

## **Opener: Lost At Sea (25-30 Minutes)**

Ask the group for responses to this question: **On a scale of 1 - 10, how good would you say you are at wilderness survival? (1 = I am totally hopeless/I am future bear food if I am in the wilderness. 10 = Bear Grylls could call me for advice if things got really tough.)**

*Explain: Today's topic is marriage. Most of us, especially if we have been married, know at least something about marriage. We also have grown accustomed to pastors, politicians, and community leaders offering commentary on marriage especially in the current debate on same-sex marriage. What we may not realize is that as long as there have been humans walking the earth, our concept and understanding of marriage has been evolving and changing. Furthermore, what we may THINK we know about marriage, much like what we think we know about survival might be over-stated. Often, we aren't quite the experts that we assume we are – in the wilderness, in marriage, or in other survival scenarios! Here's an exercise to help.*

Introduce the survival scenario:

*You have chartered a yacht with three friends, for a trip of a lifetime across the Atlantic Ocean. Congratulations, you've clearly done well in life! Because none of you are experienced sailors, you have hired an experienced skipper and crew.*

*Unfortunately, in the mid-Atlantic a fierce fire breaks out in the ship's galley and the skipper and crew have been lost while trying to fight the blaze. Much of the yacht is destroyed and it is slowly sinking.*

*Your location is unclear, because vital navigational and radio equipment was damaged in the fire. Your best estimate is that you are hundreds of miles from nearest landfall.*

*You and your friends have managed to save 15 items, undamaged and intact, after the fire. In addition, you have salvaged a rubber life-craft and a box of matches.*

*Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of importance for you as you wait to be rescued. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important and so forth until you've ranked*

*all 15 items.*

**Provide the ‘Lost at Sea Ranking Chart’ for every member of your group. Ask each person to spend 5 minutes deciding their own rankings, and record their choices on the left hand column.**

**Once everyone has done so, invite the groups to discuss their choices at their tables. The group should then come up with their own official list ranking the items.**

**When each group is finished with their own ranking, explain that the creators of this activity consulted survival experts with the U.S. Coast Guard. Go through the Coast Guard rankings as they are explained below. You’ll want to write the item and its ranking on a white board as you go.**

**For each item, mark the number ranking that the Coast Guard scored for each item. If an individual or group’s score differs from the coast guard, have them write the difference in the final column (so if they scored an item as a “2” and the coast guard scored it as a “4,” add 2 points to the far right column.) At the end, they can total the difference and you will share their chances of survival based on the difference.**

### **US COAST GUARD RANKING OF ITEMS**

A sextant chronometer	15	Useless without relevant tables and a
A shaving critical It is the most mirror presence. million can be seen	1	Of all items, the mirror is absolutely powerful tool you have for communicating your In sunlight, a mirror can generate five-to seven candlepower of light. The reflected sunbeam even beyond the horizon.
A quantity of 14 Atlantic, mosquito	14	There are not mosquitos in the middle of the and the netting is useless for anything else.

	netting.			
	A 25 liter 25 liters container of water.	3		Vital to restore fluids lost through perspiration.  will supply water rations for several days.
	A case of army rations	4		This is your basic food intake.
	Maps of the Atlantic Ocean	13		Worthless without navigational equipment.
overboard.	A floating seat cushion	9		Useful as a life preserver if someone fell
mixture matches.	A 10 liter can of gasoline/ oil mixture	2		The second most critical item for signaling. The will float on water and can be ignited using the
station.	A small transistor radio	12		Would likely be out of range of any radio
from the	20 square feet of opaque plastic sheeting	5		Can be used to collect rainwater and shelter  wind and waves.
	A can of shark repellant.	10		To repel sharks, of course!
used as an Very	One bottle of 160 proof rum	11		Contains 80% alcohol, which means it can be antiseptic for injuries, otherwise of little value.  dangerous to drink, as it would cause the body

to de-  
survive.

hydrate, the opposite of what you need to

15 foot  
equipment together to  
nylon rope  
too, but

8 Could be used to lash people or  
prevent being washed over board. Others uses  
none that are high on the list for survival.

2 boxes of 6  
chocolate

A high-calorie reserve food supply.

there is no  
Ocean  
fishing kit  
is worth 2 in  
with pole.  
also be used

7 Ranked lower than the chocolate as  
guarantee of catching fish. (A bird in the hand  
the bush...or something like that.) Pole could  
as a tent pole.

Give participants a moment to tally the difference in their rankings and the coast guard's. If their scores are between...

00-25 survival skills. Rescued!	EXCELLENT!	You demonstrated great
26-32 survival skills. Rescued!	GOOD.	Above average results. Good
33-45	AVERAGE	Seasick, hungry, tired...but still rescued.
46-55 tough but,	FAIR	Dehydrated and barely alive. It was rescued.
56-70	POOR	Rescued, but only just in time.
71+ on a distant has been called off.	VERY POOR	Oh dear, an empty raft washes ashore beach, weeks after the search

Ask the group for responses to the following questions:

- How did you do? What surprised you? Did your perception of your wilderness survival skills differ from the reality?
- Are there other areas where you've noticed that reality might be different from the conventional wisdom, your pre-existing attitudes, or the popular approach?
- Did your group/collective list do better than your individual list? If so, what does that demonstrate? Is there value in the group wisdom, or did it lead you astray?
- Let's talk about another survival scenario: marriage. If you've been married, what are some unexpected things you learned along the way? How did marriage differ, maybe differ greatly, from your preconceived notions?

### Lost at Sea Ranking Chart

As you try to survive with your table group on a small rubber life-raft in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, you have the following 15 items available for your use. Rank them from 1 to 15 in order of importance for your survival (1= most important, 15 = least)

Rank them as individuals first, then discuss them with your table group and come up with a group ranking

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Item	Your Ranking	Group Ranking	Coast
Guard	Difference	Ranking	
Sextant			

_____	_____	_____	_____
Shaving	Mirror	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Mosquito Netting	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
25 liter container of H2O	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Case of army rations	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Maps of the Atlantic	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Floating	seat cushion	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
10 liter can of oil/gas	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Transistor radio	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
20 sq. ft. opaque plastic	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
sheeting	_____	_____	_____
Can of shark repellent	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
1 Bottle 160 proof rum	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
15 ft. of nylon rope	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
2 boxes of chocolate	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Ocean fishing kit/pole	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

DIFFERENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL