

WFWP Norway and Sweden: Easter Family Retreat - Harmony in the Family

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April 10. 2023



The program for adults included group sessions with therapists and coaches. Meanwhile the children were taken care of by kindergarten teachers. The children's program included lots of fun and engaging crafts and activities such as painting, bracelet making, a scavenger hunt, and a Swedish version of hide and seek. We observed that the children quickly felt safe and built friendships beyond the language barrier between Norwegian and Swedish.

The interactive adult program focused on teaching and practicing methods to increase harmony in the family. In addition to the group sessions, participants could schedule private sessions with the therapists and coaches for free during the retreat.



Vigdis Parkins walked us through goal-setting processes in accordance with her program "The Power of

Imaginations." We learned how to define and work towards our goals by activating our subconscious mind.

With Margoth Kalstad we trained our ability to identify and communicate our feelings and the underlying met/unmet needs, as is taught in Non-Violent Communication and Gestalt Therapy. She also gave us insights into a model that describes different romantic phases a couple goes through.



Liliana Karlsson presented Emotion Code, Body Code and Original Energy Code and performed sessions on stage. By asking the volunteer's unconscious mind yes/no questions through a pendulum, she identified and released energetic imbalances, including trapped emotions and black magic, that can for example contribute to relationship problems.

In addition, there was a talk about men and women by David Cisigani who also had a birthday during the retreat. We celebrated his birthday together with cake and a song.

In the morning we offered inspirational readings, secular or from different faiths, and exercises like yoga, dancing or pilates so that adults and children could try out different methods to increase physical health and well-being.

Joint activities in the afternoons focused on family bonding. One such activity was the word puzzle trail in the forest where teams followed a forest trail which had posts on the trees stating a riddle or trivia question. A favorite among many participants was sauna day where we could enjoy a traditional Swedish sauna and ice bathing (for those brave enough).

On Easter Sunday we celebrated with a traditional Swedish Easter lunch and an Easter egg hunt for all ages in the forest.

The spacious program with long breaks and flexibility accommodated the needs of families with young children as well as of elders. In addition, many deep conversations, relationship-building, and games on the participants' initiative took place during free time.

To conclude the Easter Family Retreat, we had entertainment including beautiful songs and funny sketches by volunteers. Many participants and staff members expressed that the retreat deeply impacted them. They valued the new or deepened friendships, tools and knowledge and happy memories that they have gained during the retreat.

To accommodate their desire to repeat this kind of event, we are planning to organize the next Family Retreat at the same venue at Easter 2025. We are hoping that all the participants could leave feeling rejuvenated physically, emotionally and in their familial relationships. We staff members are deeply grateful for the contribution by each participant and feel empowered by their positive feedback.

Reported by Johanna Toresen
President WFWP Norway