

— A GUIDE TO —

Using Lanterns



WinShape
Marriage





Steps to Maximize Floating Lanterns with Couples

Step 1: Make sure to pack a lighter and your lanterns (we recommend a long BIC lighter!)

Step 2: Plan for access to some body of water on your adventure. Be creative! (i.e. If it's an at-home adventure gather by a pool, local lake, etc.)

Step 3: Choose a relevant framework below to lead from with your group.

Step 4: Take a picture of your group and tag @winshapemarriage so our team can celebrate with you!

This booklet serves as both a guide and a framework.

Utilizing one of the frameworks, it will allow you to begin working with couples and utilizing lanterns right away.

As a general experiential guide, it will serve you as you create your own experiences to serve marriages in the future. More ideas are included in the guide at the end about how to use this same concept without lanterns.

Together, the frameworks and the guide will help encourage your creativity as you seek to create impactful experiences for couples.

Framework 1: Discipleship

Background

- Remember a component from Host Couple Training: **to pay attention to what's happening in you, not just what's happening to you.**
- Listening to what God is doing in us is how we learn to increasingly love Him with all our hearts, mind, and souls (Luke 10:27). As we do, we are shaped into who God intended us to become.

Set Up

- This time together was full of life. We laughed, broke bread, shared stories, shared hearts. As you reflect on all we've done, let's take a moment to reflect on what He's done in us and what He might be asking of us.
- These are floating lanterns. The irony and beauty of floating is that it requires surrender. You can't float without letting go. The more you try and float, the more you sink.

Reflect

- As you think about this time we've shared together, and you think about your marriage, what is one thing you sense you're supposed to let go of? What are you supposed to surrender? Maybe it's a need to have the last word in an argument, or a desire to be right versus being in relationship. Whatever it is, make it real and own it as your invitation.

Write

- When you are ready, go ahead and write that down on one side of the lantern. Each of you will write something.

Reflect

- When you surrender and let go of something, you create space for something to take its place - something that seeks to fill it.
- What is one thing you sense God asking you to seek in your marriage? It could be a new habit of service unto your spouse. It could be a new habit of connection to keep your marriage united. Whatever it is, make it personal and make it actionable. Ask the Lord, He will direct your path and lead you in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Write

- On the other side of the lantern, write down one step you will take in the coming weeks that serves your marriage. Each of you will write something.

Pray

- As you watch your lanterns floating in the water and beaming with light, turn towards your spouse and as a group, speak this prayer together in faith.

As ONE: May we sleep this night side by side in unity of heart and mind and purpose. May we wake in the morning in solidarity and delight, thankful for the sharing of this life, for the companion who journeys beside me, for hands to hold and arms to embrace, and lips to kiss at the close of day.

Husband: May we love one another more at the close of this day than we did at its dawning.

Wife: May we treasure one another more at the close of this week than we did at its beginning.

Husband: May we hold one another as more precious, more respected, and more dear at the shuttering of this month, than we did at its opening.

Wife: May we delight in our companionship and take heart in the sharing of our burdens more at the conclusion of this year, than we did as it began.

Husband: In the beauty of our bond, may we reflect your glory more fully in the hour we are parted by death than we did in the hour of our wedding.

As ONE: Bless our marriage, oh Lord. Kindle our desire. Teach us to be friends and lovers and companions. May this our marriage exist not only for our benefit, but may the bond between us grow to be a shelter and a blessing for others as well. We ask these things in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Framework 2: Multiplication

Background

- Remember a component from Host Couple Training: **to make disciples that make disciples.**
- We are all called to be fishers of men. And we all have a voice and a story to serve the Kingdom of God by loving on marriages. (Luke 5:1-11)

Set Up

- The gospel of Jesus is so tactile and practical. It involves all the things we used today. We used our hands, hearts, mind, mouths, and feet, sharing in the journey of marriage together and being present to each other.
- **Presence is hospitality, and that's such good news.** There's so many couples out there desperate to experience good news.
- These lanterns represent the people of God. Together we float on the water, carrying other marriages in our hearts.

Reflect

- I want you to think about the marriages in your sphere of influence and ask God: "Lord, is there a couple you are inviting us to be good news to this next year? What marriage is in our sphere of influence that we could serve?"

Write

- When you are ready, write down their names on the lantern and one simple step you will take to serve them in the coming weeks. (i.e. invite them on a double date, a book study, or a WinShape Marriage Retreat)

Pray

- As you watch your lanterns floating in the water and holding another marriage in your heart, speak this prayer together as a blessing.

As ONE: Lord, as we hold _____ for a moment in our hearts, we pray that you'd hold them eternally in yours, remaining ever at work in their lives and union, even now directing their paths toward your good ends. Amen.



Framework 3: Celebration

Background

- “We were filled with laughter and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, ‘What amazing things the Lord has done for them.’” Psalm 126:2

Set Up

- Laughter, celebration, and joy are in our DNA. God wired us to enjoy one another and His creation. In fact, as the Psalm indicates - our celebration actually becomes a witness to others of how great God is. Let’s take a moment to celebrate the beauty and delight of this experience together.

Reflect

- Our time has been full of surprise and delight. Maybe you had an experience with God you weren’t expecting. Perhaps you encountered something in nature that struck you, or you could’ve found yourself in a meaningful conversation that touched you. Maybe it was something as simple as relishing the food you ate or how you played with your spouse. However small or large the delights and surprises were, they were there. We want to pause, mark it, and celebrate together.
- Poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning puts it well, “Earth’s crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only they who see take off their shoes; the rest sit round and pluck blackberries.”

Write

- On one side of the lantern, name something you experienced that you want to celebrate and not forget. **Think about how it made you feel and what it did for you.**
- On the other side of the lantern, name one key individual takeaway and one simple action step. Your action step will allow you to cultivate your key takeaway in the future. Each of you will write something.

Pray

- As you watch your lanterns floating in the water and holding your marriage in your heart, turn, face each other and speak the prayer on the next page as a blessing.



Leader: To gather joyfully is indeed a serious affair, for feasting and all enjoyments gratefully taken are, at their heart, acts of beauty and faith.

Couples: In celebrating this time, we declare that evil and death, suffering and loss, sorrow and tears, will not have the final word.

Leader: But the joy of fellowship, and the welcome and comfort of friends new and old, and the celebration of these blessings of food and drink and conversation and laughter are the true evidences of things eternal, and are the first fruits of that great glad joy that is to come and that will be unending.

ALL: So let our gathering this day be joined to those sure victories secured by Christ, Let it be to us now a delight, and a glad foretaste of His eternal kingdom. Bless us O Lord, in this celebration!

General Experiential Guide

Purpose

- Use the resources around you and get creative beyond lanterns.

Result

- To commemorate God's work in you through experiential practice.

Technique

Step 1: Create a framework (or choose from our existing ones: discipleship, multiplication, celebration).

Step 2: Connect Scripture to your framework.

Step 3: Use what's around you.

Examples

- If you're in the mountains, forest, or valley, have the group go on a mini-hunt for something that symbolizes what their experience has meant to them. Have them bring it back to the group to process what they found and what it means through the "what" reflection process.
- If you are near a body of water you can use throwing rocks and its ripple effect as an analogy. Whose life "ripple" has affected your own marriage in a really positive way? Consequently, who is God inviting you to do the same among?
- For those who have more preparation time, consider using floating candles in a large container. Provide a small canvas for your group to write on to take home as a reminder of their experience and an inspiration to keep moving toward their God given action steps. Don't be afraid to be creative!

Step 4: The "What" Reflection Process

What?

- What happened in you?
- What's a key takeaway from your experience together?

So What?

- How does it impact or apply...
 - to your marriage?
 - your life with God?

Now What?

- What will you do about it?

Step 5: Attach It

- Whatever creative resource or means you utilize with your group, do your best to attach a takeaway or an action step to something that you will take with you. It's a powerful symbol and reminder of what God is calling you toward.

Step 6: Prayer + Blessing

- To close your time together, use a simple prayer that everyone can participate in and also incorporates your framework. An example is provided below.

As ONE: Lord, as we hold _____ for a moment in our hearts, we pray that you'd hold them eternally in yours, remaining ever at work in their lives and union, even now directing their paths toward your good ends. Amen.

*Prayers adapted from Every Moment Holy by Douglas Kaine McKelvey
www.EveryMomentHoly.com





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