

RUN THE PLAY

Challenge 3— BUILD GODLY RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGES

This challenge in the Journey to Biblical Manhood helps your men understand the importance of integrity in personal relationships and how to love sacrificially. This challenge centers around marriage for the men who are married or engaged, and accountable friendship for the men who are single, divorced or widowers. As a result, we suggest grouping men/couples accordingly, and we offer resources for all **three types of groups**: married couples' groups, men's-only groups, and pre-marital groups. The "Run the Play" option makes the Plan portion of the challenge simple—most of the planning is already done for you!

You may have an existing group, class, or other opportunity that would work well to **Capture Momentum** and/or **Sustain Change**. **Feel free to use that**; just be sure to apply the principles in this section.

The resources for the Run the Play version of Challenge 3 are:

- **Create Value event:**
 - Host *The Marriage Prayer Challenge: An Evening for Couples*, Man in the Mirror (two-hour event).
 - Men's Only: Host a men's cookout.
- **Capture Momentum small group resource:**
 - Married Couples' groups: *The Marriage Prayer* book by Patrick Morley and David Delk—Chapters 1–4
 - Men's-only groups: *When Good Men Are Tempted* book by Bill Perkins—Chapters 1–5
 - Seriously Dating or Engaged groups: *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* book and workbook by Les and Leslie Parrott—Chapters 1–3 (including Assessment; see weekly plan)
- **Sustain Change curriculum:**
 - Married Couples' groups: *The Marriage Prayer* book—Chapters 5–11
 - Men's-only groups: *When Good Men Are Tempted* book—Chapters 6–12
 - Seriously Dating or Engaged groups: *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* book and workbook—Chapters 4–7 (see weekly plan)
- **Celebrate** gathering: Host a dessert night, open to ALL the adults in the church.

On the next page is a weekly chapter plan to show you how the three groups coexist.

Weekly Plan			
Week	Seriously Dating or Engaged Couples	Men's Only	Married Couples
-1		Men's Cookout	
0	0	<i>When Good Men Are Tempted:</i> Chapter 1	<i>The Marriage Prayer Challenge</i>
1	<i>Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts:</i> Read and Discuss "Before You Begin" and Question 1: Myths One and Two.	Chapter 2	<i>The Marriage Prayer:</i> Chapter 1
2	Discuss Exercises 1-3. Read/Discuss Question 1: Myths Three and Four	Chapter 3	Chapter 2
3	Discuss Exercises 4-5 and "For Reflection." (Assign online pre-marital evaluation for homework; www.realrelationships.com .)	Chapter 4	Chapter 3
4	Go over SYMBIS pre-marital evaluation results privately with each couple while rest of group reads and discusses Question 2.	Chapter 5	Chapter 4
5	Discuss Question 2, "For Reflection," and Exercises 6-9.	Chapter 6	Chapter 5
6	Discuss Question 3, "For Reflection," and Exercises 10-12.	Chapter 7	Chapter 6
7	Discuss Question 4, "For Reflection," and Exercises 13-15.	Chapter 8	Chapter 7
8	Discuss Question 5, "For Reflection," and Exercises 16-17.	Chapter 9	Chapter 8
9	Discuss Question 6, "For Reflection," and Exercises 18-21.	Chapter 10	Chapter 9
10	Discuss Question 7, "For Reflection," and Exercises 22-24.	Chapter 11	Chapter 10
11	"Potluck" party and group discussion.	Chapter 12	Chapter 11

PLAN & ASSESS

Although many of the challenge options have been chosen for you, there are a few things that you still need to decide:

- On what date do you want to hold the couples' kick-off event for Challenge 3, *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*? Keep in mind the church calendar and how The Journey fits in with other efforts. Start by listing your top three choices for dates. It's a good idea to also check the community calendar for things such as school vacations and popular community events.
1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
- On what date do you want to hold the men's-only kick-off event, the men's cookout? Aim to have the cookout the week before *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*. This will ensure that the strides of Challenge 3 flow together for both the couples' groups and the men's groups.

Once you have decided on the above, you are ready to begin preparing for Challenge 3 and to assess the men in your church in the areas related to this challenge.

1. **Determine the Faith & Life Objectives for this challenge.**

- a. What do you hope to accomplish in the heads, hearts, and habits (hands) of the men in the church?
- b. Visit www.maninthemirror.org/JBM and download the template for the Faith & Life Objectives (F&LO) for Challenge 3. Review it with your team. Adjust as needed. Note that you'll want an objective for "Head," one for "Heart," and one for "Hands."
- c. Give the F&LO card to your senior pastor for approval.
- d. Print them on **business cards**, either through a commercial printing company or on your own, using the Avery template for business cards, 10 per sheet (Avery business card paper can be purchased from Office Depot, Staples, or a similar supply store). **Be sure to have one for EVERY man in your church.**
- e. Establish a distribution plan: Determine who, where, when and how. Be sure to cover Sunday worship services, home groups, Sunday school classes, sports teams, etc. The idea is for every man—including those on the periphery of church activity—to feel included in the challenge and aware of the objectives.

Who: _____

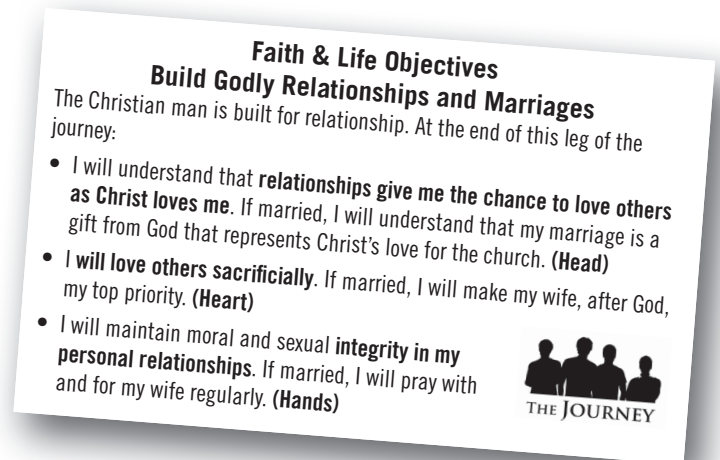
Where: _____

When: _____

How: _____

2. **Develop your Assessment.**

- a. Where are your men starting from in the areas of this challenge?
- b. Visit www.maninthemirror.org/JBM and download the standard Assessment for Challenge 3. Note that there will be two Assessments for each challenge—a pre-challenge and a post-challenge. Be sure to download the pre-challenge. Review it with your team. Adjust as needed. (Note: The Assessments are also in the Forms section of this notebook.)



- c. Give the Assessment form to your senior pastor for approval.
- d. Print one for EVERY man in your church.
- e. Establish a distribution plan: Determine who, where, when and how.
 Who: _____
 Where: _____
 When: _____
 How: _____
- f. Note: We recommend you distribute the Assessment before the Faith & Life Objectives card so men can answer before they see your goals for the challenge.

3. **Recruit new leaders to help with this challenge.**

- a. For every challenge, aim to have a combination of existing leaders and new leaders working together. This will prevent burn-out and foster a feeling of inclusion.
- b. In the Processes section of this notebook, complete the Leadership Audit and Recruiting Worksheet with your current team. **We recommend including women on the leadership team for this challenge to help with inviting couples to the event and recruiting couples to lead follow-up groups.**
- c. Using the Recruiting Worksheet as your guide, invite these new people to join your team for Challenge 3. Share your vision with them for the kick-off event and challenge as a whole.
- d. It may be wise to give your current leaders an opportunity to gracefully take a break from the leadership team at the start of each challenge. The Journey can be a long process and you don't want any one man feeling overwhelmed or overcommitted.

4. **Determine the All-Inclusive activities (see No Man Left Behind term key and the Processes section).**

- a. Inevitably, there will be men and couples who cannot or do not actively engage in the groups or attend the events. **It's critical that your team helps them participate in the challenge through whatever ways they are already engaged at your church.**
- b. On the next page are some ideas for making this challenge all-inclusive. We also provide communication templates on our website for involving other leaders. Review them and see how they might fit into your plans.

MAKE IT ALL-INCLUSIVE

- ☐ Ask your pastor to consider either doing a sermon series or devoting one Sunday to marriage. Give every couple a Marriage Prayer Card and **issue the Marriage Prayer Challenge** church-wide. There is a husband's version and a wife's version of the simple prayer, designed to be prayed daily. Cards can be ordered in packs of 50 (one card per couple) from Man in the Mirror or download and print at www.marriageprayer.org. Ask the pastor to send an email out reminding couples of the challenge; we recommend using excerpts from the article "Worship and The Marriage Prayer."
- ☐ Give guys who aren't participating in group studies the chance to be involved through **individual study**. Post a link on the church website or email a link to the online Man in the Mirror six-part video series, *The Marriage Prayer*. The study can be watched for FREE by streaming or downloading from the website. Encourage men to do it with their wives if possible. For men who aren't married, send out the link to the 40-minute video message *Friends: Risks and Rewards* from the Bible Study series, the *Man in the Mirror REMIX*. Encourage them to use the corresponding handout and discussion/reflection questions.
- ☐ Email the article "How Easy is Sexual Sin?" to all the men in the church, encouraging them to focus on the questions at the end of the article—either in their small groups, with an accountability partner, or by jotting down their thoughts individually on paper.
- ☐ Challenge men to enter into **one-on-one** accountability relationships. Focus on men who aren't in a men's-only follow-up group. Consider offering an hour-long information session at the church, where you help men pair up at the end, as desired. Show the 30-minute video *Accountability: The Missing Link* from the Bible Study series, the *Man in the Mirror REMIX*, and stress the importance of follow-through and confidentiality.
- ☐ Emphasize the concepts of the challenge to the engaged and married couples in the church that aren't participating in the groups. Send out a link to the two-part sermon *Cultivating a Healthy Marriage* from Tim and Kathy Keller (can be downloaded at www.timothykeller.com) to the married men and women, or a link to the four-part sermon series *The New Rules for Love, Sex & Dating* by Andy Stanley (can be downloaded at www.northpoint.org) to engaged or seriously dating men and women. Reference the Challenge 3 Faith & Life Objectives in the email.

(Links to all of the above videos and articles can be found under Challenge 3 at www.maninthemirror.org/JBM.)

- c. Brainstorm with your team additional ideas to reach the men who aren't participating in the standard ways:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

- d. Determine who on your leadership team will be responsible for the different aspects of implementing the All-Inclusive activities you've chosen.

All-Inclusive activity: _____

Who else do we need to involve from other ministries in the church for permission or help? _____

Who on our team will provide leadership to this effort? _____

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Who else do we need to involve from other ministries in the church for permission or help? _____

Who on our team will provide leadership to this effort? _____

5. **Distribute the Faith & Life Objectives and the Assessment.**

- a. Approximately three weeks before the kick-off event, using the plan agreed upon by the team, distribute the pre-Assessment and then the F&LO cards.
- b. **The point of the Assessment** is to help both the leaders and the men of the church see where they are spiritually at both the start and the end of the challenge. Ask men to take the pre-challenge Assessment based on their life during the last year.
- c. **The point of the F&LO card** is to help all the men of the church see that you are trying to accomplish something more than just another men's class or event.

- d. If possible, have your pastor reference the Assessment during regular worship services and give men the option of dropping their completed Assessment in the offering basket or tray.
- e. **It's very important that you get back every completed Assessment possible. Give men multiple ways to do this:** a drop box in the lobby, an opportunity during the service, collection by their small group and class leaders, collection at their sports games, etc.
- f. Create a simple report with the results of the Assessment. Share the report with your pastor and the leadership team. Keep the results confidential among the leadership team.

CREATE VALUE

The **Create Value** step for Challenge 3, Run the Play, consists of **two events**: *The Marriage Prayer Challenge* evening for couples and a cookout for the men. We strongly recommend you hold the men's cookout the week before the couples' event (see weekly plan in the beginning of this section). *The Marriage Prayer Challenge* is a two-hour evening event from Man in the Mirror, done by a Man in the Mirror speaker. We recommend doing it on a Friday or Saturday night. The event comes with graphics and templates for printing your own promo materials, 25 copies of *The Marriage Prayer* book, a Marriage Prayer card for each couple in attendance, and a list of ideas to make it more resonant.

1. **Schedule *The Marriage Prayer Challenge* with Man in the Mirror.**

- a. Confirm your possible event dates with the leadership team and senior pastor.
- b. Call a Ministry Consultant at Man in the Mirror or work with your Man in the Mirror Area Director to schedule the event.
- c. Mail or email a completed event contract, along with the scheduling fee.
- d. **Consider splitting up the event tasks into four main coordinator roles:**

Event Director: _____

Promotions Coordinator: _____

Follow-Up Groups Coordinator: _____

Registration Coordinator: _____

Set up weekly meetings with your event planning team to study the book *No Man Left Behind*. For more in-depth training, go through the video-based No Man Left Behind Courseware.

- e. Determine your ticket price for *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*. See if anyone in the church would like to offer a scholarship for another couple. Even if you have ministry funds to cover the event, we encourage you to charge *something* for it—experience has shown us that charging increases perceived value, commitment, and attendance.
- f. Using the guide in the Processes section of this notebook, choose the location for your event and make sure you have technical and room requirements met.

2. **Schedule the men's cookout.**

- a. Confirm your event date and times with the leadership team and senior pastor, based on the date of *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*. (The cookout should be sometime during the week before the couples' event.)
- b. Decide on what food and beverages will be served. Determine who will be responsible for what (set up, bringing ice, grilling, food prep, etc.).
- c. Determine your ticket price, based on food, drink and book (*When Good Men Are Tempted*) costs. Aim to keep it as low as possible for this event.
- d. Ask one or two men to share a brief testimony about how God has used accountable male friendship to impact them. Arrange this beforehand.
- e. Decide whether you will include any icebreakers, activities, or games to help guys connect. Incorporate humor and competition!

3. **Invite men and couples to the respective events.**

- a. Use the promotions plan in the Processes section of this notebook as a template. Modify as needed for each event, adding your own ideas as you go.
- b. Invite your pastor to attend the events, as well as help invite others during Sunday morning worship services.
- c. Print flyers or bulletin inserts for *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*, using the templates provided on the Promotions CD that comes with the event from Man in the Mirror. Print and hang up posters in heavy-traffic areas of the church.
- d. Work closely with other ministries, groups, and leaders in your church to involve everyone in the invitation process. (See Promotions Plan in the Processes section and communication templates on the website.) Make it an all-inclusive effort.
- e. Aim for every man/couple in your church to receive no fewer than five touches. Make sure everyone is encouraged to pre-register and pre-pay, if you're charging for the events. This will increase the sense of value and commitment and thereby increase attendance.

- f. Have the leaders helping on this challenge commit to calling a group of men and personally inviting them to attend either the cookout or *The Marriage Prayer Challenge*, depending on their circumstances. Divide all the men in the church among them. Ask any women on the leadership team for this challenge to help invite couples. **Personal invitation is critical to the success of the events.**
 - g. Encourage men and couples to bring others with them. Use these events to cast an outreach vision. The more people that get involved in the challenge at the initial level, the better!
4. **Plan and prepare for your Capture step.**
- a. The **Capture** step and **Sustain** step use the same resource in this challenge. Groups will stay together for the duration of these two strides so group facilitators will need to be committed to the full study (11 weeks for couples' groups and 12 weeks for men's groups).
 - b. Announce the pre-marital group study for engaged or seriously dating couples about five weeks in advance of your kick-off events. Have sign-ups after weekend services so you know how many books, workbooks, and group facilitators you will need. Aim to have stable married couples leading these groups.
 - c. Once you have a count, order the books *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*, along with the workbooks. Note: There is a workbook for men and a separate one for women.
 - d. Make an educated estimate for the men's cookout and couples' event attendance and determine how many small group facilitators you'll need to have in place. Aim to have 4-6 couples to a couples' group, and 5-10 men to a men's-only group.
 - e. With your event team, make a list of men and couples you'd like to ask to be small group facilitators.
 - f. Invite them to lead a follow-up group. Discussion questions are included in the resources. Emphasize that facilitating a group should be easy and just requires a willing person.
 - g. Have a meeting 2-3 weeks before the events with them. Give them the handout found in the Forms and Templates section of this notebook. For more instruction on choosing and preparing group leaders, see the Processes section of this notebook.
 - h. *The Marriage Prayer Challenge* comes with 25 copies of the book *The Marriage Prayer* to be used in the couples' follow-up groups. If you expect more than 25 couples, be sure to order your books in time for the event.

- i. Based on sign-ups for the men's cookout, order the books *When Good Men Are Tempted*. Be sure to order extra for men who want to join the groups but couldn't attend the event.

5. **Kick off the challenge with your events!**

- a. Have your leaders in attendance and make sure every man at the cookout and couple at *The Marriage Prayer Challenges* feels welcome!
- b. Be attentive to people sitting alone or those who are new to the church. Have leaders spread out at different tables to help facilitate conversation.
- c. If either of your events will have 100+ people, signs should be hung up around the room with follow-up group locations, days, and times (see Processes section).
- d. Help men and couples form small groups at the end of the events—**BEFORE they leave**.

CAPTURE MOMENTUM

The **Capture Momentum** step for Challenge 3, Run the Play, is a different resource for each type of group. Married couples will use *The Marriage Prayer*, men's-only groups will use *When Good Men Are Tempted*, and engaged/seriously dating couples will use *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*.

1. **Begin follow-up groups.**

- a. The groups should begin the week following each of the events, including the pre-marital groups (see weekly plan in the beginning of this section).
- b. **Invite all the men in your church to join a men's-only follow-up group, even those who didn't attend the cookout.** Have extra books on hand for late joiners. Likewise, invite all the married couples in the church to join a couples' follow-up group.
- c. Have group leaders give out and collect pre-challenge Assessments for any men who haven't completed them. This should be done at the first meeting.
- d. Have group leaders hand out a Faith & Life Objectives card to any man who doesn't already have one, but only after completing the pre-Assessment. They should read and briefly discuss them as a group at their first meeting.
- e. Call all the group leaders to see how the first meeting went and to pray with them.

2. **Help those who don't join the groups participate in the challenge.**
 - a. Implement the All-Inclusive suggestions found in this section of the notebook that are specific to this challenge, as desired. For additional suggestions, see www.maninthemirror.org/JBM.
 - b. Use the email templates and other communication tools found on the website to recruit leaders of existing ministries and groups, asking them to emphasize the Faith & Life Objectives during their interactions with the men in their areas of influence.
 - c. Make sure every man has a Faith & Life Objectives card.
 - d. During the weeks of follow-up study, plug as many men as possible who aren't participating in small groups into other ongoing ministries in the church.
3. **Give the pre-marital couples a couples' evaluation.**
 - a. The book *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* directs couples to evaluate their relationships. We suggest you have couples do this for homework after the third week.
 - b. We recommend that group leaders review the results of the evaluations with each couple in the fourth week. This can be done during regular group time if there's a place to speak with each couple privately for 10 or 15 minutes, while the rest of the group discusses the chapter (see weekly plan).
 - c. To access the evaluation, go to www.realrelationships.com and click on Assessments/SYMBIS Pre-Marital Assessment. The results will automatically be emailed to the couple. (Note: The evaluation can also be used by married couples.)
4. **Prepare for the Sustain step.**
 - a. This challenge is unique in that the **Capture** stride flows seamlessly into the **Sustain** stride. Continue on with the follow-up groups, using the same books.
 - b. Allow couples and men to shift groups or combine groups, *as needed*.

SUSTAIN CHANGE

The **Sustain Change** step for Challenge 3, Run the Play, is a continuation of the **Capture** Momentum study; married couples continue in *The Marriage Prayer*, pre-marital couples continue in *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*, and men's-only groups continue in *When Good Men Are Tempted*.

1. **Begin the Sustain Change study groups.**
 - a. The **Capture** groups should seamlessly flow into the **Sustain Change** groups.

- b. Have group leaders hand out a Faith & Life Objectives card to any man who might have lost it.
2. **Help men and couples that aren't in the follow-up groups participate in the challenge.**
 - a. Continue to implement the All-Inclusive suggestions.
 - b. Keep the leaders of other ministries engaged and updated throughout the study. Ask them to support the challenge in their interactions with their men, and offer to serve them in any way possible.
3. **Choose one or two "Hands" opportunities.**
 - a. During the **Sustain Change** time period of the challenge, give people an opportunity to put what they're learning into action. Below are some ideas.

USE YOUR "HANDS"

- ☐ Ask the couples in the church to take a **survey** to determine their love language (assessments can be downloaded from www.5lovelanguages.com). Then, challenge each spouse to be intentional about doing something special in the other's primary "language" every day for a week. Consider providing ideas and examples to get people thinking.
- ☐ Plan a **church-wide date night**. Serve dinner or dessert and show the movie *Fireproof*. Encourage the men to take the initiative and ask their wife "out" for the date night. Provide free childcare for couples with young children and choose a Friday or Saturday night so (most) people don't have to work the next day. Be sure to purchase an Authorized Public Exhibition License. (Link to purchase license can be found on the JBM website.)
- ☐ Don't let the single or widowed women in your church feel isolated by the ways others might be participating in this challenge. Give the men in the church a way to honor and serve them at some point in the challenge. Consider a handyman morning where women can get yard work or home repairs done, or host an afternoon of free car washes and oil changes in the church parking lot. Be sure to ask any women's ministry leaders for help in this initiative. They may be able to point you to where the needs are.
- ☐ Have some of the men's leaders for this challenge plan a **"Guys' day out"**—organize various opportunities for men with similar interests to get to know each other better. Plan a day of golf, hold a basketball or Ping-Pong tournament, go skeet shooting, meet up for a morning bicycle ride, go to a baseball game, or even just enjoy a long lunch! Be sure to emphasize to the leaders the importance of including as many men as possible across the different activities; avoid "cliques" where possible and include men who are new to the church. Remind leaders to **go over the Faith & Life Objectives** and give men a chance to share what God is doing in their lives. Also, if any of the outings require travel time, download and print out the **Drive Time Questions** from www.maninthemirror.org/JBM.

- b. Advertise these opportunities church-wide, not just to those participating in the study! You may choose to use portions of the promo plan found in the Processes section for this effort, depending on the nature of the Hands project.
 - c. Be sure to delegate related tasks to your leadership team members for this challenge.
4. **Distribute the post-challenge Assessment.**
- a. Visit www.maninthemirror.org/JBM and download the standard post-challenge Assessment for Challenge 3. Note that there will be two Assessments for each challenge—a pre-challenge and a post-challenge. Be sure to download the post-challenge. Review it with your team. Adjust as needed to conform to your pre-challenge Assessment.
 - b. Give the Assessment form to your senior pastor for approval.
 - c. Print.
 - d. Have the study group leaders distribute to their men in the final week of the study.
 - e. Distribute to all other men in the church. Keep the Assessments of direct challenge participants separate from the others as you collect them.
 - f. Instruct men to complete it based on how they are living their lives *recently*.

EVALUATE & CELEBRATE

This is the home stretch; don't skip the end of the challenge! This final phase helps you determine and celebrate what God has done in men's lives.

Be sure to rally your leadership team during this integral time and thank them for all the work they've done and the impact they've made throughout Challenge 3. The last thing for them to do will be to help plan and execute the Celebration. The celebration for Challenge 3, Run the Play, is a **dessert night**, open to ALL the adults in the church.

1. **Evaluate your men.**
 - a. Collect all post-challenge Assessments.
 - b. Create a simple report of the results; **if possible, make one for the men who participated in the study groups and a separate one for those who did not.**
 - c. Share the results with the church leaders and senior pastor.
2. **Plan the celebration night.**
 - a. Ask the leaders of the groups for the names of some men and couples who they think have particularly benefitted from the challenge.

- b. Ask those people to share their story with you or another team member—either by email, on a web cam, or in person.
- c. Invite a few of them to share their stories at the celebration night.
- d. In order to emphasize the all-inclusive nature of the challenge, aim to find one couple and one man to share at the celebration who was impacted but didn't participate in the groups.
- e. Share all testimonies with the church leaders and senior pastor.
- f. Review celebration “hardware” ideas on www.maninthemirror.org/JBM. If you choose to give out coins, wristbands, or something similar, order them with plenty of time for arrival.
- g. Plan to include humor or competition as part of the celebration.
- h. Choose a date and time for the dessert night, with approval from your pastor, who should plan to attend:
 Date: _____ Time: _____
- i. Reserve a room or venue. Be sure to arrange childcare.
- j. Decide on the dessert and drink menu and whether it will be buffet style or self-serve. Set the night's agenda including testimony, any music, entertainment, etc.
- k. Invite **all** the adults in the church to attend!

3. **Celebrate!**

- a. Have men and couples share testimonies, as arranged ahead of time.
- b. Announce the results of the Assessment, if appropriate. Remind men of their Faith & Life Objectives and how you hope that God worked in their lives.
- c. Connect the testimonies and other celebration remarks to the larger vision of the church and how God is using your men to impact their community and world.
- d. If you ordered any celebration giveaways, such as tokens or wristbands, pass them out to all the men.
- e. Unveil the next challenge and the next **Create** event.
- f. Ask men, “Who's missing?” and encourage them to invite others to the event from outside the church.
- g. Give men an opportunity to sign up for the next **Create** event before they leave.
- h. Also, recruit additional men for the leadership team for the next challenge.