributing factors?  
See #2
4. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to undertake this effort again?  
See #6
5. What lessons were learned through this effort?  
See #6
6. What suggestions would you give to a congregation considering a similar effort?
  - a. Do the marriage retreat well. Use a good clean hotel. Invite someone like Dr. Thad Warren who is an expert in marriage and has quality material that will make a difference. Invite a good musician(s). Music has a way of breaking down barriers and likewise makes people more able to relax and soak in the purpose of the retreat!
  - b. Pray for the event and all those preparing to attend.
  - c. Advertise well.
  - d. Price point. \$100 is the preferred price. Charging \$125 cut down on attendance even though it is the actual cost per couple. Ask Thrivent, endowments, or donors to pay \$25 of the cost making it \$100. Calvary, for example, had good response to the discounted rate!
  - e. Do not completely pay people's way. The result is that some people do not show up! If they have no vested financial interest in coming, they often will go somewhere else. Free often is not a gift!
  - f. Have committed lay people talk up the retreat and invite others. Our gimmick of offering \$25 off if a couple invited a second couple did bring two extra couples! We needed to do more of couple inviting couples!
7. Contact person  
Name: Rev. James Travis  
E-mail: rev.travis@hotmail.com Phone: (712-239-1575)  
Congregation: Calvary & St. Paul, Sioux City