

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER  
COMMUNITY HANDBOOK**

Published by the  
North American Region Board of Lutheran Marriage Encounter

Intended as a guide to accepted policies, procedures  
and practices for an Area planning or offering  
the gift of the Marriage Encounter Weekend

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Call To Be Family, Inc.  
LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER  
COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

## **PREFACE**

### **Purpose of this Handbook**

How do we host a weekend? What is a Love Circle/Spiral? What are the policies about expenses? If we accept this loving task, what should we be doing?

No doubt you have asked some of the same questions and this handbook may have some of the answers you are seeking. Because Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a growing and dynamic experience and organization, all the answers will not be found in this handbook. What has been attempted is to compile the policies and practices that have molded Lutheran Marriage Encounter weekends and local communities into what they are today. These guidelines and a healthy dose of common sense should solve most problems as they arise.

As an international LME family, we derive our strength from the common bond of our weekend and our continuing dialogue. In addition, our relationships within and between communities are enhanced by our diversity. While this handbook can be a useful resource for a new Area, it was also designed to be a reference for the couple assuming a leadership position in an established Area.

### **Revisions**

Periodic revisions to this handbook will be sent to all recipients who are registered with the Lutheran Marriage Encounter Regional Secretary Couple.

**THIS BOOK SHOULD BE PASSED ON TO YOUR SUCCESSOR**

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# LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

## Chapter 1

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Purposes of Lutheran Marriage Encounter**

1. Strengthening the couple relationship
2. Strengthening the couple's relationship with God
3. Strengthening and renewing the Lutheran Church

Lutheran Marriage Encounter exists to bring the gift of the Marriage Encounter Weekends to Lutheran couples around the world. LME recognizes that other denominations and faiths will also be invited for Weekends and they will also receive the gift of the Weekend.

As you read this handbook, please remember that LME is not a direct part of any corporate Lutheran Church. It is a ministry of lay and clergy couples, operating independently, but alongside, all Lutheran synods.

#### **Organization**

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is incorporated in the State of Washington. Our corporate name is "Call To Be Family".

The corporation is governed by an **International Council** composed of elected representatives from established **Regions** of the organization. The members of the International Council bring the cares and concerns of the regions to the Council and represent the Council to their Regions. The corporation has two elected executive couples who share overall leadership responsibility; one is a clergy presenting couple and the other is a lay presenting couple. Together they are the **Executive Team**.

#### **Mission Statement**

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing an Encounter Weekend experience as well as ongoing community support.

#### **Vision Statement**

The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ.

**Relationship to Worldwide Marriage Encounter**

LME is licensed to conduct Marriage Encounter Weekends by an Interfaith Licensing Agreement with **Worldwide Marriage Encounter**. The Executive Teams of the various expressions form the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Interfaith Board.

One of the principles of Worldwide Marriage Encounter and LME is that the same basic Weekend experience be offered everywhere. All LME Weekends are based on the same outline. Weekends presented by Lutheran, Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and other denominations affiliated with Worldwide Marriage Encounter are the same except for differences of theology and tradition.

The primary benefit of the affiliation with Worldwide Marriage Encounter is the use of the Worldwide Weekend outline materials, use of the Marriage Encounter logo, and the resources that have been developed by Worldwide ME.

The quality of the Weekend content is maintained by a Presenting Couple workshop system under the leadership of the Regional Presenting Couple Coordinator. The Area Presenting Couple Coordinator schedules Presenting Couples for Weekends.

**LOGOS**

**Marriage Encounter Logo**

The Lutheran Marriage Encounter Logo is copyrighted by Christian Family Movement. Lutheran Marriage Encounter has use of the logo by virtue of the Interfaith Licensing Agreement.

The colors of red in the heart and yellow in the rings are accepted colorings. The use of the cross is not copyrighted. Lutheran Marriage Encounter chose the cross since we acknowledge Christ as the center of our Christian life. The logo can be used with or without the words "Marriage Encounter" printed in the heart.

**Call To Be Family Logo**

The logo of Call To Be Family, Inc. is a ring of circles, which symbolizes all areas bonded together in a unique Christian family of love. This logo shall be used only for corporate business and at International, Regional and District gatherings of LME.

## LME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

### **LME International Organization**

Organizationally, International Lutheran Marriage Encounter is divided into such Regions as are deemed necessary to fulfill the mission. There are two established regions at the time of this publication.

### **North American Region**

North America including Canada, United States and Central America, plus islands usually associated with these areas. (South America and Antarctica plus islands usually associated with these areas are currently an outreach of the North American Region.)

The map that follows is a graphical representation of the North American Region.



### **European Region**

The Nordic countries, the United Kingdom, Ireland, all of Europe including Eastern and Western Europe plus islands usually associated with these areas. (Australia and Pacific Rim Asian countries plus islands usually associated with these areas are currently an outreach of the European Region.)

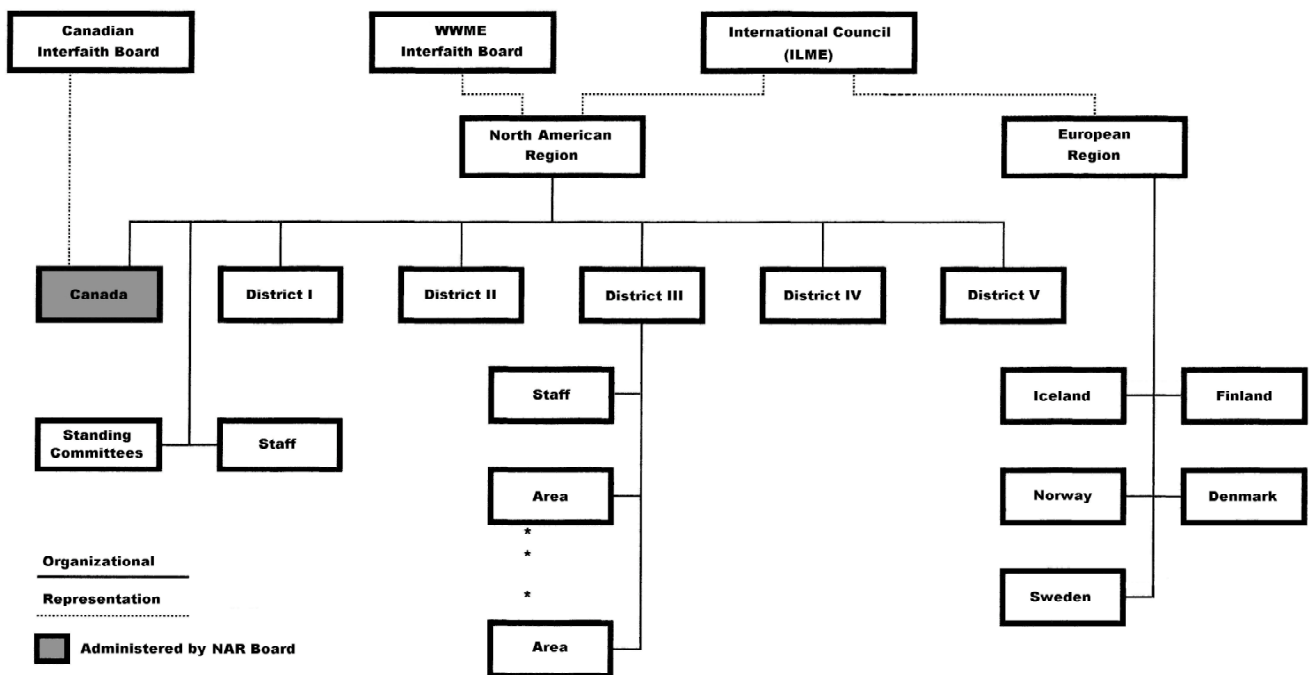
**Region Boundaries**

Changes or alterations in region boundaries, including the creation of new regions and the dissolution of current regions shall be the responsibility of the International Council. Such changes in region boundaries do not require formal changes to the By-laws.

**Board Membership**

Each established Region is represented on the International Board of LME by an elected Lay Presenting Couple and an elected Clergy Presenting Couple. These International Executive Couples serve a two-year term, beginning at the conclusion of the summer meeting on even years. This leadership position rotates among member Regions.

A diagram depicting the International and Regional Board membership and relationship to other parts of the LME International family is shown below.



## HISTORY OF LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

### **Roots In Spain**

Marriage Encounter had its beginnings in Barcelona, Spain, in the early 1950's. There Father Gabriel Calvo, a Roman Catholic priest, developed the "Encuentro Conjugal." The purpose of the Weekend was to strengthen the family unit by strengthening the married couple's relationship. Father Calvo brought the program to the United States where it was spread under the auspices of the Christian Family Movement. In 1968, Marriage Encounter in the United States evolved into two groups with slightly different focuses: National Marriage Encounter and Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

### **North America**

Father Charles Gallagher developed Father Calvo's program into what is known as Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Worldwide Marriage Encounter was started in New York City and has spread to most of North America and 56 other countries. The first Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend was hosted in Spokane, Washington, in October 1975.

Don and Karen Kurtz served as the first Executive Lay Couple and Phillip and Doreen Maakestad served as the first Executive Clergy Couple. Don and Karen were primarily responsible for the coordination of all the couples across the United States who wanted a Lutheran Marriage Encounter and drew them together into a cohesive organization that could support Lutheran Weekends across the nation.

In 1977, the Lutheran Expression of Marriage Encounter was incorporated as "Call to Be Family," and began to conduct Weekends as "Lutheran Marriage Encounter". The term "Expression" was dropped from its name at that time. The first organization was established to coordinate and direct the activities of LME.

### **Canada**

In November 1978, LME became an "International" organization when the first Canadian Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend was held in Ontario, followed by Weekends in Red Deer, Alberta. Now the Weekend experience has spread throughout the Provinces and the Areas in Canada are a vital part of Districts I, III, and V in the North American Region.

## **Europe**

In October 1980, Trygve and Sissel Erickson came to the U.S. to experience a Marriage Encounter Weekend. They met with Jim and June Harvey, who initiated contacts to further their vision of bringing LME to Norway. During the summer of 1981, Otto and Barb Tollefson prepared the way for Norway's first English-language Weekend in January 1982. The first Norwegian Weekend was in October 1984. This was the beginning of the European family and it continued to expand when, in December 1984, plans were made with the U.S. military community in Iceland and the Icelandic church for an LME Weekend in Iceland. The first Icelandic Weekend was held in April 1985 and included both military and local Icelandic couples. November 1987 saw the first Weekend in Finland.

## **South America**

In January 1981, Otto and Barb Tollefson made further contacts with couples they knew in Brazil. This effort eventually led to Doris and Orlando Kiel coming to the U.S. for an LME Weekend and Deeper Weekend in January 1983. Plans began for Weekends in Brazil. The first three Weekends were held in September and October of 1983. The Weekends were in Portuguese and formed the core communities of our South American family.

## **Australia**

Following several Lutheran couples attending an Anglican Weekend in Australia, efforts were made to begin LME there. With the assistance of Otto and Barb Tollefson, as well as financial assistance from the North American Districts, several Australian couples attended a Deeper in Columbus, Ohio, in 1988. In April of 1989 the first LME Weekend was held in Adelaide, Australia.

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **References**

Some references you may occasionally find to be useful are listed below and are available on the LME website.

1. Articles of Incorporation of Call To Be Family
2. Licensing Agreement (with Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Inc.)
3. Non-profit Determination by IRS
4. Charter

### **By-Laws of Call To Be Family**

d.b.a. INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

The current By-laws of Call To Be Family are available on the LME website.

## CONCEPTS PRESENTED ON LME WEEKENDS

**Weekend Concepts** A complete explanation of the concepts presented on an Encounter Weekend may be found in the Appendix.

## HOW TO OBTAIN RESOURCES

**Resource Couple** It is suggested that Districts appoint a Resource Couple who keeps files (or has access to files) of Circle presentations, Enrichment programs and any other documents pertaining to Lutheran Marriage Encounter. You can contact your District Resource Couple for help in planning community activities.

**Regional Resource Couple** The Regional Resource Couple is an appointed position by the Regional Executive Team. Their job is to keep all resources available for distribution as requested. These include but are not limited to the following:  
Weekend inviting ideas, outlines, information  
Spiral/Love Circle outlines and resources  
Publicity information and ideas

**How to Obtain Resources**

Web Site:	<a href="http://www.ILME.org">www.ILME.org</a>
Then:	Resources for Couples who have been on a Marriage Encounter Weekend
Then:	ILME--Post-Weekend Material
Then:	Download some documents, get dialogue helps
User Name:	<b>ILME couples</b>
Password:	<b>1010</b>

# LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

## Chapter 2

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

#### **Definition of an Area**

As a group of encountered couples gather together and begin forming plans and ideas for bringing LME into their Area, a very early question that gets asked is, "What's an AREA?" As we begin, it is most appropriate that we define the term because Areas are the common organizational denominator used within LME. Linked together with other Areas, they are the grass roots strength and backbone of LME.

According to the LME by-laws, an Area is defined as "a geographical location with an Area Lay Contact Couple and an Area Clergy Contact Couple, administrative board and Presenting Couples to support local Weekends". A new Area must have at least one clergy Presenting Couple. As can be expected, Areas tend to be formed close to population centers with enough Lutherans to support LME Weekends. When Weekends initially begin in an Area, the geographical base may be quite large. As more Weekends take place, new Areas are formed, as they are able to support their own Weekends. It is important to realize there is a diversity of size and organization of Areas within LME. Some Areas exist as a part of major metropolitan cities whereas others may encompass a much larger geographical area, perhaps more than one state. The focus of this handbook is directed primarily toward newly forming Areas, offering guidance and suggestions as to what Area leadership positions are needed with brief job descriptions for key Area positions.

### AREA LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LME

#### **Leadership Positions**

When an Area is going through its formative period, serious efforts should be directed toward filling key leadership positions. When an Area is preparing for Weekends, many tasks need to be performed and filling these positions at an early date is beneficial to everyone. Many of these positions have a direct link to similar District, Regional or International positions. A couple holding one of these positions may be subsequently elected to a District, Regional or International position. If this should happen, the couple's position at the local Area level should be filled as soon as possible from the Area, so that no one couple occupies two positions simultaneously.



**Leadership  
Positions**  
cont.

Following is the minimum "set" of key positions necessary in an Area organization:

Lay Contact Couple  
Clergy Contact Couple  
Presenting Couple Coordinator  
Registration Couple  
Finance Couple  
Supply Couple

In addition to the above positions, many other loving tasks need to be done to support Weekends. Each Area needs to form an organization that best meets their pre-Weekend, Weekend, and post-Weekend support activities and programs. (This manual does not intend to define specifically how the organization should be structured, but rather to address the loving tasks that need to be done in supporting LME Weekends. Many of these additional loving task positions are described in detail in Chapters 4 & 6.) Most Areas have established an Area Board consisting of couples holding these key positions whose purpose is to support, advise and assist the Area Contact Couples in leadership to their Area.

**Area Lay  
Contact  
Couple**

The Lay Contact Couple in an Area is the lay representative of that Area for LME. They represent their Area at District meetings or events as required. The Lay Contact Couple and the Clergy Contact Couple in an Area are the four individuals ultimately responsible for making decisions for the Area. The Lay Contact Couple needs to work closely with the Clergy Contact Couple to develop LME in their Area. These four individuals assign couples to the loving tasks necessary to plan, host and follow-up LME Weekends. As Lay Contact Couple, they are urged to establish and maintain close communications with other faith expressions of Marriage Encounter in their Area. The requirements for the position of Area Lay Contact Couple as identified in the LME By-laws, Section VIII are

1. Both must be Lutheran.
2. They must be an active Presenting Couple in the Area after the first LME Weekend in the Area. (Any temporary exceptions shall be with the approval of the District Lay and Clergy Contact Couples, and the Regional Board shall be advised of the exception.)

**Area Clergy Contact Couple**

The Clergy Contact Couple and Lay Contact Couple share community leadership responsibilities for their Area as they function as an Administrative Team. Close coordination and communication about Area activities is expected. The following requirements for Clergy Contact Couple are

1. Both must be Lutheran.
2. They must be an active presenting clergy couple in the Area after the first LME Weekend in the Area. (Any temporary exceptions will be with the approval of the District Lay and Clergy Contact Couples, and the Regional Board shall be advised of the exception).

**Area Presenting Couple Coordinator**

The Presenting Couple Coordinator shall be an active Presenting Couple and is responsible for Presenting Couple activities in the Area:

1. Provide kickoffs for potential Presenting Couples
2. Schedule new Presenting Couples for Deeper Weekends through the District Presenting Couple Coordinator
3. Schedule workshopping for Presenting Couples within the Area
4. Schedule Presenting Couples for all Area Weekends
5. Schedule Presenting Couple meetings for relationship and growth within the Presenting Couple Community
6. Work with District Presenting Couple Coordinator

The Presenting Couple Coordinator may involve other Presenting Couples in these tasks but they are all responsible to the Area Contact Couples.

It is LME policy that once an Area has become established (held two Weekends) the couple who holds the APCC position should not be one of the Area Contact Couples. In some Areas, the Presenting Couple Coordinators are appointed by the Contact Couples, while in other Areas, they are elected by the Area Presenting Couples. In any case they must be an active LME Presenting Couple.

**Area Finance Couple**

The Area Finance Couple is the keeper of the Area's Petty Cash funds. They are responsible for paying all reimbursable local bills submitted by couples in the Area. They approve all expenses to be paid from the District account prior to their submission to the District Finance Couple. They operate within the Financial Guidelines approved by the Regional Board and the Regional Finance Couple. They are required to submit copy of monthly bank statements to the District Finance Couple. This account is used to pay local LME bills and Area expenses. The Area Contact Couples appoint the Area Finance Couple. The Area Finance Couple does not need to be a Presenting Couple.

**Area  
Registration  
Couple**

The Area Registration Couple performs a very key position within the Area. They are the couple who handles all registrations for LME Weekends in the Area, and they handle the Weekend registration fees, sending these fees to the District Finance Couple. They operate within guidelines approved by the Regional Board and the Regional Registration Couple. The Area Registration Couple is an appointed position of the Area Contact Couples and the couple does not need to be a Presenting Couple.

**Area Supply  
Couple**

The Area Supply Couple handles all of the Weekend handouts, notebooks and other supplies for LME Weekends in the Area. They order the Weekend handouts and supplies periodically from the Regional Supply Couple. They also could be responsible for purchasing the local materials, medical and sundry supplies for the Weekend. The Area Supply Couple is an appointed position of the Area Contact Couples and the couple does not need to be a Weekend Presenting Couple

**Other Loving  
Tasks  
Supporting  
the Weekend**

There are many other loving tasks that are needed to support LME Weekends and follow up in an Area. Couples holding these positions do not have to be Presenting Couples:

- Information Presentation Coordinator
- Weekend Coordinator
- Hosting (Friday Night) Coordinators
- Prayer Couple Coordinator
- Facility Couple
- Banner Couple
- Sing-off Couple
- Potluck Coordinator
- Accessory Couple (Donation items - calendars and jewelry)
- Newsletter Editor Couple
- Newsletter Mailing Crew Coordinators
- Post Weekend Coordinators
- Special/Community Events Couple
- Weekend Renewal Coordinators

## **AREA ORGANIZATION SET-UP**

**Flexibility** In a new LME Area, an organization must be set up to meet the unique needs of that Area in support of their Weekend. As a result, the structure may differ so that each Area has the flexibility to adapt and set up their organization to best meet their community's needs.

**Area Board** In general, the structure should be set up to best administer the pre- and post-Weekend programs as well as ensuring that all of the Weekend support functions get done. The Contact Couples are ultimately responsible for decisions in an Area, but having a support group of couples to share this responsibility with them is beneficial to the Area as well as to the Contact Couples. This support group is commonly referred to as the Area Board.

**Area Board Composition** The Area Board is usually composed of 6-10 couples and meets with the Area Contact Couples on a regular basis. The basic recommendation to a new Area concerning the membership of the Area Board would be to include enough couples holding key positions so that the board represents fairly the pre-Weekend, Weekend, and post-Weekend activities and support tasks. The North America Regional Board recommends Area Board meetings at least quarterly and more frequently when necessary.

As an Area grows, hosts more Weekends, and more couples become involved in supporting tasks, the coordination efforts of the Contact Couples also grow. Most Areas have grouped support tasks under several couples who, in turn, work with the Area Contact Couples. Typical grouping under Pre-Weekend, Weekend Support and Post-Weekend serves to ease the coordination efforts of the Area Contact Couples and give more couples an opportunity to lead and be a part of a growing ministry.

## FINANCES

<b>General</b>	The money donated to Lutheran Marriage Encounter is tax exempt and is used for the operation of the organization and for the continuation for the Weekends. All of us who use these funds will want to keep faith with the couples who gave the donations, and with the Lord, who has so abundantly provided for our every need.
<b>Expense Reimbursement</b>	Lutheran Marriage Encounter will fully reimburse allowable Weekend related expenses incurred by a couple doing the work of Lutheran Marriage Encounter.
<b>Documentation</b>	All requests for reimbursement should be documented with paid receipts, bill vouchers, travel vouchers, etc., and be enclosed with the reimbursement form. <u>No documentation means no refunds by LME Finance Couples!</u>
<b>Accountability</b>	All monies and financial transactions of the LME organization are accountable to the Regional Board. Each Area offering Weekends shall have an Area Finance Couple appointed by and accountable to the Area Contact Couples and the District Finance Couple.
<b>Reporting</b>	The Area Finance Couple sends their monthly bank statement to the District Finance Couple who reports to the Regional Finance Couple.
<b>A Single Family</b>	District and National Finance Couples handle receipts and expenses for their Districts or Countries, but the finances of LME are considered to be an International resource that is handled on a "single family" basis.
<b>Area Bank Accounts</b>	Each Area offering Weekends will establish a petty cash account. This account is tied to the Regional account by the U.S. IRS tax number 91-1003177. The account shall be titled, "Call to be Family d.b.a. Lutheran Marriage Encounter." The District Finance Couple shall use the address of the Area Finance Couple on the Area's petty cash account. It is expected that the Area petty cash account will be used to pay for Weekend supplies and expenses, and normal Area expenses, except for those items specifically designated as Regional and District account expenses.

<b>Receipts to District Account</b>	All cash receipts (including checks) must be sent to the District Finance Couple for deposit in a District account. Funds will be made available to Area accounts as required to cover Area expenses. Requests for those funds should be directed to the District Finance Couple.
<b>Registration Fees</b>	LME is a non-profit corporation. The Weekend registration fee is non-refundable but can be transferred to any Encounter Weekend.
<b>Tax Deductibility</b>	Weekend donations above the fair market value of the Weekend are tax deductible. A statement to this effect is given during the Sharing in the Dream presentation.
<b>Discontinuing an Area</b>	In the event an Area should cease to offer Weekends, any capital property and monies (petty cash) shall be returned to the District Finance Couple.
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	The fiscal year of LME ends July 31 of each year.
<b>Tax Records</b>	All cancelled checks, bills, and reconciled financial records are to be kept at all levels for seven years in case there is an audit by the IRS.
<b>Audits</b>	Area petty cash accounts shall be audited July 31 of each year by the Area Lay Contact Couple. An audit is also conducted whenever a new Area Finance Couple is named. Details of audits shall be sent to the District Finance Couple and the District Contact Couples. National Finance Couples within Districts outside the United States shall report their Area audits to the representative District of which they are a part.
<b>IRS Restrictions</b>	IRS regulations place some restrictions on the disbursement of our funds: "No part of the income of the corporation shall incurr to the benefit of any member, trustee, officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets (as in the Articles of Incorporation of LME). The Corporation (The Regional Board of LME) does have the right to authorize the payment of reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distribution of funds consistent with the purposes of LME.

**LME  
Regional  
Account**

The LME Regional Finance Couple who is accountable to the Regional Board will administer the LME Regional Account. Paragraph VII of the By-laws outlines the responsibilities of the Regional Finance Couple.

The following expenses are the only expenses recognized for payment by the LME Regional Finance account.

1. Insurance
2. Accounting services
3. Regional Executive Couples' expenses (phone, parking, work loss, babysitting, postage, stationery, printing, pulpit supply, etc.)
4. Regional staff expenses (see above)
5. Regional Staff, Board and Executive couples' travel
6. Regional newsletter (postage included)
7. Regional Board facilities only
8. Regional miscellaneous (inter-faith, fees for WWME, etc)
9. The Regional Finance Couple shall maintain a "family reserve fund" which may be utilized to supplement District funds, when necessary, for Regional and International expansion, and other Weekend related activities of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, also known as Call To Be Family, as may be stipulated by the Regional Board.

All requests for reimbursement should be documented with paid receipts, bill vouchers, travel vouchers, etc., and be enclosed with the reimbursement form. No documentation means no refunds by LME finance couples!

**LME District  
Account**

The LME District Accounts are an extension of the family checking account although they may be kept in a different bank. The LME District Finance Couple, who is accountable to the LME Regional Board, The Regional Finance Couple and the District Contact Couples, will administer the LME District Account. Two signatures are required to sign District checks. Signatures on file with the bank will be those of the District Finance Couple, the District Contact Couples and the Regional Finance Couple.

**LME District  
Account  
(cont.)**

The expenses listed below are normally submitted to the District Finance Couple for payment. The Regional and/or District Contact Couples will deal with exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Note: All requests for reimbursement should be documented with paid receipts, bill vouchers, travel vouchers etc. and be enclosed with the reimbursement form. No documentation means no refunds by LME Finance couples.

1. Weekend travel for Presenting Couples:
  - a. Related to the giving of a Weekend
  - b. Related to workshopping of talks
2. District business travel between major cities or Areas
3. Automobile expenses, as related to #1 and #2 above, to be reimbursed at current IRS rate per mile for charitable organizations, but not to exceed alternate airfare
4. Deeper travel for Presenting Couples and couples attending Deeper Weekends (see #2)
5. Babysitting-reimbursement for babysitting only under extenuating circumstances, with the approval of the District and/or Regional Contact Couples, and only when it pertains to District and/or Regional business
6. Weekend supplies (pens, notebooks, etc.)
7. First three start-up issues of local newsletters (postage included)
8. Weekend facility bills
9. Petty Cash to local Areas: maintenance of Petty Cash Fund in local Areas not to exceed \$500 balance, and reimbursed on a "need-basis" to the local Areas by a "Request for Reimbursement Form" sent by the Area Finance Couple to the District Finance Couple
10. Postage for the District Contact Couples and phone expenses when related to District matters
11. Postage and stationery for pre and/or post-Weekend letters sent by Presenting Couples
12. Paper and copy expenses for Weekend Talks
13. Printing and copying for District and Weekend functions
14. Pulpit replacement for clergy giving a Weekend or attending District meetings; expense limited to the amount the congregation normally pays for a replacement, but not to exceed \$100 unless approved by the District Finance Couple and/or the District Contact Couples
15. Telephone expenses for District or Presenting Couples (when Weekend related). Couples desiring reimbursement should keep phone expenses to a minimum by finding and using the most economical calling plans, including email
16. \$200 to be given to a new Area when they are authorized to give a Weekend to help buy supplies for the Weekend



**LME District  
Account  
(cont.)**

- 17.** The District Finance Couple is to submit a standardized monthly finance report to the Regional Finance Couple, and also a Weekend analysis report - after all Weekend expenses are complete. This report is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month.
- 18.** The District Finance Couple is to submit \$35 per couple completing a Weekend to the Regional Finance Couple. Monies are to be sent in on a monthly basis.
- 19.** The District Finance Couple is to submit a monthly report to the District Lay and Clergy Contact Couples.
- 20.** Any District maintaining a balance of more than \$10,000 for two consecutive months shall submit the excess amount over \$10,000 to the Regional Finance Couple, to be placed in the "family reserve fund." Although the Regional LME Board has set a "maximum" amount of \$10,000 for the District account, if history shows your District can operate with a lower maximum fund amount, then "in love for the ME family and the dream," transfer the surplus to your Regional Finance Couple.

The District Finance Couple will transfer from District funds to the local Area Petty Cash Funds the necessary funds for the local Areas to pay their expenses. The present maximum amount to maintain in the Petty Cash Funds for local Areas is \$500 per the LME Regional Board. Excess funds are to be transferred to the District quarterly

## AREA PETTY CASH ACCOUNTS

**Area Finance Couple Guidelines** The Area Finance Couple who is accountable to the Area Contact Couple and District Finance Couple will administer the Area petty cash account. While it is desired that *two authorized signatures* be on petty cash account checks, only one of six authorized signatures need be required for signing Area checks. The Area finance couple shall submit a copy of the monthly bank statement and check register to the District Finance Couple. Separate records must be kept locally for proceeds from donation items (for example, candles, calendars, etc.) with accountability to the District Finance Couple. Donation proceeds will be sent to the District Finance Couple for deposit in order to comply with IRS requirements.

**Allowable Expenses** The following expenses are normally submitted to the local Area Finance Couple for payment. The District Contact Couples and/or District Finance Couple will deal with exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

1. All Communion supplies for the Weekend
2. Medical and snack table supplies for the Weekend
3. Reasonable and appropriate expenses incurred by pre-Weekend and/or post-Weekend planning meetings or activities
4. Local Newsletter: printing, postage and related expenses (after first 3 issues)
5. Banners - although materials and services are usually donated by local community couples, expenses can be reimbursed by the local Area with the approval of the Area Board.
6. Babysitting - reimbursement for babysitting should be made only under unusual circumstances - with the approval of the Area Contact couples - when it pertains to Area business.
7. All bills should be submitted no later than two months after the expense is incurred.

**Designated Responsibilities**

1. Twice a year, the Area Finance Couple is to put something in their local newsletter encouraging couples to spend LME funds wisely.
2. In each issue of the Area newsletter, the Area Finance Couple should have a notation about how and where couples can still donate to Lutheran Marriage Encounter, i.e. The District Finance Couple and the appropriate mailing address.
3. All bills should be submitted no later than two months after the expense is incurred.

**Designated  
Responsibilities (cont.)**

4. THE WEEKEND FACILITY BILLS ARE TO GO TO THE AREA FINANCE COUPLE and/or FACILITY COUPLE FOR APPROVAL BEFORE BEING SENT TO THE DISTRICT FINANCE COUPLE. That "bill review" couple should check the facility bills for errors. This also gives the local couples the knowledge to work with the facility and to correct any problems that may have arisen.
5. For reimbursement, claims must go through the Area Finance Couple for approval and signature, except travel and Regional expenses of District and Regional Contact Couples and Staff couples.
6. A standardized reimbursement form is to be used by all local Areas and copies of paid expenses, receipts, etc. should be maintained in local finance records.
7. All local finances are to be audited by the Lay or Clergy Contact couple of the Area and/or Area designee, at least once a year and whenever a new Area finance couple begins their term. Copies of their reports should be sent to the District Finance Couple.
8. Forward all bills that are "District expenses" directly to the District Finance couple, for payment, etc.
9. Pay to Area couples all local incurred expenses from the Area Petty Cash Fund. Only if Area funds are very low, should the Area Finance Couple mail the bills directly to the District Finance Couple for payment.
10. The District Finance Couple will transfer from District funds to the Area Petty Cash Funds the necessary funds for the Areas to pay their expenses. The present maximum amount to maintain in the Petty Cash Funds for Areas is \$500 per the LME Regional Board. Excess funds are to be transferred to District.
11. Separate records are to be kept locally for proceeds from specified local donations with accountability to the District Finance Couple. Donations will be sent directly to the District Finance Couple for deposit.
12. All registration money and specified donations for Areas that are to be used as tax deductions must be sent to the District Finance Couple. Those specified donations for the Areas should be properly marked and they will be returned to the Area. We need to do this because LME is not incorporated in each state.
13. Only one of eight (8) authorized signatures need be required for signing checks on the Area Petty Cash Account. Signatures on file with the bank will be the Area Finance Couple, Area Lay Contact Couple, Area Clergy Contact Couple and the District Finance Couple.
14. The Area Finance Couple and the District Finance Couple to facilitate auditing should keep accurate records on all income and expenditures.

**Points of Information**

1. All Registration Fees for Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends will be as set by the Region Board.
2. The Region Board sets the amount quoted on the Weekend. This amount will be reviewed at least annually.
3. All Weekend proceeds and statements, bills, etc. are to be mailed **NO LATER THAN THE FRIDAY FOLLOWING THE WEEKEND**, to the District Finance Couple! No cash should be sent only personal checks, certified checks and/or money orders.  
Note: Mailing of Weekend proceeds is the responsibility of the Admin couple on the Weekend.} Common courtesy dictates prompt notification of any problems related to the above, including cancellation of Weekends. Notification to the District Finance Couple and the District Contact Couples is to be made by the Area Contact Couple.
4. All requests for reimbursement should be documented with paid receipts, bill vouchers, travel vouchers, etc., and be enclosed with a reimbursement form. No documentation means no refunds by LME finance couples.
5. Any Areas with more than \$500 in Petty Cash funds should send the excess funds to the District Finance Couple. This is not an issue of "control" but of "Good Stewardship" of the Marriage Encounter Family money. The flow of financial information to the appropriate "boards" is vital for the success of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. Although the LME Board has set a "maximum" amount of \$500 for the Areas' petty cash funds, if history shows your Area can operate with a lower maximum fund amount, then "in love for the LME family and the dream" transfer the surplus to your District Finance Couple.
6. All financial reports should be mathematically correct and completely filled out before being submitted. Auditing is the responsibility, on each level - Area, District, etc. - by the appropriate contact couples or designated members of the Boards.
7. All funds belong to the entire "Family" to be shared freely, as needed, not held locally against vague future expenses.
8. The District Presenting Couples, District Finance Couples and Regional Finance Couples are to be viewed as resources to help Areas or individuals work out unusual problems.

**Local Donations**

The Area Petty Cash account is funded from District monies. Donations to LME given at a time other than on the Weekend can be designated for use in the local Area at the request of the donors. However because of IRS regulations, such a donation must be routed through the District or Regional Account. An LME check will then be sent back to the Area's Finance for the Area Account. All undesignated donations shall be retained in the Regional Account for use throughout the family.

**Reimbursement Procedure**

All requests for reimbursement from Area, District or Regional accounts must be accompanied by a "Request for Reimbursement" voucher, available from Area, District or Regional Finance Couples. A sample voucher is included in the appendix of this handbook. It can be reproduced locally.

**Approval**

All requests for reimbursement for local expenses must be sent to the Area Finance Couple for approval signature. This need was established because it has become increasingly difficult for the District or Regional Finance Couple to verify expenses since they are not in direct contact with each couple presenting reimbursement vouchers. It is judged that Area Finance Couples can more easily verify local expenses.

Invoices for the Weekend facility and meal costs shall be routed to the Weekend Admin Couple and/or the Area Finance Couple for approval before being sent to the District Finance Couple for payment. This is primarily so Areas can verify the accuracy of the invoice before sending it to the District Finance Couple. This may also give Area couples some bargaining power in arranging for Weekend facilities or to work out any problems that may have arisen with a facility.

**Other Bills**

It is the responsibility of the Area Finance Couple to forward only appropriate bills to the District Finance Couple. It is the responsibility of the District Finance Couple to forward only appropriate bills to the Regional Finance Couple.

**INSURANCE**

**Property Insurance**

Insurance coverage is not provided for LME supplies or property stored in homes of Area Supply Couple or the Contact Couples. If not covered under the couple's individual homeowner's policy, the risk of loss and subsequent replacement will be borne by LME.

**Other Insurance**

Liability insurance for the Weekends and reunions is available through Worldwide Marriage Encounter. The District and Regional Finance Couples are to be bonded.

## **PROPERTY**

**Purchases** As a general policy, LME is trying to minimize the amount of capital equipment it owns in each Area. Each Area is encouraged to try to find alternate means of acquiring or borrowing equipment for use before considering a purchase.

**Fund Raising** Questions regarding fund raising should be referred to the District Contact Couples. If we answer our call to give the gift of the Weekend to new couples, "fund raising" will be unnecessary.

# LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

## Chapter 3

### PRE-WEEKEND

**Inviting** Strong and effective inviting is essential for the life and continued growth of the community. Sharing our Weekend gift is the lifeblood of Marriage Encounter. Couples may register by completing a Weekend registration brochure and paying a non-refundable registration fee.

The best way to invite couples to attend a Weekend is to simply invite them. One-on-one invitations, especially by couples who have just discovered the beauty of a Weekend, are a very personal way to share your love.

### INFORMATION PRESENTATION

**What Is It?** An Information Presentation is a meeting where pre-Encountered couples learn about Marriage Encounter and the Weekend registration procedure and where their questions can be answered. Encountered couples are encouraged to accompany their pre-Encountered friends and/or relatives to the presentation. An Information Presentation may be given to a couple one-on-one; in situations where distance is a problem, the presentation may be made by telephone, but both husband and wife should be listening.

**All Couples Should Hear One** It is strongly encouraged that all couples hear an Information Presentation as a couple, so both may hear the same information and be able to mutually decide whether to attend the Weekend or not. Some Areas even make this a requirement. Some Registration Couples mail the Inviting Video to couples who have not heard an Information Presentation.

**Light Mood** It is very important to note the atmosphere of these presentations; keep in mind that too serious an atmosphere is likely to turn off a couple.

**Presentation** One or two couples may present the Information Presentation talk. All information talks should be presented with the same care as a Weekend talk. An alternative presentation is the videotape currently available from the District or Regional Supply Couples. It includes reactions of couples attending a Weekend.

## **OPTIONAL INFORMATION MEETING FORMATS**

**Options** In-home presentations can be a successful, intimate way to register couples for a Weekend, but the same care and format should go into such a presentation as would for a larger group. Time can also be arranged at the end of a church service, or between services, to provide an Information Presentation.

Helpful suggestions include offering babysitting for both Encountered and pre-Encountered couples attending the Information Presentation, and finding excuses to celebrate, like a Sunday Sundae Information Presentation, or an Enhance the Romance Night. Be creative. Check with the National Resource Couple for more Inviting ideas.

**Timing** Information meetings need not be restricted to a date immediately after a Weekend. They may be held to meet each Area's needs. Usually an Information Presentation is held one to three weeks after a Weekend, when newly Encountered couples do their best inviting and have a specific place to bring their pre-Encountered couples for information. Advance announcement of Information Presentations should appear in Area newsletters and could also be put into church newsletters and bulletins in the Area.

**Facility** A facility must be secured well in advance. It should have a room that will comfortably seat the number of couples anticipated, be fairly easy to locate geographically, and have no other activities or meetings planned which could disrupt the presentation. If it is held at a church, it is suggested a letter be sent in advance to the church council asking permission to use their facility and afterwards to thank them. This serves also to get Marriage Encounter's name in more common use.



**Refreshments** Encountered couples usually are asked to bring a snack but the Presenting Couple should be at the facility well in advance (if there is no special couple in the Area to do this loving task) to prepare coffee or punch and greet the couples.

## **INFORMATION PRESENTATION COORDINATOR COUPLE**

**General Responsibilities** In order to provide the help we need in keeping our focus on inviting, it is recommended that each Area have an Information Presentation Coordinator Couple. This couple would specifically handle all aspects of Information Presentations:

1. Secure a facility
2. Arrange for Presenting Couples
3. Give Information Presentation training for Presenting Couples and/or workshop talks
4. Maintain a supply of pamphlets, nametags and other aids
5. If possible, set up facility, be present at Information Presentation itself, and help in collecting Weekend registration cards
6. See that registration cards and registration fees get to the appropriate couple for confirmation and scheduling

## **GUIDELINES FOR INFORMATION PRESENTATION COORDINATOR COUPLE**

- Selection of Date**
1. Information Presentations generally follow approximately 1-3 weeks after LME Weekends to allow new couples to bring their friends.
  2. Review the proposed date for your Area with Contact Couple and/or Weekend Admin Presenting Couple.
    - a. Consider occasionally alternating days or nights of the week
    - b. Avoid conflicts with other ME events and Weekends if possible.
  3. Locate the facility. Important things to remember are a warm setting, away from other noises or distractions, adequate size of room, easy to locate geographically and the cost charged.
  4. When dates and locations have been established, notify the Area Newsletter Couple so event can be published at least a month in advance.
  5. Schedule Presenting Couples. Assist them in preparing or updating their talks if necessary.
    - a. First time Information Presentation - talks must be workshopped.
    - b. Maintain a file of all talks prepared in case a couple loses theirs.

**One Week  
Before  
Information  
Presentation**

1. Confirm Presenting Couples and facility
  - a. Arrange to have door open 1 hour before starting or get keys.
  - b. Reaffirm permission to use kitchen equipment.
  - c. Determine lock-up procedure.
2. Materials and/or supplies needed
  - a. Coffee, tea and/or other beverage
  - b. Cups, napkins
  - c. Sugar, cream
  - d. Name tags, marking pens
  - e. LME brochures
  - f. Reservation cards
  - g. Calendar
  - h. Receipt book
  - i. Stapler (to secure cash/checks to registration cards)
  - j. Sign for door to identify entrance to be used

**Day of  
Presentation**

1. Open facility about 1 hour before designated time.
2. Set up refreshments.
3. Set up outside directional sign if needed.
4. Set up guest sign-in table (nametags, felt pens).
5. Set up chairs and head table or chairs for speakers.
6. Have brochures readily and visibly available.
7. Determine if P.A. system is needed depending on size of room/group.
8. Set up and test video (if it is to be used).

**As Couples  
Arrive**

1. Greet them warmly.
2. Invite them to put on a nametag and give them a brochure.
3. Begin talk no later than 15 minutes after posted starting time.
4. Invite them to have coffee or beverage while waiting.

**As  
Reservations  
Are Received**

1. As registration cards are collected, staple the check or cash to card.
2. Make sure all spaces are filled in.
3. Verify that each name on the card is the one desired on a nametag on the Weekend. Ask the couple to indicate if nicknames are preferred.
4. Answer as many questions as you can concerning their Weekend. If necessary refer them to the Area Contact Couple(s).

- After Couples Leave**
1. Help clean up facility if necessary.
  2. Verify that the facilities are safe (coffee pots off, doors locked, etc).
  3. Get registration cards to the Reservation Couple as soon as possible after the Information Presentation.
  4. Send thank you note to facility for letting LME use it.

## **THE PRESENTING COUPLES**

**General** The Presenting Couples should be well informed of the Area's registration procedure and the non-refundable registration fee. The Presenting Couples may also assist the Information Presentation coordinator in setting up the facility.

**Outline** An outline for guidance in preparing the Information Presentation may be found in the Appendix. The points in the outline should be covered, but in the couple's own words.

The talk should be 20 to 30 minutes long and be informative, informal and light-hearted. The Presenting Couple's task is to stimulate the interest of those listening, so how it's presented may have as much impact as what is presented. It is important that couple closeness be apparent, but comfortable, and that the couples presenting the information have a commitment to the Weekend and their relationship.

**Two Couples** Having two couples present is an optional format that has been used in some communities. If used, this could be done with two lay couples or a lay couple and clergy couple presenting the talk together. This gives the pre-Encountered couples an opportunity to identify with more couples. It also gives them a taste of having two couples presenting as they do on a Weekend. When two couples present together, the combined talks should be a maximum of 30 minutes long with care taken to avoid duplication of information.

## REGISTRATION CARD

**Standard Form** A standard registration card has been developed for use in registering couples. The use of this card is recommended. The card is so designed that it can be used as the permanent file record as well as the fact that it fits neatly within an LME brochure. A sample is shown in the Appendix and is available from the District or Regional Supply Couple. (This card format is recommended rather than an 8 1/2" x 11" form. Information on a form that has to be transferred to a card not only increases the time and effort required of the Reservation Couple, but also increases the possibility of errors.)

**Locally Developed Registration Forms** If the standard registration card is not used, and a local Area form is substituted, NO MORE information other than required by the recommended form shall be requested. The information required on the recommended card is all the information necessary for the conduct of registering for the Weekend. Anything more (inquiries whether this is the couple's first or second marriage, occupation, etc.) is considered an invasion of the couple's privacy.

## INFORMATION PRESENTATION TO PASTORS

**Approaching Clergy** It is surprising and disillusioning to realize how many pastors know little or nothing about LME. Many do not even realize that Weekends are available in their own city. Nearly every metropolitan area has organizations for the clergy to meet together in small groups. Your own pastor can tell you when and where these groups meet and how you can request to be "the program" at one of the meetings. An information outline for use with pastors is included in the Appendix. Be relaxed and conversational. Clergy are people too. Just tell them what the Weekend meant for you and offer to help them tell their congregations about the Weekends in your Area.

**Presentation Outline To Pastors** An information outline for use with pastors is included in the Appendix.

## AREA REGISTRATION SYSTEM AND POLICIES

- Records** The task of the Registration Couple primarily involves maintaining accurate records of couples waiting to go on a Weekend. The records maintained by the registration couple become permanent records and should not be destroyed. Weekend Registration cards filled out by pre-Encountered couples becomes the basic records for the Area Registration Couple.
- Carryover Registrations** Some Areas only schedule a couple three times for a Weekend after which the registration is automatically committed to inactive status. This is NOT the recommended practice and is strongly discouraged. If a couple repeatedly cancels, they should be contacted to see what THEY desire. Sometimes some of the most active couples in the community are those who had cancelled many times. No additional registration fee should ever be requested.
- Weekend Quotas** In order to be good stewards of LME funds, it is our goal to have full Weekends. The NAR Regional Board will periodically review and determine the need for a minimum quota.
- Lutheran/ Non-Lutheran Ratio** The Weekend quota of 60% Lutheran couples is *required* by the by-laws. A couple is considered Lutheran for this quota if either one or both are Lutheran. This quota was established because experience in other expressions has shown this is the ideal quota for the continuation of necessary growth. While each Weekend need not meet this criterion, the 60/40 ratio must be maintained as an average over the period of a year.
- Response to Homosexual Couples Requesting To Attend A Weekend** “International Lutheran Marriage Encounter has been designed to nurture and strengthen heterosexual marriages. We do not have the resources or preparation to provide that same support to homosexual relationships.” [If appropriate, add, “If you have additional questions please contact \_\_\_\_ (National Execs).”]

**Transfer  
From Other  
Expressions**

If a couple has registered with another expression and wishes to attend a Lutheran Weekend, the couple should complete an LME registration form. Contact the other expression's Registration Couple and request the fee be transferred to LME. (It has been found helpful when the transfer is made by phone to record the other expression Registration couple's name and phone number, etc.)

**Registration  
Fee Transfer**

Transfers to another expression can be best accomplished by sending the other expression a file card. Complete a reimbursement form listing the name of the couple transferring and name and address to which the check should be sent. Send the reimbursement form to the Area Finance Couple. The Area Finance Couple will forward the funds directly to the other expression.

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER  
COMMUNITY HANDBOOK  
Chapter 4**

**WEEKEND PROCEDURES**

**Community Involvement** While the events of the Weekend itself are in the hands of the Weekend presenting team, the Marriage Encounter community is responsible for preparation and clean up. The Area Supply Couple and the Weekend Host Couple will coordinate these responsibilities. It should be understood, however, that assistance from the Encountered community is vital if a Weekend is to succeed.

**Weekend Duties** Specifics of Weekend preparation are listed in the job description sheets of the Supply and Weekend Host couples (as well as the Prayer Couple Coordinators) which will be found at the end of this chapter. The duties listed do not necessarily have to be done by that couple, but all duties need to be covered. In some Areas, Love Circles or other community groups meet to make small Weekend banners, stuff Care Packages, etc. It is suggested that the Supply and Host couples work together to coordinate the necessary tasks.

**Community Presence on a Weekend** Community prayer support as the Weekend unfolds is a vital part of the Weekend's success; however, there should be *no community presence* during the Weekend itself. Once the participant couples enter the conference room on Friday evening, only the presenting team should have any contact with them until the Sunday evening close of the Weekend.

**Contact Couple** Some Areas designate a Weekend Contact Couple who is responsible for running errands, making calls or doing anything needed outside the conference room. If an Area thinks it is necessary to have a Contact Couple at the facility, they are not part of the Weekend presenting team and should not be involved with the presenters. It is the responsibility of the Admin Couple to notify the Contact Couple of any needs they have. A Contact Couple's room cost is not an approved LME expense.

## AREA SUPPLY COUPLE

- Duties**
1. Handles all of the Weekend handouts, notebooks and other supplies for LME Weekends
  2. Orders Weekend handouts and supplies periodically from the Regional Supply Couple
  3. Purchases local materials such as workbook covers, medical and sundry supplies for the Weekend
  4. Is an appointed position of the Area Contact Couples
  5. Should not be a Weekend Presenting Couple

**Source for Supplies and Information** Standard supplies such as workbooks, notebooks, brochures, etc., are available from the Regional Supply Couple. Last-minute orders should be avoided. Contact information for Regional Supply Couple is available in Call To Be Family or on the ILME website.

**Weekend Boxes, Tables And Supplies** All established Areas have worked out detailed lists of items needed to support a Weekend and are fairly standard. While generally considered the responsibility of the Area Supply Couple, some Areas have designated other couples to help in this task.

**Admin Box** This box is for the use of the Weekend Presenting Couples and is customarily left in the Admin Couple's room on Friday night. It contains items required during the course of the Weekend:

Song books*	Stapler, extra staples
Community history	Tape (masking & scotch)
Black markers	A small supply of ballpoint pens
Stationery & envelopes	Large envelopes for donations
Matches	Scissors
Basket to collect envelopes	Extension cord
Extra candle (Large)	Paper clips
Extra blank prayer slips	Blank meal place cards
Timer	CD player
Blank name tags	CD's containing Weekend songs**

\* Specific commercially available songbooks used during the services or before presentations are optional and are furnished by the Area presenting the Weekend, at Area expense. (Commercial songbooks must be used rather than duplicated songbooks due to copyright laws.)

\*\* If a single CD containing all Weekend songs is used, original CD's must still be stored in Admin box for copyright purposes.



**Weekend Handouts**

It is Lutheran Marriage Encounter policy that only the following handouts be used on a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend:

1. Matrimonial Evaluation - 1 per person (folded/stapled to show only first question). Sufficient number pre-counted (80) plus extras
2. There's a New World Somewhere - 1 per couple
3. Finance Envelopes - 1 per couple
4. Care Kits or Care Packages – 1 per couple

It is suggested that a list of items contained inside be placed on the outside of the Admin box. In addition, the names and phone numbers of several community helpers to contact in case of emergency or other needs should be placed in the box.

**Clergy Supply Box**

This box may be separate or a part of the Admin box but should include:

Altar cloth	Chalice and paten
Napkin	Table cross
Timer	Two candles with holders
Stole	Local clergy approved tape
Bread	Wine
Corkscrew	

Occasionally the clergy Presenting Couple will prefer to use some of their own supplies. The Contact Couple should check with them ahead of the Weekend to determine this. Any items made or purchased for Marriage Encounter Weekends for use by the clergy couple (i.e., chalice and paten, cross, stole, etc.) *should NOT bear the Marriage Encounter symbol. This is an LME policy.*

**Medical  
Kit/Supply  
Table**

Medical and sundry items should be available to couples on the Weekend on a NO-DONATION basis. Such items may include:

Aspirin	Tylenol or ibuprophen
Antacid tablets (8-10 rolls)	Breath fresheners (8-10 rolls)
Deodorant (few small bottles)	Shampoo (few small bottles)
One small sewing kit	One box of Band-Aids
Kleenex (6 boxes)	Mouthwash (3 small bottles)
Shaving cream (2 small cans)	Tampons (one box)
Sanitary napkins (1 box)	Midol or Pamprin
Exlax or similar laxative	Kaopectate
Disposable razors (2 packages)	Toothbrushes (5)
Matchbooks	Assorted pins (all sizes)
Antihistamine tablets (1 bottle)	First aid spray or ointment
Toothpaste (5 small tubes)	Cough syrup (1 bottle)
Visine or Murine (1 bottle)	Hair spray (2 small cans)
Chewing gum (8-10 packs)	Hand lotion (1 bottle)
Nail files or clipper	Contraceptives (4-6 boxes)
Cold capsules (1 package)	Cough drops (2-4 boxes or bags)

Shopping during sales and buying "sample" sizes keeps costs down on these items. Items such as gum or breath mints can be opened and placed in dishes to encourage couples to take one piece rather than the whole package. It is suggested the Presenting Couples be made aware of the nearest drug or variety store in case an emergency need arises from one of the Weekend couples.

**Extra  
Conference  
Room  
Supplies for  
Weekend**

Extra pens should be available on the supply table in the conference room. Extra spiral notebooks (at least 20 should be available) should be stored under the conference table. Presenting Couples will get them out prior to the Extended Dialogue time on the Weekend.

**The Snack  
Table – at  
Area's  
Discretion**

The snack table is set up in the conference room to provide beverages and munchies for the Weekend couples. If the snack table needs to be in the conference room, it should be in a back corner or side away from the entrance to the conference room. If space allows, it is best to set up coffee and beverages on another table separate from the snacks to reduce congestion in the room. Included on the table should be the following:

Beverage supplies such as cups, creamer, sugar, etc., if not provided by facility	Napkins Small plates Sharp knife
---	--

**Other  
Weekend  
Supplies** (not  
listed  
elsewhere)

The following items are used in some Areas for extra frills. They are an Area option: table candles for Saturday evening dinner, bud vases for Saturday evening dinner, bud vases for participants' rooms, flowers and mini-banners for participants. These are not included in Area expenses and should be donated by community.

**Care  
Kits/Care  
Packages**

A Care Package should be prepared for each couple attending the Weekend. Include extras for Presenting Couples. Items to include:

Weekend Renewal information	90 Dialogue Questions
LME bumper sticker	WEDS Manual
Presenting Couples' address, phone and email	LME window decal
Scripture Dialogue	Call to Be Family
Electronic information (LME website, etc.)	Local newsletter
	2 or more Inviting brochures
	Other items at Area's discretion

**Post Weekend  
Duties**

Sort through the Admin Box and Clergy Box and replenish all supplies in preparation for the next Weekend.

Replenish any supplies to medical kit, host supplies or registration supplies in preparation for the next Weekend.

## WEEKEND HOSTING COUPLE

### Hosting Couple Responsibilities

1. Be present on Friday night at the facility to set up and direct the check-in of the Weekend couples.
2. Be available during the Weekend if an outside need arises from one of the participants or a Presenting Couple.
3. Make sure the post Weekend list is prepared and delivered to the Admin Presenting Couple, usually prior to Sunday noon.
4. Be present Sunday evening to help take down banners and clean up conference room.

Note: While this loving task may be separate, it is also, in many Areas, divided among the Facility Couple, the Registration Couple, the Supply Couple, etc. Each Area should delegate responsibilities to ensure that all needs are covered.

### Guidelines for Pre-Weekend Preparation by Weekend Hosting Couple

1. Three weeks ahead, get a pre-Weekend list from the Registration Couple.
2. Two weeks ahead, if necessary, call the facility to double check meal times, location of conference room, number of rooms required, etc., for the Weekend. Verify arrangements for Lutheran Marriage Encounter.
3. Obtain Weekend supplies such as workbooks and medical and sundry supplies from the Supply Couple and prepare Weekend Care Packets/Kits if not already assembled.
4. Make up legible nametags for everyone on the Weekend. Use **bold** print.
  - a. Do not put "pastor" or any other professional titles on any of the nametags.
  - b. Be sure names are large enough to be easily read by Presenting Couples.
  - c. Leave extra nametags in Admin box.
5. Make up meal place setting cards for everyone on the Weekend.
  - a. Use 4 x 6 or 3 x 5 index cards folded in half lengthwise.
  - b. Write couples' names in large clear print on both sides with black bold felt tip pen (or use computer printing.)
  - c. Arrange place-setting cards in alphabetical order. (They are to be left with Admin Presenting Couple on Weekend.)
6. Make six copies of Weekend list, or secure from Registration Couple.
  - a. On Friday night, after all couples are checked-in, add room numbers to the lists. Line out any last minute cancellations and add fill-ins.
  - b. Distribute at the end of the evening on Friday night as follows: Facility Manager, Host Couple, Presenting Couples and any others as specified within your Area.
7. Recruit couples to help set up and show couples to their rooms. Three couples are needed by 6 p.m. and the rest by 7 p.m. (see guidelines for Friday Night Greeters) Use caution in securing too many couples to help - a **crowd** of Encountered couples can be overwhelming to a pre-Encountered couple on Friday evening.

**Guidelines for Pre-Weekend Preparation by Weekend Hosting Couple (cont.)**

8. Call the facility no later than Friday morning, if necessary, to verify the number of rooms needed. Note: Many facilities require 48 hours and are not flexible about this time frame.
9. Have with you on Friday night:
  - a. Banners and tape or tacks for hanging them
  - b. Box of registration supplies - name tags, pens, sign-in forms
  - c. Admin Team Box
  - d. Host supplies - medical supplies, coffee, etc.
  - e. Communion supplies

**Guidelines for Friday Night Hosting and Set up Tasks**

1. Arrive at the facility no later than 6:00 p.m.
2. Check in at facility desk.
  - a. Get list of room numbers and two (2) keys to each room.
  - b. Order coffee, cream, sugar, cups, etc., if it is being supplied by the facility.
  - c. If possible, three (3) tables with tablecloths should be set up on conference room (one for presenters, one for snacks/coffee and one for medical and Weekend supplies).
  - d. Ask permission to display the Marriage Encounter sign if your Area has one, in a prominent place outside the door or by the check-in table.
3. Set up Conference Room.
  - a. Hang banners. DON'T fold in half or hang backside out.
  - b. Arrange medical and supplies on table. Do not leave a collection container for donations (the couples are told everything is provided for them).
  - c. Put workbooks and pens on chairs.
  - d. Set up riser platform for presentation table.
  - e. Cover table for presenters with cloth, if not already done. (Optional: Put pitcher of water and cups on presenters' table.)
  - f. Put cloth on table for coffee/snacks - start coffee or hot water.
  - g. Set up **exact** number of chairs. Remove any if there are last minute cancellations.
4. After everyone is in the conference room
  - a. Sort prayer couple letters and prayer slips if not already done by Prayer Couple Coordinator. If a letter is missing, call the prayer couple and check on status. Put room numbers on letters.
  - b. Separate letters for Presenting Couples. Place rest in alphabetical order.
  - c. Check registration forms against pre-Weekend list for address and correct spelling.
  - d. Give each presenter updated pre-Weekend list with room numbers.
  - e. Deliver Admin box to Admin's room if not already done. Leave Prayer Couple letters, prayer slips, Weekend handouts, room lists, host couple's name and phone number, Care Kits, Communion supplies and any other necessary supplies in their room.
  - f. Clean up registration area in facility and coordinate any other details as necessary with facility staff.

**Hosting Couple/  
Presenting Couple  
Relationship**

1. Before assigning rooms check with Admin couple to determine if they have room preference.
2. Check with Clergy Couple to make sure they have everything needed, especially for the services.
3. Invite the Presenting Couples to help greet if you are short on greeter couples.
4. Offer any information or help and try, within reason, to accommodate any special needs or requests they may have.
5. Be sure to leave your name and phone number and alternate couples' names/phone numbers to call in case of special needs.

**Guidelines for  
Sunday Afternoon  
Hosting Tasks**

1. Secure 1-2 other couples to help clean-up conference room and pickup Weekend supplies.
  - a. Clean-up conference room. Be sure to remove:
    - banners (roll neatly to avoid wrinkles)
    - CD player and CD's
    - Communion supplies
    - medical supplies
    - extra pens, notebooks and supplies
    - snack table and coffee supplies
  - b. Unopened boxes of snacks can be donated to a local charity. Opened boxes can be taken to the potluck or saved for the Weekend renewal.
2. Collect any other Area supplies from Presenting Couples' rooms.
3. If feasible, ask Presenting Couples for any suggestions or if they have any last minute needs.

Note: In some Areas, the Weekend Hosting Couple(s) may also direct the greet-off activity at the close of the Weekend.

**Guidelines for Friday Night Greeters**

1. Arrive at facility between 6 and 7 p.m. as requested by Hosting Couple. Let Hosting Couple know you have arrived and are ready to help.
2. Assist in set-up of conference room or other tasks as requested by Hosting Couple.
3. As you are called upon, welcome arriving couples. Introduce yourself. Determine if they have parked their car and/or need help with their luggage. Tell or show them the location of the conference room. If they have their snacks with them, show them where to place them. Ask that they come to the conference room no later than 8 p.m. Suggest they might want to come up earlier for coffee or visiting. Ask if they have any special needs; if so, inform the Hosting Couple or take care of it yourself. Care should be taken to avoid interfering with normal hotel registration procedures.
4. As Weekend begins, join together for brief prayer circle with other community couples and Presenting Couples in a secluded area away from the conference room.
5. After all couples are in the conference room, assist the Hosting Couple with any last minute details.

Note: Friday Night Greeters are a part of the whole Weekend team. It is important that they realize their mood or attitude can be the first impression of a couple about to begin a Marriage Encounter Weekend. It is best not to be too bubbly or energized about what's about to unfold for the couple, but rather maintain a mature warmth for them. Avoid comments about what kind of a Weekend to expect, that "they'll love it," "it'll be great," etc., which may set up a couple. You are playing a very important part in the couple's Weekend. Make their first touch with the Marriage Encounter community a positive one!

**Weekend Banners**

The large Weekend banners should be considered a loving gift of the couples in the Area, and the materials used to make these banners are not a reimbursable expense. Banners help emphasize the concepts and presentations, but should be made simply.

**Hanging the Banners**

It should be emphasized banners need to be as little distraction as possible for the couples on the Weekend. The banners should all be hung in the conference room, and fully visible before the Weekend begins. To have them folded in half or bring them in one by one before a talk causes too much attention to be drawn to the banners rather than the presentation. By having the banners visible on Friday evening, the couples can digest what they say and then they become a part of the background of the Weekend adding emphasis to the presentations.

## PRAYER COUPLE COORDINATOR

<b>Description</b>	The Area Prayer Couple Coordinator is responsible for assigning Prayer Couples for all the couples on the Weekend, including the Presenting Couples. They do not have to be a Presenting Couple. Coordinating and arranging for Prayer Couples for everyone attending a Weekend is a job that should be fulfilled by a responsible couple with enthusiasm and excitement for the Weekends.
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Obtain a pre-Weekend list of the couples attending the Weekend from the Registration Couple.</li><li>2. Assign an encountered couple from the community (the Prayer Couple) to each couple on the Weekend.</li><li>3. Send a letter to all Prayer Couples outlining their responsibilities to support the couple making a Weekend. (See sample below)</li><li>4. Keep track of Weekend cancellations and additions and all incoming Prayer Couple letters to make sure that every couple on the Weekend receives a letter from their Prayer Couple to be given to them at the end of the Extended Dialogue.</li><li>5. Deliver letters to Admin couple on Friday night of the Weekend.</li><li>6. Be present Sunday afternoon to check in Prayer Couples as they arrive for the Greet-off.</li></ol>
<b>Guidelines for Prayer Couple Coordinator</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Maintain a list of couples who want to be a Prayer Couple. Include names from Weekend Renewal sign-up sheets.</li><li>2. Three weeks before the Weekend, receive pre-Weekend list of Weekend couples from the Reservation Couple. Determine how many Prayer Couples are needed from each geographical area.</li><li>3. Contact other helpers to notify them how many Prayer Couples are needed from their area, and then to get the names of couples who have agreed to be Prayer Couples.</li><li>4. Make sure all couples on the Weekend, including Presenting Couples, have Prayer Couples.</li><li>5. Send information letter "How to be a Prayer Couple." (See sample letter in appendix.)</li><li>6. Keep in touch with Registration Couple for cancellations, additions or changes.</li><li>7. If there are changes, call the Prayer Couple to give them new name or find another couple.</li><li>8. Before the Weekend begins, know the status of every Prayer Couple letter. If a letter has not arrived, call the Prayer Couple to find out when they will deliver it to the Weekend facility or have them dictate a letter over the phone to you.</li></ol>



**Guidelines for  
Prayer  
Couple  
Coordinator  
(cont.)**

9. Make sure Prayer Couple letters are marked with "PC" in upper right corner and extra or sharing letters are marked with "X" or "S" in upper right corner.
10. Prepare Prayer Slip for each encountering couple to be handed to the couple by the Presenting Couple after the Extended Dialogue.
11. If, in carrying out your loving task, you hear of a couple who isn't planning to attend the Weekend, notify the Registration Couple immediately.
12. Arrange to have Prayer Couple letters, Prayer Slips, and extra/sharing letters to the Weekend facility by 8:00 p.m. Friday night. If all have not been received, be sure Weekend Admin couple is notified and let them know status. Arrange prayer and sharing letters as is customary in your Area.
13. If a couple does not arrive at the Weekend, call their Prayer Couple (if a Weekend Presenting Couple does not) and advise them their couple did not attend the Weekend. Be gentle and sensitive during this conversation.
14. Make sure any letters that arrive after the Weekend are forwarded to the proper couple immediately.

## **PRAYER COUPLE RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Expectations**

There are many expectations of a Prayer Couple that should be known to them as they agree to take on this loving task. To fulfill the requirements of this task, the couple should be willing to:

1. Write a prayer letter for their couple to receive after the Extended Dialogue. This letter should be written and signed as a couple.
2. Call their couple before the Weekend (This is an Area option).
3. Pray for their couple during the Weekend, especially during the Extended Dialogue.
4. Greet their couple at the close of the Weekend.
5. Accompany their couple to the post-Weekend potluck or reception.
6. Keep in touch with their couple after the Weekend, encouraging them to join a love circle, inviting them to their own if possible. Engage them in dialogue challenges. Be encouraging but honest about their own struggles in daily dialogue.
7. Encourage their couple to go to their Weekend Renewal, and if possible accompany them.

**One Prayer Couple per Participant**

Each of these aspects is important in letting the couple know of their importance and specialness. LME policy is that there be only one prayer couple assigned to each Encountering couple or Presenting Couple on a Weekend. Every couple on the Weekend must have a prayer couple letter and be assigned a prayer couple. (In the event of a shortage or absence of enough couples, use a Prayer Couple assigned to one of the Presenters to greet the couple at the Greet-Off.)

**Dialogue**

Sometimes a couple may hesitate to accept the task of being a Prayer Couple because they are not dialoguing. What we ask is that a Prayer Couple, whether dialoguing or not, believe in the purposes of Marriage Encounter and the benefits of dialogue. Often a non-dialoguing couple will be spurred on to dialogue through their experience in this loving task.

**Prayer Letters**

Prior to the Weekend, the Prayer Couple writes a letter, sent from them as a couple, to their assigned couple which will be given to them after their Extended Dialogue. These letters are sent to the Prayer Couple Coordinator at least a week prior to the Weekend. In some Areas the Prayer Couple makes phone contact with the Encountering couple a few days before the Weekend to see if they have any questions, needs, or concerns. However, their identity as a Prayer Couple should not be revealed to them until they receive their letter after the Extended Dialogue.

**Other Gifts**

There are optional Prayer Couple gifts of love that they may pass on to their assigned couple. It has become a tradition in many Areas for a Prayer Couple to burn a special candle during the Weekend in honor of the couple on the Weekend, and then present the candle to the couple at the greet-off or during the potluck or reception. Other gifts of flowers, cards or mementos\* have been shared on the Weekend, but can never replace the specialness of the Prayer Couple's concern and love that is shared in the letter received after the Extended Dialogue and their presence at the conclusion of the Weekend.

**\*Caution:** This can be overdone and even cause some unnecessary hurt feelings among other Weekend couples or prayer couples. If a Prayer Couple wants to give a larger gift – for example, if the Encountering Couple is a special friend – these should be given privately.

**After the Weekend**

The Prayer Couple should accompany their couple to the potluck or traditional dinner or reception after the Weekend and help welcome them into the LME family. Their love and support should be continued in the weeks to come through phone calls and notes of encouragement. They should remind their couple of, and if possible accompany them to, their Weekend Renewal. After the Weekend Renewal, their loving task is formally ended, but by then it is hoped the couples will have a close relationship which they will want to continue.

**Extra Sharing Letters**

Extra sharing letters for couples on a Weekend should be encouraged and welcomed. The method of distribution of such letters may vary from Area to Area. The Admin or other Presenting Couples may slip them under the door during lunch on Sunday, include them in the Care Kit, or place them in a plastic bag, which is hung on the doorknob. In any case, extra/sharing letters should be handled so that couples on the Weekend receive them after the Extended Dialogue (separately from their prayer letter) and before the end of the Weekend in a way that is not disruptive to the Weekend itself. While an Area may express a desire on how they wish to have letters distributed, the ultimate decision regarding the time and method of distribution rests with the Weekend Presenting Couples.

# LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

## Chapter 5

### POST-WEEKEND OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Care of Newly Encountered Couples**

Nurturing newly Encountered couples is of primary importance if Marriage Encounter is to continue. Some areas assign a Shepherding Couple to each couple. They make sure the couple is involved in a Spiral, encourage their dialogue and generally act as “cheerleaders” for them. It is also the responsibility of the Presenting Couples from their Weekend, and of the community at large, to follow up on the Weekend’s participants and be sure they have been given opportunities to become involved.

#### **Information**

Information for all the programs discussed in this chapter is available through the National Resource Couple, whose address may be found on the LME website or in Call To Be Family.

#### **Rap Session**

A Rap Session (an Area option) is a small informal gathering of Weekend couples and any local weekend Presenting Couples approximately one week after the Weekend. The evenings are held in homes or churches and have as their purpose to promote dialogue and introduce newly Encountered couples to group sharing.

The relaxed atmosphere is probably less threatening and affords the chance to ask questions and be a part of small group sharing. Couples attending raps have found it easier to feel comfortable within a circle and the percentage of couples later attending circles has increased.

The Rap helps to keep the couple’s interest in being part of the community during the transition period from their Weekend to their Weekend Renewal. The Area may have a couple named as Rap Session Coordinators to offer this experience.

**Rap Session**  
(cont.)

The three programs outlined below have been used very successfully as a post-Weekend follow-up. Each program contains many of the same concepts, but each is of varying duration, depth and intensity. Any program could be (and one should be) used soon after the completion of a Weekend as a way to help newly Encountered couples continue to grow through dialogue. If possible, starting one of the programs a week or two after a Weekend would be good, but offering one of these as an opportunity at the Weekend Renewal may be a good way to draw couples into post-Weekend activities. With any program, community couples can be called upon to help provide this vital LME ministry. Other faith expressions have used similar programs with great results.

*In-Home* program is probably the simplest to prepare and would be good for small communities.

*Bridges* contains more depth and requires more preparation, but is well worth the effort.

*Journey in Love* is longer in duration and the most “meaty” of the three. This program could be used after the other two to add to the couple’s understanding, but it could be used right after the weekend.

These programs were reviewed and approved by the North American Region Board. However, this does not mean that you must use one of them. If you already have a successful post weekend program, please continue with whatever is best for meeting the needs of your Area. For those Areas without a program or those wanting a change, the Board strongly encourages Areas to implement one of them.

**Weekend  
Renewal**

The Weekend Renewal is a gathering of Weekend couples and other Encountered couples within three to four weeks after a Weekend. This timing enables the newly Encountered couples to try the Weekend concepts in their daily lives and practice the tool of dialogue. The purpose of the Renewal is to renew the commitment to daily dialogue through presentations on dialogue and to encourage couples to renew community unity by being a part of the fellowship and sharing.

## LOVE CIRCLES/SPIRALS

**Love Circles/  
Spirals** A post-Weekend gathering of Encountered couples, typically in groups of five to ten couples who meet for fellowship, dialoguing and sharing of relationships. Love Circles/Spirals may also be known as Encounter Evenings, Raps or sharing groups.

By whatever name, all are designed to help keep dialogue alive after the Weekend experience. Keeping in touch with other Encountered couples is beneficial. Love Circles offer an opportunity to share joys and struggles, develop fellowship and promote dialogue.

**Exclusivity** It is important that newcomers to a Love Circle be included and welcomed. There is a danger that long-established circles can become “closed” to newcomers – in attitude if not in fact. *No Encountered Couple should ever be refused admittance to a Love Circle.*

Note: In special cases, for example while a Circle is experiencing an intensive program of limited duration, membership can be *temporarily* closed, but every effort should be made to include any newly Encountered couples into the closest or most conveniently meeting community group.

**Meeting  
Frequency** Love circles are most successful when couples in an Area can meet on a regular basis. Most have found that getting together monthly is best.

**Lead Couple** One couple is usually a lead couple or host for the group. They see that the mechanics such as time, place, and activity are established for the gathering. In some communities, leadership is rotated annually or on some regular basis, while a different couple may host each meeting.

**Location** Love circles are usually home get-togethers, generally hosted on a rotating basis among those involved.

**Activities/  
Format** While activities may vary, the general format is prayer or devotions, followed by a presentation or enriching activity, time for a 10/10 dialogue, open sharing, and fellowship over coffee and snacks. Time is usually allotted for sharing community news and information. Normally the whole evening is about 2 to 2 1/2 hours in length. Any sharing done during a Love Circle is voluntary, and no one should be forced to share. Accepting couples and persons where they are in their relationships is a key factor to the success of such a group.

**Materials** The Regional Resource Couple has files of Spiral/Love Circle presentations available for use by any Encountered couple. Material is also available on-line. See “RESOURCES” at the end of this chapter.

**Community Night** Community nights are much the same as Love Circle/Spirals. The Community Nights are designed to be couple-centered where, through dialogue and open sharing, couples can gain encouragement for dialogue and strength to continue the growth in their marriage relationship. The Community Nights are designed as isolated evenings that couples who cannot make long-term commitments to Love Circles/Spirals can attend as their schedule allows. Community Nights are also useful for widening opportunities for fellowship and/or hearing special speakers or presentations.

## **DIALOGUE WORKSHOP**

**Purpose** A dialogue workshop can be a community-wide function in an Area. Its purpose is to strengthen and deepen couples' dialogue, not for the "how to's," but more to help couples to discover and become aware of their attitudes about themselves and their dialogue. It is a way for all the couples who come and participate to get a "dialogue tune-up."

**Organizers** Strongly committed couples in the Area usually put on the workshop, preferably couples who are NOT Weekend Presenting Couples.

**Format & Duration** Suggested formats and guidelines for a dialogue workshop are available from the LME website. Such presentations are typically done on a daylong basis with couples bringing their own lunch, a snack to share, and at the conclusion offering a small donation to help defray costs.

## **FAMILY REUNION**

**International/  
Region  
Family  
Reunion** Past LME reunions have been held on a campus setting to permit use of dormitories for the many couples coming from a distance and needing housing. Encountered couples in the Area also offer their homes to couples attending the reunion.

**Duration &  
Format** The reunion begins on Friday evening and ends with a Sunday afternoon worship service. Included in this Weekend are many presentations, dialogue times, opportunities for worship and a chance to share with LME lovers from all across the country. All Encountered couples are invited to attend.

**District  
Family  
Reunions** Biannually, on the year we do not have a Regional Family Reunion, Districts are encouraged to gather within their own District to share together. These District Reunions follow the format of the Regional Family Reunion.

## **WEEKEND ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCE**

**What is it?** It has been the tradition of LME to hold experiences such as the Weekend Enrichment Experience only when there seems to be a great interest within the community for such a weekend. A Weekend Enrichment Experience is often considered a gift of the Weekend Presenting Couples in an Area to the rest of the community and as many of the loving tasks as possible are performed by Weekend Presenting Couples. This gives the couples who hold loving tasks for regular Weekends the opportunity to attend a Weekend Enrichment Experience and experience it free of their usual responsibility. A number of programs, such as the Discovery Weekend and a modified Deeper Weekend, are available. Unlike the regular Weekend, participants pay “up front” for the weekend: expenses should include facility, travel and housing as necessary for presenters, but no registration fee.



## **NEWSLETTERS AND BULK MAILING**

**Newsletter** Most established Areas have a newsletter to keep the Encountered community informed. Many send out a monthly newsletter. The basic purpose of the newsletter is to strengthen the couples' commitment to dialogue and to draw the Area closer.

**Frequency of Publication** The decision on how often to publish rests with Area leadership, and depends upon the number of Weekends being hosted by the Area.

**No Newsletter Advertising** There is to be no advertising in newsletters for any item (accessories or jewelry) offered by the Regional Supply Couple; postal regulations prohibit this.

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER  
COMMUNITY HANDBOOK  
Chapter 6**

**AREA LOVING TASK DESCRIPTIONS**

The following information is intended to serve as a guide for couples who are taking on an Area Loving Task. Each position is listed on separate sheets so that it can be copied and given to the couple serving in the position.

## **AREA LAY CONTACT COUPLE [ALC]**

- 1.** Serves as the lay representative of that Area for LME
- 2.** Represents their Area at District meetings and/or events as required
- 3.** With the Area Clergy Contact Couple, is ultimately responsible for making decisions for the Area, including but not limited to
  - a.** Setting Weekend dates
  - b.** Canceling scheduled Weekends
  - c.** Scheduling and presiding at Area Board Meetings
  - d.** Overseeing all staff positions and activities
- 4.** With the Area Clergy Contact Couple, assigns couples to the loving tasks necessary to plan, host and follow-up LME Weekends
- 5.** Establishes and maintains close communications with other faith expressions of Marriage Encounter in their Area
- 6.** Position requirements as identified in the LME By-laws:
  - a.** Both must be Lutheran.
  - b.** Must be an active Presenting Couple in the Area after the first LME Weekend in the Area. (Temporary exceptions shall be with approval of the District Lay and Clergy Contact Couples, and the Regional Board shall be advised of the exception.)

## **AREA CLERGY CONTACT COUPLE [ACC]**

- 1.** Serves as the clergy representative of that Area for LME
- 2.** Represents their Area at District meetings or events as required
- 3.** With the ALC, is ultimately responsible for making decisions for the Area, including but not limited to
  - a.** Setting Weekend dates
  - b.** Canceling scheduled Weekends
  - c.** Scheduling and presiding at Area Board Meetings
  - d.** Overseeing all staff positions and activities
- 4.** With the ALC, assigns couples to the loving tasks necessary to plan, host and follow-up LME Weekends
- 5.** Establishes and maintains close communications with other faith expressions of Marriage Encounter in their Area
- 6.** Position requirements as identified in the LME By-laws:
  - a.** Both must be Lutheran.
  - b.** Must be an active Clergy Presenting Couple in the Area after the first LME Weekend in the Area. (Temporary exceptions shall be with approval of the District Lay and Clergy Contact Couples, and the Regional Board shall be advised of the exception.)

## **AREA PRESENTING COUPLE COORDINATOR [APCC]**

### **Weekend Support**

1. Schedule presenters for Area Weekends.
  - a. Maintain an equitable rotation of presenters.
  - b. Whenever possible try to avoid repeated scheduling of the same set of presenters.
  - c. Use out-of-Area couples if they can travel inexpensively.
2. Schedule presenters as far ahead as possible (6 months or more) & advise DPCC. Schedule clergy presenters at beginning of year for entire year; clergy have many out-of-Area calls, so be sure your Area is covered.
3. Contact other Area APCC's when presenters are needed.
  - a. Start with Areas where travel costs are lowest, i.e., driving vs. flying.
  - b. If no presenters are available in the district, then contact DPCC.
4. Mail Weekend assignment sheets to all presenters, registration couple and DPCC. When using out-of-Area presenters, assignment sheet should go to the appropriate APCC and (if out of District) DPCC.
5. Be sure a current Admin Packet is included in supply box; check that Area history and post-Weekend inviting activity information is up-to-date and that addresses are on forms that are to be sent.
6. Assign presenters for out-of-Area requests. (Keep a separate, equitable rotation.)

### **Post-Weekend Support**

1. Oversee post-Weekend selection process.
  - a. You should receive Weekend Couples Report from Admin couple.
  - b. Verify that Weekend presenters are contacting eligible couples within a week or two after Weekend.
2. Be responsible for scheduling kickoffs, and be available to present KO 1 & 2 if needed; attend KO 1 & 2 meetings.
3. When couples commit to writing, check that they meet guidelines (married 5 years, both communing Lutherans, committed to daily dialogue)
4. Assign workshopers and mentor couples to potential presenters.
5. Contact each couple going on the Deeper by phone or letter.

### **Keep Records**

1. For Presenters: Address, email, phone number, status of talks (1,2,3,C)
  - a. Loving task, if any
  - b. Dates of Weekends presented
  - c. Talks being written, workshoper, completion dates
2. Couples attending Weekends (post-Weekend lists and Weekend Couple Report forms)
3. Deeper Weekend dates and locations
4. Couples attending KO 1 and responses

## **Team Support**

1. Schedule regular Presenting Couple meetings; should include relationship-building activity and 10/10. DO NOT hold merely "business meetings."
2. Try for a minimum of 4 meetings per year. Plan your year's meetings early and get dates to your couples right away.
3. Consider developing a yearly calendar with dates of Weekends, meetings, birthdays and anniversaries (good relationship-builder).
4. BE A NURTURER!
5. Be aware of those who might be struggling; offer support and encouragement; contact DPCC's if/when serious problems arise. Sometimes a couple who decides to retire might benefit from a year's leave of absence instead. However, remind them that LOA is limited to one year..
6. Be aware of the presenting needs for your community
7. Assign workshoppers.
8. Keep in touch and be aware of status of re-writes.
9. Encourage couples to present any set needed on a Weekend.
10. Confer with Presenting Couples about when to write up to next set.
11. Schedule KO 3 at least once every two years.

## **Area Support**

1. Attend Area board meetings.
2. Work with Area and District execs to keep Area functioning smoothly.
3. Stress to Presenting Couples that their first responsibility is to present Weekends in their Area.

## **District Support**

1. Keep in contact with District Presenting Couple Coordinator; report changes and/or problems in a timely manner.
2. Inform DPCC of Weekend schedules and cancellations
3. Report to Area community any information from District; report concerns of your Presenting Couples to DPCC.
4. When possible, write sharing letters to presenters on Weekends throughout the District.
5. Attend District Board meetings.

## AREA REGISTRATION COUPLE

1. Primarily involves maintaining accurate records of couples waiting to go on a Weekend.
2. An appointed position (by the Area Contact Couples)
3. Does not have to be a Presenting Couple.

### Area Registration System and Policies

1. Some Areas only schedule a couple three times for a Weekend after which the registration is automatically committed to inactive status. This is NOT the recommended practice and is strongly discouraged. If a couple repeatedly cancels, they should be contacted to see what THEY desire. Sometimes some of the most active couples in the community are those who had cancelled many times. No additional registration fee should ever be requested.
2. Some couples registering for a Weekend have never heard an information talk. The Registration Couple should be prepared to give some minimum information over the phone at their first contact with the couple. Include at least the following points:
  - a. Time -- 7:30 Friday night – 4:00 Sunday afternoon.
  - b. It is a work weekend.
  - c. Privacy – presentations given in a group setting, but all discussion is in the couple's own room.
  - d. Cost – During the Weekend they will be offered the opportunity to contribute to LME, but no money other than registration fee is required. If a couple is insistent about knowing the cost, the current Weekend quote can be given.
3. In talking with the couple, try to avoid the appearance of secrecy. Be as open as possible without revealing surprises such as Prayer Couples, Extended Dialogue, etc.
4. The maximum number of couples on a Weekend is 35 plus three anniversary couples. Included in the 35 count are places for not more than five clergy couples (clergy couples can be Lutheran or Non-Lutheran).
5. The Weekend quota of 60% Lutheran couples is **required** by the by-laws. A couple is considered Lutheran for this quota if either one or both are Lutheran. Experience in other expressions has shown this is the ideal quota for the continuation of necessary growth.

Note: The 60% quota applies to a fiscal year of Weekends; thus, one Weekend may be less than 60% Lutheran, but the year-end total should meet the quota.

## Area Registration System and Policies (cont.)

6. If a couple registered with another expression wish to attend a Lutheran Weekend, have the couple complete an LME registration form. Contact the other expression's Registration Couple and request the fee be transferred to LME. (It has been found helpful when the transfer is made by phone to record the other expression couple's name and phone number, etc.)
7. If the other expression will not transfer the registration, make note of the fact. DO NOT ask the registering couple for another registration fee in this case.
8. Transfers to another expression can be best accomplished by sending the other expression a file card. Complete a reimbursement form listing the name of the couple transferring and name and address to whom the check should be sent. Send the reimbursement form to the Area Finance Couple. The Area Finance Couple will forward the funds directly to the other expression.
9. Response to homosexual couples requesting to attend a Weekend:  
*“International Lutheran Marriage Encounter has been designed to nurture and strengthen heterosexual marriages. We do not have the resources or preparation to provide that same support to homosexual relationships.” (If appropriate, add, “If you have additional questions please contact \_\_\_[National Executive Couples].”)*

## Registration Reports

In addition to the post-Weekend lists that are sent to the Regional Registration Couple, these additional reports are necessary:

1. **Monthly Registration Log** - This must be completed and forwarded monthly with all the fees collected that month to the District Finance Couple. Do not send cash - convert all cash to bank money orders or cashier check. Forward the registration log and checks by certified mail (not registered). Keep a copy for the Area's records. A sample registration log form is available from the Regional Registration Couple and is to be reproduced locally.
2. **Projected Weekend Dates** - The Regional Registration couple will annually ask each Area for projected Weekend dates for the upcoming fiscal year. A form will be provided (see below), and dates are to be given for August 1 - July 31 of the upcoming year. If dates cannot be provided that far in advance, at least give the number of Weekends planned for the year.



## Guidelines for Area Registration Couple

1. Know the scheduled Weekend dates and locations.
2. Make sure the fee is included with the registration slip **or it cannot be confirmed.**
3. Send the first confirmation letter shortly after receipt of **both** the registration fee and registration card. Enclose the small receipt/ confirmation card if used in your Area.
4. Keep a file of couples registered. Most Registration Couples maintain separate card files of Lutheran Couples waiting, Non-Lutheran couples waiting, and couples who have gone on Weekends. Registration must be kept on a "first-come, first-served" basis except in extenuating circumstances.
5. Send pre-Weekend (or "third week" letter) approximately three weeks prior to the Weekend.
6. Make up Pre-Weekend list. This list must include the following:
  - a. Weekend date
  - b. Area name
  - c. facility address and phone number
  - d. Presenting Couples' names, addresses and phone numbers
  - e. couples' names, address, phone number, religions, and wedding date
  - f. email address if available

Information about whether a couple is clergy or making an anniversary Weekend should be handwritten only on the Presenting Couples' copies. Make sure the solicitation statement is also printed on the list. (See paragraph 12.)

Send the pre-Weekend list to the Area Contact Couples, the Prayer Couple Coordinator, Weekend Presenting Couples and whomever else your Area decides should receive them. Include a copy of the pre-Weekend letter with the list sent to the Presenting Couples. The pre-Weekend letter and list should be distributed three weeks before the Weekend. Reserve eight copies to be corrected and ready for the Presenting Couples on Friday night of the Weekend.

You may also want to prepare a list of the couples waiting who could attend on short notice in case of cancellations.

7. Keep Weekend Presenting Couples, Prayer Couple Coordinator, and other couples hosting the Weekend advised of all cancellations and additions daily until the Weekend begins.

## Guidelines for Area Registration Couple (cont.)

8. Friday night check-in procedure:
  - a. Have each couple fill out the Friday night registration form, completing all blanks if possible.
  - b. Ask if the couple has any special needs (i.e. diet, room accommodations, etc.).
  - c. Give each couple their nametags. Ask if spelling, nicknames, etc. are correct. Ask them to wear nametags to the conference room when they return.
  - d. Give each couple two (2) keys and record their room number on the Pre-Weekend list.
  - e. Have greeting couple show the couple the conference room and to their room.
  - f. If any couples are going to be late, notify the Presenting Couples.
  - g. Call any couples who haven't checked in by 7:45 p.m. to ascertain if they are coming or are on their way.
  - h. When all couples have arrived, notify the Admin Presenting Couple.
  - i. Call greeters together for a brief prayer circle, including Presenting Couples (Area option).
  
9. Make up post-Weekend list. Head the list with your Area name and Weekend date. LEAVE OFF RELIGIONS AND CLERGY TITLES.
  - a. Check with one of the Presenting Couples for changes (i.e. if couples left the Weekend or last minute add-ons).

Note: Couples who stay through the Extended Dialogue are considered to have completed the Weekend and are included on the post Weekend list. Couples leaving before the end of the Extended Dialogue did not complete the Weekend and are not included on the post-Weekend list, newsletter or mailing lists.
  - b. Deliver the correct number of copies for inclusion in the Care Kit, or prepare the list the following week for mailing to the Weekend couples.
  - c. Send a copy of the Post-Weekend list to:
    - LME Regional "Call To Be Family"
    - Area Newsletter couple
    - Area Contact Couple
    - Regional Registration Couple [Mark Lutheran, Non-Lutheran, and clergy on this list only.]
  
10. Registration Couples should send a list of names on a completed standardized form (Monthly Registration Log); **AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH**, with the accumulated checks from couples signed up for Weekends to the District Finance Couple. This procedure is to avoid stale-dated checks that can be returned by local banks.
  
11. Any time a Weekend is rescheduled, the Regional Registration Couple and the District Finance couple should be notified IMMEDIATELY.

## **Guidelines for Area Registration Couple (cont.)**

- 12.** Any Weekend lists of encountered couples which identify the couples' names and addresses and/or phone numbers (this includes both the Pre- and Post-Weekend lists and any listings in the newsletters) shall have the following solicitation statement posted prominently on the list:

This Weekend list shall not be used for solicitation by any person or organization for personal or organizational gain or profit.

- 13.** Keep the file card of encountered couples. This should be filed by the current fiscal year (August 1 through July 31). The Registration Couple may want to identify the cards by color coding to distinguish the cards of Lutheran couples, and Non-Lutheran couples, Lutheran Clergy couples and Non-Lutheran Clergy couples. These files have been helpful in providing lists of couples of another denomination when that denomination is getting organized in the Area. It is recommended that registration files not be destroyed but kept as permanent records.
- 14.** Notify the Regional Registration Couple promptly whenever the task of Area Registration Couple is passed on to another couple.
- 15.** If there are any problems or you have questions, contact the District Executive Couples.

## **AREA FINANCE COUPLE**

1. Keeper of the Area's Petty Cash funds
2. Responsible for paying all reimbursable local bills submitted by couples in the Area
3. Approve all reimbursable expenses to be paid from the District account prior to their submission to the District Finance Couple
4. Operate within the Financial guidelines approved by the Regional Board and the Regional Finance Couple
5. Appointed by the Area Contact Couples
6. Does not need to be a Presenting Couple

### **Area Finance Couple Guidelines**

1. The Area Finance Couple who is accountable to the Area Contact Couple and District Finance Couple will administer the Area petty cash account. While it is desired that two authorized signatures be on petty cash account checks, only one of six authorized signatures need be required for signing Area Checks. The Area finance couple shall submit a copy of the monthly bank statement and check register to the District Finance Couple. Separate records must be kept locally for proceeds from donation items (for example, candles, calendars, etc.) with accountability to the District Finance Couple. Donation item proceeds will be reported monthly to the District Finance Couple.
2. The following expenses are normally submitted to the Area Finance Couple for payment. The District Contact Couples and/or District Finance Couple will deal with exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
  - a. All Communion supplies for the Weekend.
  - b. Medical and snack table supplies for the Weekend.
  - c. Reasonable and appropriate expenses incurred by pre-Weekend and/or post-Weekend planning meetings or activities.
  - d. Local Newsletter: printing, postage and related expenses
  - e. Banners - although materials and services are usually donated by local community couples, expenses can be reimbursed by the local Area with the approval of the Area Board.
  - f. Babysitting - reimbursement for babysitting should be made only under unusual circumstances - with the approval of the Area Contact couples - when it pertains to Area business.

## **Local Donations**

Donations to LME given at a time other than on the Weekend can be designated for use in the local Area at the request of the donors. However because of IRS regulations, such a donation **must** be routed through the District or Regional Account. An LME check will then be sent back to the Area's Finance for the Area Account. All undesignated donations shall be retained in the Regional Account for use throughout the family.

## **Reimbursement Procedure**

1. All requests for reimbursement from Area, District or Regional accounts must be accompanied by a "Request for Reimbursement" voucher. These vouchers are available from Area, District or Regional Finance Couples and can be reproduced locally.
2. All requests for reimbursement for local expenses must be sent to the Area Finance Couple for approval signature. This need was established because it has become increasingly difficult for the District or Regional Finance Couple to verify expenses since they are not in direct contact with each couple presenting reimbursement vouchers. It is judged that Area Finance Couples can more easily verify local expenses.
3. Invoices for the Weekend facility and meal costs shall be routed to the Weekend Admin Couple and/or the Area Finance Couple for approval before being sent to the District Finance Couple for payment. This is primarily so Areas can verify the accuracy of the invoice before sending it to the District Finance Couple. This may also give Area couples some bargaining power in arranging for Weekend facilities or to work out any problems that may have arisen with a facility.
4. It is the responsibility of the Area Finance Couple to forward only appropriate bills to the District Finance Couple. All bills for the Regional Executive Couples and the Regional Staff Couples, arising from Regional duties, are sent to the Regional Finance Couple.

## **FACILITY COUPLE**

### **Responsibility for Weekend Facility:**

1. The Area Contact Couples may appoint a specific couple to be responsible for securing a Weekend facility. The final decision as to acceptability and financial commitment rests with the Area Contact Couples, however, subject to approval of any required written contracts.
2. The Facility Couple should visit motels, retreat houses and other types of religious institutions in the general area. Other Marriage Encounter expressions within the Area can be contacted for recommendations for facilities and local clergy might be asked about religious facilities.

### **Approaching the Facility**

The management contacted at a prospective facility may or may not be familiar with Marriage Encounter. All contacts should be made with an open, friendly, yet business-like attitude. Remember that we are the customer securing a service from them, and they may need our business. Familiarity of the facility management with Marriage Encounter obviously aids in obtaining necessary information. If the facility's management is unaware of Marriage Encounter, the following is suggested prior to discussing any business.

- a. Explain the purpose of the Weekend in sufficient detail. Make them aware that only couples with basically sound marriages attend the Weekend. Generally only local couples attend the Weekend and they stay from Friday evening to Sunday evening.
- b. Suggest that if the facility and services required for the initial Weekend are satisfactory, additional Weekends might be scheduled at their facility.
- c. Explain that Marriage Encounter is conducted throughout North America. The possibility exists if the prospective facility is a chain operation other communities might have use for their facilities.
- d. Present the facility management with a copy of the minimum housing requirements and the suggested menu ideas (given below) plus a Lutheran Marriage Encounter brochure. The brochure can provide additional information and serves as a reminder that the Weekend is a legitimate cause.
- e. Make a complete tour of the facility including review of traffic flow patterns (stairs vs. elevators), dining area, conference rooms and sleeping rooms before any firm commitment is completed.
- f. Discuss the use of credit cards by participants. Make it clear that their payments would be applied to the total facility costs, not just the couple's room. More complete information is in the Appendix.
- g. Be sure the cancellation policy is spelled out in writing.

## **Physical Requirements of the Weekend Facility**

1. To aid the flow and success of the Weekend, these minimum requirements should be requested. A maximum of forty-two (42) rooms should be available. Sleeping rooms should be located in one particular area of the facility in a "blocked manner" if possible and as close to the conference room as possible. Telephone service should be available to at least the Presenting Couples.
2. The Marriage Encounter community should do the assignment of rooms on Friday night of the Weekend and not the facility staff. Request the management try not to assign other guests to rooms within the "blocked" area if possible so that distractions might be avoided. All rooms should have at least one (1) double bed or two (2) single beds.
3. Indicate to management that maid service must be discontinued for the Weekend. An adequate supply of towels and supplies should be left in each room for the Weekend. Inform them that the Weekend team will request additional room supplies if needed.
4. Rooms should be made available by 6:00 p.m. Friday night and will be vacated by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evening. Presenting Couple's rooms should be made available earlier. If motel requires that the rooms be vacated any earlier on Sunday, stress that this is very inconvenient and try for the latest possible time to vacate.

Note: In some cases, rooms have to be made available for housekeeping services earlier than the end of the Weekend; in that case, Facility Couple should confer with ALC and Weekend Admin Couple to determine what arrangements need to be made.

5. Two (2) keys to each room should be furnished by the facility.
6. At the completion of registration on Friday evening, the Hosting/Greeter Couple will present a list of all registered couples by room number to the registration desk.

## **Conference Room Requirements**

1. The conference room size will dictate the maximum number of couples for the Weekend but should accommodate not less than thirty-four (34) couples. If possible, the conference room should be large enough to seat (theater style) comfortably a maximum of forty-two (42) couples including Presenting Couples.
2. There should be room enough for the snack, coffee and supply tables inside the conference room.
3. Heating, air conditioning and ventilation should be adequate based on the conference room being used to capacity, with controls located inside the conference room. Also consider the acoustics of the room.
4. The conference room should be located in a distraction-free area. Entertainment centers publicly shared corridors and closeness to other business meeting rooms should be avoided if at all possible.

## **Dining Room Requirements**

1. The dining room must be sufficient in size to accommodate the number of couples participating in the Weekend.
2. The location of the dining room should be in a private area. The table set-up must seat a minimum of four (4) couples to a maximum of six (6) couples per table with no couples having to split up. Round tables are preferable to square or rectangular ones.
3. If circumstances dictate the use of an open public dining area, have the management guarantee a reserved area big enough for the number of couples on the Weekend. This area should be partitioned off if possible.

## **Menu and Serving Times**

1. The actual menu for each meal should remain flexible, but substantial. Meals can be served either buffet or table service which is most convenient (remember: buffet lines become slow and can affect your schedule). The Area Contact Couples should determine the method of serving and basic content prior to the Weekend.
2. Serving times for the five (5) Weekend meals should remain flexible but within limits. (See below for the usual serving times of the Weekend meals.) Explain to the facility that we are on a tight time schedule and meals need to be served as timely as possible. They may need more waiters or waitresses or a double buffet line.
3. Each meal on the Weekend should be basically inexpensive and part of the normal menu provided for groups.



## **Facility Contracts**

- 1.** A written contract should be secured for all facilities. Be sure the terms and conditions are adequately detailed and are clear and concise. Review the contract with the Area Contact Couples before signing. Area Contact Couples without prior approval of the District Contact Couples may enter into no long-term contract.
- 2.** Before agreeing to use a particular facility, know exactly the proposed costs for individual meals, individual rooms, the conference room, dining room, coffee service if used, tax, gratuities, and any other chargeable costs incidental to the Weekend. Make provisions for credit for rooms not occupied Friday night as well as rooms vacated before the end of the Weekend. Cancellation rights are a proper part of any such contract. A minimum period of 30 days notice should be agreed to with no penalty for either the facility or LME. If cancellation by either party is necessary, written notice should be sent.
- 3.** Occasionally a facility unfamiliar with Marriage Encounter may require a deposit in advance of the first Weekend. In this event, a check should be requested from the District Finance Couple.
- 4.** The District Finance couple will pay all Weekend facility bills, usually within 30 days of receipt. The bill must be approved by the Area Finance Couple prior to submittal to District Finance Couple for payment.

## Summary of General Facility Requirements

1. Length of Weekend: Friday 7:00 p.m. to Sunday 4:00 p.m.
2. Facilities needed:
  - a. Sleeping rooms: maximum of forty-two (42). No maid service but adequate supply of towels.
  - b. Conference room: large enough to seat eighty-four (84) people maximum. Needs at least three (3) conference size tables, each approximately six (6) feet long, plus head table on risers.
  - c. Dining room: large enough to seat eight-four (84) people maximum. Tables large enough to seat four to six couples each. If possible, located close to conference room. Prefer not to be in public areas.
3. Meals: Total of five: Three (3) on Saturday and two (2) on Sunday.

Note: Give a copy of this summary to the facility management when discussing requirements and terms.

## Time Schedule and Suggested Menu Ideas

DAY	SERVING TIME	MENU IDEAS
<b>Saturday Breakfast</b>	8:10 a.m.	1. Scrambled eggs, toast, (bacon opt ) 2. Waffles, sausages 3. French toast, bacon
<b>Saturday Lunch</b>	12:00 p.m.	1. Soup or salad, sandwich 2. Tuna salad, finger sandwiches 3. Cold cuts, potato salad, rolls, fruit
<b>Saturday Dinner</b>	5:30 p.m.	1. Chicken, two vegetables, potato 2. Swiss steak, potato salad, vegetable 3. Beef stew and rice, vegetable, roll 4. Meat loaf, potatoes, vegetables, roll
<b>Sunday Breakfast</b>	7:45 a.m.	See Saturday morning menu
<b>Sunday Lunch</b>	12:45 p.m.	See Saturday lunch/dinner menus. It is advised that this meal be substantial since it is the last meal until the potluck.

Note: Include beverages, coffee, tea, milk (with juice at breakfast). It is suggested there be no desserts for lunch due to time limitations.

### **Time Schedule and Suggested Menu Ideas (cont.)**

The management of the facility will need a time schedule with the understanding that the group may want to delay or move up any mealtime, given ample notice by the Weekend Presenting Couples. However, do NOT leave the Weekend time schedule that lists all the presentation and dialogue times, as this could invite a security problem.

### **OTHER LOVING TASKS**

The following loving task descriptions and duties may be found in Chapter 4:

1. Area Supply Couple
2. Weekend Hosting Couple
3. Friday Night Greeters
4. Prayer Couple Coordinators

## APPENDIX

### WEEKEND CONCEPTS

#### **Feelings Are Neither Right nor Wrong**

Feelings are an integral part of our human nature. Feelings like happiness and elation generally have a pleasant, positive effect on a person; feelings like apprehension, anger, or gloom are normally experienced as being unpleasant and negative. Feelings are real. They are neither attitudes nor behaviors, but they help to shape both. It is what we do with our feelings that determine ethical rightness or wrongness. Consequently, it is important that we deal with our feelings in a healthy way. Denying or repressing them because we believe that certain feelings are "wrong" is a common but unhealthy practice. Teaching the concept that "feelings are neither right nor wrong" typically has the freeing, beneficial effect of helping persons get in touch with the wide spectrum of their feelings. The Scriptures say: "Be angry and sin not." This suggests the importance of distinguishing between the feeling of anger and the attitude of hostility or the behavior of striking out hurtfully. Feelings are useful signals of something deeper happening within us.

#### **You Are Precious and Honored In My Sight**

This concept points to the essential goodness of God's creation, including people. God looked upon His creation, we are told in Genesis (1:31), "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." This does not deny that humanity is fallen (cf. Genesis 3) and is caught up in sin. But it is to affirm the ultimate worth of people. Humanity has been reaffirmed most particularly in Jesus Christ. In His person and life-giving work, forgiveness, life and salvation have become actualized. In and through Jesus we are able to recognize our value and worth. God has made us in His image and likeness and through the power of His forgiving, life-enhancing love, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to overcome even the marring and destruction of sin and evil.

#### **Married Singles**

Companionship is one of the purposes for which God instituted marriage. Adam was lonely and longed to have someone who was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Therefore, when two people marry they become one in the very intimate companionship of a responsible relationship. In contrast, the world typically draws us into living separate, isolated lives. "Married Singles" takes many forms as each lives a separate life under the same roof, unaware and/or unresponsive to the needs of the spouse. They may join together in parallel fashion to deal with the finances, parenting, and the like, but never achieve the oneness of mind, heart, and spirit that God envisioned.

**To Love Is a Decision**

This concept does not say that love is only a decision, for love is more, but it tries to move us away from the notion that love is only a feeling. We can decide to love and be loved even when we do not feel loving or lovable. We can decide to act in love. The strength to make this decision to love comes from God and is rooted in His love for us. We can decide to love because God first decided to love us. To love, as a decision, focuses upon the commitment aspect of a love that is self-giving rather than merely self-seeking.

**Cycles of Love**

Growth is natural to the Christian life; therefore, it is natural to marriage. But growth isn't necessarily uninterrupted progress. Rather, it is composed of highs and lows, ups and downs, forward movements and regressions. The lows or down times offer opportunity to assess what is going on and to reaffirm or reshape values. Romance and disillusionment are part of the fluctuations of life and may be experienced as a kind of cycle throughout marriage. Understanding that disillusionment in marriage is but part of a cycle can help contribute to deeper insight and understanding of our own and each others needs and facilitate the reflowering of romance. Learning to make the decision to love leads us beyond romance, to the stage of joy.

**Non-Verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication plays a significant role in our relationship with God, a relationship which both Old and New Testaments compare to a marriage. We see the power of non-verbal communication focused most centrally in the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Water and bread and wine are non-verbal means to enhance the Word with the water and the Words of Institution. In the early Church it was evidently also the custom to greet one another with a holy kiss. Just as the non-verbal is important in our relationship with God and with one another in the Body of Christ, so it is also important in the intimate relationship of marriage. We focus on understanding the power and importance of non-verbal communication in our couple relationships.

**Listening –The Key to Communication**

The parable of the Sower points out what Jesus taught us about our inconsistency in listening to the Word of God at different times throughout our lives and how we thereby control to some extent the degree to which His Word will bear fruit in us. The same teachings apply to our way of listening to each other. Without listening to each other with our eyes, ears, and hearts and allowing that which we hear to affect us deeply, our relationships will remain shallow and unfruitful. Listening is the key to communication and communication is essential to building and maintaining strong, fruitful marriages.

**God's Plan Is Unity**

Marriage which God instituted is described in the creation story as "two becoming one flesh." Husband and wife are to cleave to one another. The literal sense of the Hebrew word for "to cleave" is to stick to, to paste, to be glued to a person. Walter Trobisch comments: "Husband and wife are glued together like two pieces of paper. If you try to separate two pieces of paper that are glued together you tear them both. If you try to separate husband and wife who cleave together both are hurt." God's plan wills unity in marriage. But unity is other than uniformity. We need not think alike; we surely will not feel alike. Differences are a part of God's creative genius for variety and need not divide us. When love is present, differences may in fact enrich us. The unity that God wills in marriage is possible only where mutual acceptance and forgiveness bring two into one.

**Risk and Confidence**

In order to live God's plan in marriage; we must build a relationship that is open and honest. Openness and honesty in all aspects of marriage calls for risk and confidence. Risk dares to be self-revealing and self-sharing. Confidence trusts in the spouse's goodness to accept me in the totality of my being, including my feelings. Risk and confidence in a Christian marriage are fueled by our confidence in a God who risked his all for us in Jesus Christ. The willingness to risk and the confidence we develop in our marriage relationship may become a base for living God's plan in marriage.

**Dialogue -A Means to Improved Intimate Communication**

Dialogue as taught and experienced on the Weekend can be an effective means for strengthening a marriage when used on a regular basis. Dialogue may begin with the risk of revealing feelings to a spouse with whom one has decided to exercise confidence. But dialogue cannot stop there. It calls us to decide what we shall do as a response to what we are feeling. Dialogue leads to a way of life that helps us make responsible choices about how we will live together. In short, dialogue is expected to grow into a communicating lifestyle.

**Marriage Is a Covenant**

Christian marriage is a sacred covenant between spouses, modeled upon God's covenant of unconditional love for us as revealed in His word, and especially in His Word made flesh, Jesus. It is enshrined in vows that are mutual, equal, intentional, voluntary, and permanent. Christian marriage necessarily involves a commitment to Christ, the ever-present embodiment of unconditional love. Christian marriage is made in the context of Christ's body, the Church, where the commitment to honor marriage and to be upheld by the committed support of other lovers is a beautiful safeguard to the sanctity of marriage.

**We Are the Church**

We are members one of another in relation with Him who is our head, the Christ. The Church is described in the New Testament as analogous to the human body. Each member's place and contribution to the life of the body is significant and vital. Each member receives gifts through God's grace and responds by sharing those gifts in loving service, aware that we have been blessed to be a blessing. The distinction between clergy and laity is primarily one of function --not of rank or status within the body. Christians who are married know that as members of Christ's body they are commissioned to be reconciling, loving, healing, forgiving, serving, and worshipping persons in their marriage and in the world.

**Reevaluation**

By continually reevaluating our relationship, we are able to avoid some of the pitfalls that can divide us. The richness of our love comes from our efforts to be one, not from our arrival at any plateau or level of achievement. The measure of our love has less to do with not falling down than it has to do with getting up again. Love is a growing, changing experience of repeatedly discovering and falling in love with a changing person. Our beginning again, our striving to be more for one another today than yesterday is our call and our delight.

**Marriage Is a Journey**

Love is a journey, an experience of growing towards tomorrow. We journey together on the strength of a promise. Couples are called not just to build a loving relationship for their own need satisfactions, but in apostolic fashion are to let God's love they received from one another become available to others. When our love is openly available and received by those to whom it is offered, a broadened community of love is built. Ours is a generative love; it propagates itself, making more love happen. We offer hope and life to a lonely, searching, love-starved world as we share our couple love. In living and sharing our love, we become channels of God's unbounded love.





## INFORMATION PRESENTATION OUTLINE

**Time Limit:** 30 Minutes maximum (2 couples)  
20 minutes maximum (1 couple)

### **I. Introduction** (2 minutes, one couple; 4 minutes, two couples)

- A. Your names and why you will read your presentation
- B. Why you are here (to tell about LME)
- C. What you are going to tell them
  - 1. What is ME
  - 2. Who it is for
  - 3. Some history of ME
  - 4. Description of the Weekend
  - 5. Some personal experiences

### **II. What is ME and who is it for** (2 minutes)

- A. An opportunity for a husband and wife to discover and use new techniques of communicating
- B. A 44-hour Weekend given in a motel or retreat house
- C. For good marriages to make them better (describe a good marriage - see below on “good” marriages)
- D. Not for problem solving - no counseling
- E. To strengthen and revitalize Christian marriages

### **III. History of ME** (3 minutes)

- A. Started in Spain by Fr. Gabriel Calvo in 1952
- B. Translated to English and first given in U.S. in 1967
- C. Spread to all 50 states and many countries. More than 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> million couples have been on an ME Weekend
- D. The first LME Weekend was held in Spokane, Washington in October 1975
- E. First Canadian Weekend was held in Ontario in November 1978
- F. First Norwegian Weekend was held in Oslo in January 1982
- G. First Brazilian Weekend was held in September 1983
- H. First Iceland Weekend was held in April 1985.
- I. Sweden, Australia and Finland

### **IV. Format of the Weekend** (2 minutes)

- A. From Friday at 8:00 p.m. to Sunday about 4:00 p.m.
- B. Led by four presenting couples including a clergy couple
- C. A series of presentations each followed by time for individual reflection and couple sharing.
- D. A structured, work weekend; Each presentation leads to the next and the last one on Sunday afternoon is just as important as the first one on Friday evening
- E. The Weekend is unique and should not be compared with other retreats or marriage enrichment experiences.

**V. Share your experience** (8 minutes - one couple; 16 minutes - two couples)

- A. How you heard about ME and your reaction
- B. How and why you decided to go
- C. The effect of ME on your lives
  - 1. Growth in your relationship
  - 2. Changes in priorities and goals
  - 3. Improvement in communication
  - 4. Openness and honesty
  - 5. Change in relationship with children and other

**VI. Conclusion** (3 minutes)

- A. Cost
  - 1. A registration fee is required to reserve a place on the Weekend.
  - 2. The registration fee is non-refundable but not limited to a specific Weekend date.
  - 3. On the Weekend, costs are explained and an opportunity to make a confidential donation is offered; an amount is suggested but the donation is free will and no specific amount is required. No one has ever been denied a Weekend because of inability to pay
- B. Childcare can be provided if necessary
- C. Some points to remember:
  - 1. Not a retreat or marriage clinic
  - 2. For solid or committed marriages - not for problem solving
  - 3. The Weekend is a private couple experience
- D. A positive ending statement  
**Example:** *"If you think you have too many outside commitments, make your next commitment to yourselves. You deserve it."*
- E. Hand out registration cards
- F. Encourage questions from individuals in the group to stimulate discussion. (If no one asks a question, share some typical questions asked - is there group sharing? what is the cost of the facility? why does there seem to be so much secrecy?)
- G. Tell couples they can visit with you individually following the presentation if they have additional questions. If a question comes up that no one present can answer, take their name and phone number and someone can call them with the answer.
- H. Thank everyone for coming.

## INFORMATION TALK - CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

### **General Information**

Marriage Encounter is an opportunity for a husband and wife to discover and use new techniques of communication and sharing with one another. It is a 44-hour Weekend held in a motel or retreat house. Each couple has their own room.

### **For "Good" Marriages**

Marriage Encounter is for good marriages. A good marriage is not one without any problems; all marriages have some problems. If the problems do not seriously damage couples' relationship, they have a good marriage. In fact, a couple attending an information presentation is probably there because the people who invited them think they have a good marriage. That pre-encountered couple should be encouraged to trust the people who invited them to the information presentation. Marriage Encounter is not for solving problems. Marriage counseling is not available on a Weekend. The purpose of Lutheran Marriage Encounter is to strengthen and revitalize Christian Marriages.

### **History of Marriage Encounter**

Father Gabriel Calvo is a Roman Catholic priest who lives in Spain. His ministry is working with married couples and their families. Marriage Encounter evolved out of the Christian Family Movement. Father Calvo noticed a special quality that some families had that others didn't have. His investigation revealed that this difference was largely because of the quality, not necessarily the quantity, of communication between the husband and wife. He then developed the Marriage Encounter Weekend to teach this quality of communication to married couples. Encounter Weekends were first given in Spain, then in South and Central America and then to the Spanish speaking people in Florida. In Spanish, it goes by the name "Encuentro Conyugal". This translates roughly into English as "Marriage Encounter" but a more accurate translation is "Marriage Discovery".

The first Weekend in English was given at Notre Dame University in 1967 as part of a Christian Family Movement convention. From there it went to the New York City area and it has since spread to all 50 states. Encounter Weekends are also being given in many foreign countries, including Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Brazil.

**History of  
Marriage  
Encounter  
(cont.)**

Up until the mid-seventies, these Weekends were all given by Roman Catholics, couples and priests, and from a Roman Catholic point of view. Even though couples of any faith were welcome on a Roman Catholic Weekend, and the differences are minor, some Jewish and later Protestant clergy and lay couples thought it would be desirable to have Weekends available from the viewpoint of their particular church. So, now there are many Marriage Encounters that are Protestant, including Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, Church of Christ, Presbyterian, United Church of Canada, Mennonite, Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist and Wesleyan.

The Lutheran Marriage Encounter began in Spokane, Washington, in October of 1975. In all expressions, over 1 3/4 million couples from all walks of life, from recently married to over fifty years married, and from many different faiths have been on a Weekend. On any Friday night, many Weekends are beginning around this country with many hundreds of couples in attendance.

**Weekend  
Format**

A Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend begins on Friday evening about 8:00 p.m. and ends on Sunday at about 4:00 p.m. Couples should eat dinner before arriving Friday evening. The Lutheran Weekends are given by four Lutheran Presenting Couples, one of whom is a Lutheran pastor and spouse. The Weekend consists of a series of presentations, each given by the clergy couple and one of the lay couples. Each of these presentations sets the mood for a couple's consideration of an aspect of their life together. After each presentation there is time for individual reflection on the presentation, and then time for each couple to share their reflections with one another in the privacy of their own room. These reflections and sharing are between the husband and wife only and are never shared with the group. The group meets together only for presentations and meals.

It is a structured, work Weekend. There is no time for TV, magazines, or knitting. Also there are no distractions such as children or cooking. There is no preaching, group dynamics, sensitivity sessions, or counseling for troubled marriages.

**Registration  
Fee**

A registration fee is required to reserve a place on the Weekend. This fee is non-refundable but is transferable to a different Weekend.

<b>Weekend Cost</b>	On the Weekend the costs to prepare and conduct the Weekend will be explained. A donation amount is suggested, but what a couple chooses to donate is up to them and completely confidential. Each couple will be given a blank envelope and asked given the opportunity to donate as they are able and the Spirit moves them.
<b>No Mention of Presentation Content or of Dialogue</b>	In the information talk, the dialogue technique and the content of the presentations are not mentioned. This is so that the presentations can lead from one to the next as they are designed to do. If details are made known, someone might be anticipating them and miss part of what precedes them. Also, no two couples experience the Weekend exactly the same. Each couples experience depends on where they are in their relationship and on what they put into the Weekend. The Weekend has been specifically designed so that any couple can benefit.
<b>Responding to Questions</b>	As the couples hearing the information presentation ask questions, try to give answers in a straightforward manner to avoid seeming secretive. Be open about why details are not given as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

## INFORMATION PRESENTATION FOR PASTORS

### I. Introduction

- A. Identify each other and give some personal information (should be short but intimate so the pastors get to know you as real persons).
  - 1. Children - names, sex and ages
  - 2. Where you live
  - 3. Your occupations
  - 4. End by saying you are members of church, then give details of what you have been doing in the Church such as Sunday School, council, usher, etc. The idea is to show you are an active member of your congregation.
- B. Briefly give your area of responsibility in LME and say how long ago you experienced your Weekend.
  - 1. Weekend experience is just as alive today as it was when you attended.
  - 2. Convey the idea that you were helped by your Weekend without being too overwhelming or implying that you have found something on the Weekend that you didn't find in Church.

### II. Witness Yourself Individually and as a Couple *(Talk present and not before and after the Weekend)*

- A. Talk about your relationship and your commitment to marriage in a world that too readily uses divorce as an escape.
- B. Tell "your story" of the strengths and struggles you face in your faith.
- C. Relate how your marriage partnership allows you to strengthen your faith and share that with others.
- D. Share how Marriage Encounter has strengthened your marriage and renewed your commitment to the Church.

### III. History of Marriage Encounter

- A. Father Calvo beginning
- B. Catholic beginning in U.S., Lutheran beginning in 1975
- C. When the first Lutheran Weekend was held in your Area
- D. Nationally there are 14 different faiths that present ME Weekends.
- E. Lutheran Marriage Encounter is separate from any Synodical body but is intended for all couples of the Lutheran family and any couple who wishes to strengthen their marriage in the context of Christianity. Lutheran ME is a non-profit organization that has NO PAID STAFF. Lutheran ME is not supported monetarily by any Lutheran body or church group. Couples both lay and clergy all across the country volunteer their talents so that Marriage Encounter Weekends can be presented to strengthen couples' commitment to the marriage covenant.
- F. The purpose of Marriage Encounter is to
  - 1. Strengthen a couple's relationship with God
  - 2. Strengthen a couple's relationship with each other
  - 3. Strengthen and revitalize the Lutheran Church

#### **IV. Explain the Weekend** (*From Info Talk*)

- A. Presenters - lay and clergy
- B. Flow of Weekend
- C. **Four phases of the Weekend – Self, Couple, Couple & God, Couple and the World**
- D. Time frame - Friday to Sunday
- E. Other information
  - 1. Better communication
  - 2. Does not end on Sunday
  - 3. Reaffirm marriage (concept of Love is a Decision without using those words)
- F. Cost of Weekend
  - 1. Registration fee, nonrefundable but transferable to other weekends
  - 2. Opportunity for anonymous donation during Weekend
  - 3. Weekends have been paid for by loving gifts of other couples who had previously experienced Weekends. (this seems most significant for pastors who regularly struggle with stewardship)

#### **V. Value to Church and Each Pastor's Own Congregation**

- A. Emphasize that Marriage Encounter does not intend to take away from Churches in the area but rather to challenge the couples to do more in the Church.
  - 1. Mention that it is specifically urged that the contribution to ME is not to detract from the giving to their home congregation. State that we tell the couples that their Church needs their support.
  - 2. Share the challenge of the Covenant talk to reach out to others and to renew their commitment and work within their own church.
  - 3. Explain how you as a couple have a renewed commitment to your church.
- B. Pass out trifolds to each Pastor and offer to come and present an Information Presentation at their Church. Sunday morning is a good time since members are already there.

#### **VI. Closing**

- A. Thank them for their time
- B. Offer to answer any questions
  - 1. Answer all questions directly
  - 2. Provide positive unhesitating answers to all questions, even those that are normally not answered directly at information talks
  - 3. If asked what the talks are about, refer to phases and offer specific examples such as talks on feelings, and explain briefly how understanding feelings helps your relationship.
  - 4. Give your phone numbers and indicate you are always available to answer any questions they may have about LME. Also include your name, address and phone number in the trifolds.

Note: We encourage you not to read this talk but rather speak each part in a conversational tone. Three by five cards for notes would be helpful. Pastors really appreciate an informal and open discussion.

## SAMPLE INFORMATION LETTER TO PRAYER COUPLE

(date)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for accepting the loving task of being a Prayer Couple. We are sure you will do all you can to let your couple know how special they are. Your couple is:

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

(city, zip) \_\_\_\_\_

(phone) \_\_\_\_\_

The following are efforts you can make to help your couple know how much you care about them:

**WRITE A PRAYER LETTER** for your couple to receive during their Weekend. In writing the letter, think back to your own Weekend and remember those special feelings you had while reading your Prayer Couple's letter to you. Put the letter in an envelope with your couple's name on the outside. Put the letter "C" in the upper right corner, which identifies it as the Prayer Couple letter. Then put that envelope in another envelope and address it to us. If you wish to write any extra letters to any Weekend couples, please identify those with an "X" in the corner. We need to receive your letter(s) by \_\_\_\_\_.

**CALL YOUR COUPLE** a few days before the Weekend to answer questions (such as type of dress or what kind of snack to bring). Offer any help they might need and wish them well. *DO NOT* tell the couple you are their Prayer Couple. You should also remind them of the importance of staying the entire Weekend, including the supper following the Weekend.

**PRAY FOR YOUR COUPLE** and keep them in your thoughts during their Encounter experience. You might want to keep a candle lit or remember them with some other memento of their Weekend.

**GREET YOUR COUPLE AT THE END OF THE WEEKEND** at the \_\_\_\_\_ on Sunday. Plan to be there by \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. If for some reason you are unable to make the sing-off, please find someone to stand in for you or call and let us know you won't be there.

**ACCOMPANY YOUR COUPLE TO THE POTLUCK DINNER** after the Weekend. The Potluck will be held at \_\_\_\_\_. A map is enclosed giving driving directions. Please bring a main dish AND a salad or dessert to share.



**KEEP IN TOUCH** with your couple to share in their successes and struggles with the dialogue technique. They will need your support and encouragement as they begin using their new communication tool.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR COUPLE TO GO TO THEIR WEEKEND RENEWAL** and accompany them if possible. Their Weekend Renewal is on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Your loving task formally ends after the Weekend Renewal. Please don't underestimate the importance of your task. YOU may be one of the most important parts of your couple's Encounter experience. For the first few weeks after the Weekend, you may be the only Marriage Encounter "community" for the couple. They will need your love and support more than at any other time. We remember how special we felt the Sunday of our Encounter when we found out a couple was praying just for us. What a blessing to know that they cared!

You will also want to remember the presenting couples for the Weekend. They need our loving support through our prayers, thoughts and extra love letters from the M.E. community, too. The team for this Weekend is:

(list names and where from)

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Thanks and love,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prayer Couple Coordinators



## TAX STATEMENT FOR *DREAM TALK*

The following information is to be placed in each envelope handed out to participants (use USA or Canada statement as needed). Be sure to add the correct weekend quote before copying.

***Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a registered non-profit organization. We receive no outside financial support. We do not give to nor receive from any Church body, such as the Lutheran Church or any other organization.***

### **ADDENDUM #1 – USA**

**The Internal Revenue Service requires that we provide you with the fair market value of the weekend. The value, in addition to the registration fee, is \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Anything given in excess of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is considered a tax-deductible contribution. If you are giving a cash contribution, and wish to receive a receipt, please include your name and address inside the envelope which you are about to receive. Consult your tax advisor for clarification.**

### **ADDENDUM #2 – Canada**

**We are a registered charitable organization. We would like to point out, though, that Revenue Canada will only allow us to issue official tax receipts, from identified donors, for contributions above the average cost of facilities across Canada. When making a donation by cheque, please make it out to Lutheran Marriage Encounter. When you are giving a cash contribution and wish a tax receipt, please include your name and address inside the envelope which you are about to receive. Receipts for the current year will be issued after December 31.**

**The average total contribution needed to provide a weekend like this, in addition to your registration fee, is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

## CONSENSUS

**Nearly all decisions in Lutheran Marriage Encounter (except the election of Leadership Couples) are made through consensus, rather than through voting. Following are the basic elements of consensus, which should be used in all levels of the ME organization.**

### **What is consensus?**

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solution, but also to promote the growth of community and trust. Hence, no decision is finalized until everyone in the group feels comfortable with the decision and is able to implement it with conviction.

### **Consensus vs. Voting:**

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesizing many diverse elements together.

Voting is a win or lose model which does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

With consensus, people can and should work through differences together and synthesize seemingly contradictory ideas. People are able to talk peacefully about their differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. No ideas are lost, and each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

Consensus can take more time than a simple vote. But the added time means increased understanding that each member of the group will have about the issue and the increased probability of the decision being carried out. Longer decision time can mean shorter implementation time.

### **Nuts & Bolts of Consensus:**

The **fundamental right** of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The **fundamental responsibility** of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and tradeoffs are replaced with creative alternatives and compromise with synthesis.

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that his/her position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. It also means that the final decision doesn't violate someone's fundamental moral values, for if it did they would be obligated to block consensus. This same individual now has a primary responsibility to work towards a proposal that would be in accordance to his/her beliefs.

Hopefully, everyone will think it's the best decision; this often happens because when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals. But, it may occasionally not, and then the decision may just be the one supported by the most people. Those who object can do one of several things:

- Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")
- Reservations ("I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it.")
- Standing aside ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it.")
- Blocking ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this; it is immoral.")
- Withdrawing ("I cannot continue participating in this group.")

Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations, stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

### **Forming the Consensus Proposal:**

During discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Alternatively, the leaders may poll the voting membership, asking each for acceptance of the proposal.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable.

### **Roles in a Consensus Meeting:**

- The *facilitator* (or facilitators) aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point at hand, makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behavior, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.
- A *recorder* can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation
- A *timekeeper* keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.

## ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR WHICH HELP A GROUP REACH CONSENSUS

### **Responsibility**

Participants are responsible for voicing their opinions, participating in the discussion and actively implementing the agreement.

### **Self-discipline**

Blocking consensus should only be done for principled objections. Object clearly, to the point, and without put-downs or excessive speeches. Participate in finding an alternative solution.

### **Respect**

Respect others and trust them to make responsible input.

### **Cooperation**

Look for areas of agreement and common ground, and build on them. Avoid competitive, right/wrong, win/lose thinking.

### **Willingness to Change**

Willingness to change means being open to new ideas. People must be committed not only to expressing their own thoughts and judgements, but also to helping others with opposite views to express those as well.

### **Struggle**

Use clear means of disagreement -- no put-downs. Use disagreements and arguments to learn, grow and change. Work hard to build unity in the group, but not at the expense of the individuals who are its members.

### **Shared Beliefs**

Because the ideal of consensus is to reach a decision that is not only acceptable to everyone, but is best for everyone, there must be a '**bottom line**' of shared beliefs about what is best for all concerned. These basic values help define the working relationships of the members.

## A Quality Weekend – Characteristics

### Presenting Couples

- ❑ Presenters need to prepare to give a performance: they are “on stage” all weekend long..
- ❑ Early team behavior -- focus on the couples, not on each other.
- ❑ Good Intro talk is important – This is the first impression the couples get of us. We can appear in control or unfocused, depending on how that talk is presented.
- ❑ “Feelings” dialog role play -- Needs to be well done as it sets the tone for the participants’ dialogue. Don’t read it -- look at each other. Topic should be light: we want the participants to see that dialogue is fun and enjoyable. They’ll get to the “heavy” subjects later. Presenters should present this sharing in front of the presenting couple community before giving it for the first time.
- ❑ Presenters need to be prepared. Their own relationships must be in good shape if they are to serve the participants. Admin couple should give the presenters pre-weekend questions for dialogue.
- ❑ Unfortunately, sometimes there is a need for healing among presenting couples. The clergy pre-weekend communion should focus on forgiveness, healing and unity in the presenting team.
- ❑ Consider reading talks aloud before the weekend. Familiarize yourself with the talk. Add cues (pause) as needed. If we stumble over words and phrases, we look awkward and unprepared.
- ❑ Keep up the pace! Slow or hesitant speech leads to boredom or inattention. Slow talkers need to practice speeding up.
- ❑ Be sure your talks are within the time limit; remember that reading on the weekend can sometimes be different than reading at home. Do not ad lib! Be aware of pauses due to laughs, emotional sections and other considerations.
- ❑ Talks must be fresh, relatable, and all changes must be workshopped. [Reminder: this is part of our commitment we made when we accepted the loving task of presenting weekends.]

### Facility

- ❑ Should be the best we can afford. Important that we keep looking for new facilities and not get locked in to one location just because it’s easy and we’re familiar with it.
- ❑ Keep the Registration Table easily accessible; Friday night host couples should be available, but not bunched around. If the host couples seem to be busy visiting with each other, it leaves the new arrivals feeling unimportant and awkward.
- ❑ Conference room should be neat and tidy.
- ❑ Banners need to be professional-looking and ironed; otherwise forget them.
- ❑ Presenting table should be on risers if at all possible.
- ❑ Make sure rows are arranged in such a way that Presenting Couples can make eye contact with all Participants.
- ❑ Consider the use of microphones if the room is noisy or a speaker has a soft voice. Suggested that lapel or other less-obvious types be used.
- ❑ Areas should consider making or purchasing low-rise holders for talks.
  - Should be no more than 6” high and wide enough to hold two pages so pages can be slid from one side to the other. One suggestion is to use 2 clear plastic picture frames, inverted and adapted to form a riser of the correct size and height.



### Other Considerations

- ❑ Start the weekend on time. If a couple is going to be late, save them a seat near the back. It is the responsibility of the Admin couple to catch them up on what they missed.
- ❑ Start talks on time.
- ❑ The Intro talk should not say, “We won’t start till every one is here.” Instead say something like, “We don’t like to start till everyone is here.”  
Clergy should compliment couples when everyone returns to the room on time.
- ❑ Prayer for presenting couples after meals is imperative! It can be effective for Clergy to explain to the couples why the Presenters are often the last to arrive at the conference room. [This can be done later in the weekend – perhaps after lunch on Saturday.]
- ❑ Handouts, both on the weekend and in Care Packages, *must* be neat and professional looking. If the area is still using handouts from many years ago, consider retyping or redesigning them so they don’t look dated.
- ❑ Name tags should have names written large and dark.
- ❑ Place cards should have names on both sides so couples around the table can read them.

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER  
COMMUNITY HANDBOOK  
Glossary**

<b>Admin Couple</b>	Presenting Couple responsible for the flow and coordination of the Weekend's activities and the Presenting Couple's relationship. Usually the 3 <sup>rd</sup> set couple, but not a requirement.
<b>Admin Box</b>	A box containing the Weekend handouts, CD player, and Weekend CD's, songbooks, and other Weekend Presenting Couple supplies. Given to the Admin couple for use during the Weekend.
<b>Anniversary Weekend</b>	The repeat of an original Marriage Encounter experience by an Encountered couple, at least six months after their first Weekend.
<b>Anniversary Couple</b>	An Encountered couple making an anniversary Weekend.
<b>Area</b>	A recognized geographical area offering Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends and having a contact couple.
<b>Banners, Weekend</b>	Wall hangings made by individual Areas depicting concepts of the Weekend.
<b>Board</b>	The group of couples, either local, district, regional or international, concerned with the implementation of policies and procedures and effective conduct of Weekends and community activities.
<b>Bumper Sticker</b>	A sticker available through Regional Supply that can be placed on a car's bumper reading, "Ask Us about Our Weekend" or "We Believe in Marriage."
<b>By-Laws</b>	The rules under which we function as Lutheran Marriage Encounter that must be adhered to by Areas offering Weekends.
<b>Care Kit</b>	A package given to the Encountering couples on Sunday Afternoon, which provides more information about dialogue, community events, etc. Usually includes Area and Regional newsletters, bumper stickers, brochures, etc. Also known as Survival Kit, Care Package, etc., in various areas.
<b>Call To Be Family</b>	The corporate name of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. Call to Be Family Inc. holds the license from Worldwide Marriage Encounter to offer Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends representing all Lutheran Synods.

<b>Clergy Presenting Couple</b>	An ordained Lutheran pastor and spouse who share presentations on the LME Weekends.
<b>Community</b>	All Encountered couples within an Area.
<b>Community Nights</b>	Special evenings offered periodically after the Weekend for encountered couples to share in activities aimed at reinforcing dialogue. Community nights are an Area option.
<b>Concepts, Weekend</b>	The beliefs and explanations that LME presents during a Weekend relating to feelings, love, relationships and God.
<b>Conference Room</b>	The room where Weekend presentations are given.
<b>Deeper Weekend</b>	The term normally applied to a "Weekend Presenting Couple Deeper." This Weekend is given to Encountered couples who have answered "yes" to the invitation to become Presenting Couples.
<b>Dialogue</b>	The talking about and sharing of feelings between a couple.
<b>District Contact Couple</b>	The lay and clergy Presenting Couples who represent a district on the Regional Board.
<b>Dialogue Workshop</b>	A special event offered for encountered couples wherein further techniques and opportunities for dialogue growth are offered via presentations, group sharing, etc.
<b>District</b>	A geographically established parameter within which Areas function. (There are five in North America.)
<b>Expense Report</b>	Another name for the "Request for Reimbursement Voucher" form used to submit expenditures to local or Regional Finance Couples.
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	The fiscal year of LME ends July 31 of each year.
<b>Finance Couple</b>	The Regional, District or Area couple responsible for finances.

<b>Handouts, Weekend</b>	Recognized materials given to couples during the Marriage Encounter Weekend.
<b>Information Presentation</b>	An informal session where couples who wish to learn more about Marriage Encounter may hear a presentation and have the opportunity to register. A meeting to introduce Marriage Encounter to non-encountered couples and give them some information pertaining to the Weekend.
<b>Isolated Area</b>	See By-laws.
<b>Interfaith Board</b>	A "board" comprising representative couples from the different faiths offering Marriage Encounter Weekends through Worldwide Marriage Encounter.
<b>International Board</b>	The executive couples of Lutheran Marriage Encounter who help give direction to keep LME functioning in a smooth and effective manner. The Board is made up of Regional Executive Couples.
<b>Kick-off, Area</b>	A special meeting designed to help couples mesh together ideas and responsibilities as they work toward the goal of the first Weekend in an Area.
<b>Kick-off, Presenting Couple</b>	The term referred to a meeting between Presenting Couple coordinator(s) and potential Presenting Couples to explore aspects of a commitment to being a Presenting Couple.
<b>Lay Presenting Couple</b>	A non-clergy husband and wife who help give presentations on Marriage Encounter Weekends.
<b>Logo</b>	The copyrighted symbolic pictorial representation for Lutheran Marriage Encounter or Call to be Family.
<b>Love Circle</b>	A small group of encountered couples who get together on a regular basis to enrich their dialogue, coupleness and relationships with one another in the group. Also known as Spiral.
<b>Loving Tasks</b>	Those tasks assumed by encountered couples in support of pre-Weekend, Weekend, and post-Weekend activities of an area.
<b>Mid Set Couple</b>	Sometimes referred to as "2 <sup>nd</sup> Set Couple." The presenters giving the middle (or second) set of talks on the Weekend.
<b>Newsletter</b>	An informative circular giving information about local Area activities, sharing loveletters or other items from couples, and providing material to enrich and encourage couples in their dialogue.

<b>One Ringers</b>	A "signal" sent from one Encountered couple to another (by dialing their number and letting it ring once) which is meant to let the couple know someone has dialogued and are thinking of them. Such calls must be limited to local calls only due to phone regulations.
<b>Outreach Weekend</b>	A Weekend "given" by an Area which does meet Weekend criteria to an area that does not yet meet Weekend criteria. A way for established Areas to share the Weekend with growing communities.
<b>Participants</b>	Couples attending a Weekend (also referred to as "Weekend couple").
<b>Petty Cash Fund</b>	A fund maintained by an Area Finance Couple for the purpose of paying for local expenses connected with the Weekend and some post-Weekend activities.
<b>Policy</b>	A statement of practice or procedure which is usually made by the Regional Board which an Area is bound to comply with.
<b>Post-Weekend List</b>	A list of names, addresses and phone numbers of couples who have completed a Marriage Encounter Weekend.
<b>Prayer Couple</b>	A couple offering their love, thoughts and prayers for a couple on an LME Weekend, and giving support to the couple following their Weekend until the Weekend Renewal. (In some areas referred to as "Caring Couple.")
<b>Prayer Couple Coordinator</b>	The couple responsible for coordinating details for prayer couples necessary for a Weekend.
<b>Presenting Couple Coordinator</b>	The couple recognized by the Area, District, or Regional Board responsible for LME business related to Presenting Couples.
<b>Pre-Weekend List</b>	A list containing the names, addresses, phone numbers, denominations and wedding anniversary dates for couples registered to attend a Weekend.
<b>Rap Session</b>	A casual get-together of Weekend couples and Presenting Couples to promote the enthusiasm for dialogue and coupleness usually held in homes within the month after their Encounter.
<b>Region (local)</b>	A sub-division within an area usually divided by local geographical boundaries. Set up mainly as a post-Weekend organizational structure in some areas. (Sometimes referred to as a "zone.")

<b>Regional Board</b>	Comprises the Regional Executive Couples and the Lay and Clergy Contact Couples of each District.
<b>Registration Couple</b>	The couple(s) recognized by the Area, District and Regional Board who conduct LME reservation business.
<b>Retrouvaille</b>	A Weekend developed by Worldwide Marriage Encounter, somewhat like a Marriage Encounter Weekend, but designed for couples who are separated, divorced or in troubled marriages.
<b>Rookie Presenting Couple</b>	The Presenting Couple usually giving the first set of talks. Can also refer to any couple on their first Weekend as a Weekend Presenting Couple.
<b>Sing-off</b>	The welcoming of newly Encountered couples by the community, which comes at the end of the Weekend.
<b>Snack Table</b>	A table of snacks brought and shared by couples on the Weekend. Bringing in food to a facility is not permitted in many areas of the country, so presence of a snack table is an area decision.
<b>Speaker's Night</b>	See "Information Night/Presentation".
<b>Supply Couple</b>	The couple(s) recognized by the Area and Regional Board who conduct LME supply business.
<b>Supply Kit</b>	A supply kit for the conference room containing first aid and other toiletry items that might be needed by couples attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend.
<b>Theology</b>	The Lutheran faith interpretation and beliefs regarding relationship to God and the Church.
<b>Unit</b>	An organizational structure consisting of several Areas which have combined for the purposes of ease of communication, sharing ideas, and fellowship at a more local level, etc.
<b>Veterans</b>	Encountered couples who have attended a Weekend Renewal.
<b>Vet Renewal</b>	A special event offered for encountered couples, which may be held at the same time a Weekend Renewal is being offered. Similar to a "Community Night".

<b>WEDS</b>	The acronym term used for "Write", "Exchange", "Dialogue", and "Select", which outlines the four basic steps in the dialogue technique.
<b>Weekend</b>	A Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend offers a couple an opportunity to enrich their couple relationship. The Weekend lasts from approximately 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening until 4:00 p.m. on Sunday evening.
<b>Weekend Coordinator</b>	A couple responsible for coordinating details connected with the Weekend in an Area.
<b>Weekend Enrichment Experience</b>	A "second Weekend" type of experience offered by established Areas wherein couples further explore their relationship and have the opportunity to share with each other and those present.
<b>Weekend Renewal</b>	A gathering of Weekend couples and other Encountered couples plus the Weekend Presenting Couples approximately three weeks after a Weekend to help encourage dialogue, overcome possible stumbling blocks and share as a group.
<b>Workshop Couple</b>	A couple who is usually experienced in writing talks, whether it be community, Information Night talks, or as a Weekend Presenting Couple, who critiques another couple's talk.
<b>World Marriage Day</b>	A day, usually the Sunday nearest Valentine's Day, when marriage is celebrated. Many churches observe this day, which is an important time for ME to be involved. Information and ideas can be obtained from the Regional Resource Couple.
<b>Worldwide Marriage Encounter</b>	The "Parent" M.E. corporate body which holds copyrights to the M.E. logo and M.E. Weekend material. "Worldwide" was originally a Catholic M.E. organization, but has licensed many other denominations to carry out the vision of Marriage Encounter.
<b>10/10</b>	Encounter term for 10 minutes of writing and 10 minutes of dialogue as a couple.