From Me to We

Facilitator Guide
SCREEN 1

Welcome to From Me to We, I am [NAME]. [Share a little about your background.]

As you begin your lives together, it’s important to remember that your marriage is a partnership.

That partnership began the moment you realized you were serious about one another, and it will last long into the future.

Talking about money at times can be difficult and even uncomfortable. The exercises and tools in the workshop are designed to help you become more comfortable with financial goals and begin healthy conversations about money.

I would like to point out that there is more information in your workbook than we will cover today.

It takes time to understand one another’s hopes and dreams and develop a plan to achieve them. There are many things you can do today to help ensure your life together gets off to a sound start—and stays on solid footing.

SCREEN 2

How do you feel about your finances?

Although we all hope and dream for a strong financial future, many couples are unsure about their finances.

Let me ask a few questions. Be honest with yourself—there are no right or wrong answers! It is all about discovering more about yourself and your spouse.

How many of you feel confident about your financial future?
(Show of hands.)

How about hopeful?
(Show of hands.)

What about unsure?
(Show of hands.)

Let’s look at this fact: Four out of five spouses say they are on the same page when it comes to money.

How about you? Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
(Call on 1–2 people.)
SCREEN 3
How do you feel about your finances?

In truth, many couples disagree over who does what and which issues matter most.

Thank you for sharing how you feel. Talking about financial topics may make some of you uncomfortable. Please know you will not be sharing any specifics.

SCREEN 4
Objectives

There are four things we’re going to accomplish today.

The first is to have a lot of fun! This workshop is fast-paced and interactive. You’ll have plenty of opportunities to contribute, and you may even learn a thing or two about yourself and your spouse!

There are also three important things that I want you to learn by the end of this workshop. They are:

• Identify your values and attitudes about money.

• Set SMART goals—individually and as a couple.

• Discover tools to help you achieve your goals.

Let’s get started!
Introductions

There’s at least one thing you all have in common. You’re here because you’re committed to your spouse—you’re planning to get married or have recently tied the knot.

Before we move on, I’d like each of you to introduce yourself so we get to know one another.

As we go around the room, briefly tell us three things:

1. Your name.
2. How long you’ve been married, or when you’re getting married.
3. What matters more than money to you. Keep in mind it is okay to differ.

Stewardship

What does stewardship mean to you? *(Call on 2–3 people.)*

Stewardship is often associated with giving money to the church.

While this is important, stewardship can play a larger, more significant role as a guiding principle for how we manage our lives—as individuals and as couples.

Stewardship means responsibly taking care of the resources God has entrusted to our care.

These resources include our time, talents and treasures.

Stewardship shifts the focus from ownership to taking care of something for someone else—in this case, God.

In addition to caring for our resources, we must also care for ourselves, our family and friends, our community—and, of course—our marriage.

Being a good steward means making intentional choices about how we use our time and talents, as well as how we share, save and spend our money.
SCREEN 8
Values

Turn to the exercise on page 4: Take Action 1—Identify Your Values.
Take a couple of minutes to identify your top 10 values by circling the words that resonate most with you. This is not a shared exercise—yet. Make sure you choose the ones that reflect how you actually live your life. Add any that are missing at the bottom.
(Allow 2 minutes.)

Next, place an asterisk by your top three.
(Allow 1 minute.)

Now, as a couple, I’d like you each to share your values and then work together to complete the “Together” section of this exercise, which you’ll find on page 5.

Be open and honest with each other, and really listen to what your spouse is saying.
(Allow 4 minutes.)

Who would like to share a discovery they had in doing this exercise?
(Call on 2–3 people.)

Understanding your values—and the ways in which they are similar as well as different—will help you create a strong foundation for your marriage. Values are your compass for decision making.

SCREEN 9
Attitudes about money

In addition to our values, each of us has attitudes about money that we bring to our marriage.

Most were acquired while we were still children.

Understanding our own attitude—and our spouse’s—about money is critical to working as a team to make financial decisions.

Let’s take a look at our attitudes about money and how they came to be.

I’d like you to answer the first five questions in Take Action 2—Reflect on Your Childhood, on pages 6 and 7.
(Allow 2 minutes.)
Now share your answers with your spouse and work through the “Together” questions on page 7.
(Allow 3 minutes.)

How are your childhood experiences affecting your attitudes about money today?
(Call on 2–3 people.)

What surprised you the most?
(Call on 2–3 people.)

Time Check—25 minutes should have passed.

SCREEN 10
What is a goal?

How many of you ever had a goal and achieved it?
(Show of hands.)

What did you do to get there?
(Call on 1–2 people.)

How did it make you feel?
(Call on 1–2 people.)

A goal is something:

- You want—a desired end point.
- You’re willing to work for.

Concrete goals provide focus and direction.

Some goals—such as buying a house, a new car, paying off student loans or saving for a child’s education—require money.

But many goals—learning a new skill or volunteering for a cause you care about, for example—don’t require any money.
SCREEN 11
Setting goals

Goals come in different sizes.

Some can be achieved in a day, a week, a month or up to three years. These are short-term goals. These could be paying off a credit card or saving for a nice vacation.

SCREEN 12
Setting goals

Other goals are called medium-term. They typically take three to seven years. Examples would be saving for a down payment on a house or buying a car.

SCREEN 13
Setting goals

Goals that take eight years or longer are called long-term goals, and they include such things as saving for retirement and funding your child's college education.

Generally, the larger the goal, the more time it takes to achieve.
SCREEN 14
SMART goals

No matter the size of your goals, you should always make them SMART.

SMART goals are:

Specific: Focused, not general.

Measurable: Define exactly what you want to accomplish.

Achievable: Realistic for you, something you can actually accomplish.

Results-based: Focused on an end point.

Timed: Has a deadline.

Turn to page 10 in your workbook to Take Action 3—Setting SMART Goals. For now, individually focus on a short-term goal and work to make it SMART. If you have time, start to work on another one. (Allow 3 minutes.)

Now, get together with your spouse and share your goals. Answer the questions on page 11. (Allow 3 minutes.)

What similarities or differences did you see when comparing your goals to your spouse’s? (Call on 2–3 couples.)

Be sure to continue discussing your goals after you get home and work to make them SMART.

Remember, it’s OK to have your own goals, as long as you and your spouse work together to help each other accomplish them. Plus, not every goal requires money to accomplish.

SCREEN 15
Healthy communication

Healthy communication is a key component of building your future.

Here are some tips for healthy conversations:

• Begin with yourself: What is most important to you and why? What are your top three values?

• Use “I” statements—focus on yourself and your feelings.

• Seek to understand: What is important for your spouse? Ask clarifying questions—be realistic and open to compromise.

• Share your goals and work together to accomplish them.

• Start small, so the process is not overwhelming.
SCREEN 16
Who makes the financial decisions in your relationship?

How you decide to manage your money is up to you.

There’s no right or wrong answer. A recent survey found that in 40% of relationships, men are the primary decision makers about finances; in 28%, the decision making is shared; and in another 16%, women are the primary decision makers. Another 16% of couples have separate finances. It is important that you decide how you’re going to make financial decisions and keep each other informed.

According to a *Money* magazine survey (2014), 70% of married couples argue about money more than any other topic. It does get better with time and alignment on goals and responsibilities.

Whatever you decide, the key is to work together to arrive at decisions.

SCREEN 17
Making informed decisions

So how do we reach our goals? By making informed decisions when it comes to how we choose to share, save and spend our resources.

Turn to page 15 in your workbook to **Take Action 4—Spend Decisions**. This bucket represents your monthly pot of money.

- First, draw a line across the bucket starting from the bottom that represents visually the amount you want to **share**.

- Next, draw a line above your **share** line that represents how much you want to **save**.

- Now look at how much your **share** and **save** amounts fill up the bucket. The space at the top is your amount to **spend**.

Does the amount left for spending reflect what you do today? Why or why not? *(Call on 1–2 people.)*

Now compare with your spouse—are you similar or different? Discuss how that might influence your spending. *(Allow 2 minutes.)*

Now discuss how this drawing reflects the values you identified earlier. What changes might you want to make? *(Allow 3 minutes.)*
From Me to We

SCREEN 18
Balanced spending

What methods do you use today to track where your money is going?
Do you feel they are working for you?
(Call on 3–4 people.)

I want to quickly go over the idea of balanced spending.

**Money In** is all of your income sources. It’s not limited to just
your paycheck.

**Money Out** is all of your uses of money—how you share, save and spend today.

The main point is simple: Don’t use more than you bring in each month.

Remember, you bring different attitudes to the relationship. It will take time to find the right balance. The key is you
both have to be fully committed, totally open and honest about how you are using your money.

In order for this tool to work, you need to track all of your spending. And I mean all of it—the impulse buys and
incidents—no matter how small. Save receipts and enter them into the categories at the end of the month.
Do this for a couple of months to see if there are any patterns. Don’t forget to account for the nonmonthly expenses,
like car insurance, property taxes, etc., so they don’t sneak up on you.

One suggestion to consider is to give yourselves a monthly allowance to enjoy a few simple pleasures.
That way your spending is accounted for. There is a balanced spending worksheet in the Resources
section for you to use at home.

What suggestions do you have when it comes to keeping track of impulse buys or incidentals, given what
we just went over?
(Call on 1–2 people.)

SCREEN 19
What else?

Knowing your values, understanding your money attitudes and defining
your goals helps you create a path to reach your dreams.

What other things should you be thinking about as you start to plan
your future?
(Call on 3–4 people.) [Looking for: college funding, retirement
savings, buying a house, cost of raising a child, stay-at-home parent,
paying off student loan.]

How might what we have learned so far help you?
(Call on 2–3 people.)
SCREEN 20
Other considerations
You mentioned some great things to consider. I just want to highlight some other considerations—some we just mentioned and some less obvious items that are important as you plan.

- Emergency savings: To help weather those inevitable, unexpected expenses.
- Revisit benefits: Make sure they meet your new family needs.
- Update beneficiaries: There are now two of you!
- Legal documents: Having proper legal instruments will help ensure your wishes are honored; otherwise, a judge will decide for you.

SCREEN 21
Retirement
How many of you have a retirement savings plan?
(Show of hands.)

Retirement savings—saving early and regularly can help you grow your retirement nest egg.

Turn to page 29. This hypothetical example visually illustrates how compound interest can help your retirement savings grow. You can read the details at home.

Consider maximizing any employer match to help grow your savings.

SCREEN 22
Protecting your future
Life is full of risks—and we take them daily. Some we don’t even give a second thought to. Having the proper insurance protection—from your vehicle and home, to your life and income—can help you and your family stay the course if something should happen.

Turn to page 21 to Take Action 5—Protection Assessment and, together, answer the questions: Yes, No or Not sure.
(Allow 2 minutes.)

For the “No’s,” discuss what impact it could have on your spouse if you lost one income or had an untimely death.
(Allow 3 minutes.)

What did you find most interesting in doing this exercise?
(Call on 1–2 people.)

Be sure to work with your property/casualty and financial professionals to help you determine the type of insurance and amounts that are needed for your unique situation.
**SCREEN 23**

**Putting it all together**

We covered a lot today. With two sets of eyes and ears, you hopefully have enough information to begin healthy conversations about your financial goals—and tools to help achieve them.

Today we:

- Identified your values and attitudes about money.
- Began setting SMART goals, individually and as a couple.
- Discovered tools to help you achieve your goals.

**SCREEN 24**

**Action plan**

Now is the time to put what you heard and learned into an action plan so you can plan for your financial future. Turn to the Action Plan section on page 22.

Together, I want you to discuss your next steps and commit yourselves by adding a due date by each item. Focus on Section 1—Setting Goals first. *(Allow 5 minutes.)*

What was the biggest discovery for you today? *(Call on 3–4 people.)*

That’s great!
Thank you

Now, before you go, there is one more thing I need you to do. Turn to the back of your workbook, tear out the evaluation and fill it out. Your feedback is very important. Be sure to answer the last question as well. (Allow 2 minutes.)

Before we part ways, I would like each of you to share the one thing that you will do differently based on today’s session. (Call on everyone.)

Thank you all for being here and giving me your gift of time. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

Just place your evaluation face down on the table before you leave.

I will stick around, so if you have any questions on what we covered today or want more information about how Thrivent can help you, please stay or write your name and contact information on the bottom of your evaluation.

Thanks again!