

Hi All,

There is no formal timeline document for the 3RE Experience. We have included a section of information from the Facilitator's Guide that will give you some things to consider. From our experience, it was important to start the work about 3 months prior to the beginning of the experience. Since this is designed to be done in a church setting, securing the facility is first. In very busy churches this will present somewhat of a challenge. Adequate, private space for the couples is so important, as well as a consistency of where each couple goes for their writing/dialogue time.

Again, being a church setting, publicity is unique. The traditional reliance on the website for application may not be the best. In our experience, most couples apply in person to the contact person in the church. As with most church programs, most of the publicity will need to be in the last 60 days prior to the experience.

A. The primary difference between a traditional Marriage Encounter Weekend and this 3RE DVD format of a Marriage Encounter Experience is:

1. The **timetable** used to provide the information and couple time; eight recommended sessions with couples meeting once per week, 2-3.5 hours per session, rather than a Friday night through Sunday afternoon.
2. The use of a **DVD format** to provide the presentations to the couples, thus not requiring three or four Marriage Encounter presenting couples to be available for seven or eight consecutive weeks.
3. The necessity of only requiring **one Marriage Encounter Facilitator Couple** to facilitate the DVD presentations each week, answer questions about dialoguing and clarify other information provided on the DVD.

B. Use and Copying of 3RE Materials

Both the 3RE DVD and the Facilitator Guide are copyrighted. No one is authorized to make a copy of the DVD or the Facilitator Couple Guide, or any part of either, in written, audio recorded, or video recorded formats, without the express written permission and consent in advance by MEUM, and if such permission is granted, then such use shall only be in conjunction with the 3RE Experience.

II. FACILITATOR COUPLE RESPONSIBILITIES

- A.** The Facilitator Couple will be the 4th team of the DVD and lead the process.
- B.** The Facilitator Couple must be a couple who has attended a Deeper Marriage Encounter Weekend. These couples understand the dialogue process and will be able to assist with questions that participants may have about dialoguing. Additional assistants are not required to be Marriage Encounter presenting team couples. However, having 2 – 3 couples to help setup, host, and clean up at the end of each session is recommended.
- C.** The Facilitator Couple must be available during all sessions to answer questions or problems (and in between sessions)
- D.** The Facilitator Couple will be responsible for helping to catch-up couples who miss a session.

- E. The Facilitator Couple should have a copy of the Marriage Encounter outline for each session. These may be obtained from the MEUM website at www.encounter.org.
- F. The Facilitator Couple shall be responsible for completing and submitting the Marriage Encounter Experience Report Form, coordinating the collection of all application fees and donations, remitting the established per couple allocation to the MEUM National Board and ensuring the proper use and accounting of all collected funds. This shall include, for MEUM Facilitator Couples, the sending of all funds over and above the per couple allocations and local expenses to their Area or Jurisdictional Finance couple. These may be obtained from the MEUM website at www.encounter.org.
- G. The Facilitator Couple will be responsible for pre-3RE and post-3RE communication with the couples.

III. REQUIREMENTS OF THE FACILITATOR COUPLE PRIOR TO THE 3RE EXPERIENCE

To create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for each couple, the following are ideas to consider. Each situation will need to adjust and adapt to individual circumstances.

- A. **Facility requirements:** Take care in choosing your facility. Space and privacy limitations must be considered when deciding on a facility. There should be a large space, such as a church fellowship hall, meeting room, or school cafeteria that will be available, without interruptions, for all sessions. While private rooms for dialogue are ideal, they are not a necessity, **if** a semi-private area can be created for each couple. These locations will be the breakout areas each couple will need for writing and dialoguing without interruptions. The maximum number of couples invited to register for the Marriage Encounter Experience may be dependent on the availability of “couple” space where couples can breakout to write and talk privately. **Open areas with no private spaces, such as those used successfully for post-weekend Reunions, are NOT acceptable for an original Marriage Encounter Experience.**
- B. **Child care:** Decisions must be made concerning the possibility of having child care available or not and where this would be offered in the facility. For many couples with young children, finding acceptable child care is a major concern and sometimes limits a couple from attending a Marriage Encounter Experience. Providing child care at the same facility as the sessions are presented may help ease this concern for couples. **Couples and care givers must understand that the couples would only have contact during the sessions with their children if there was an extreme emergency.** Background checks (and certification) may be required for child care workers. If child care is provided, this additional expense will need to be a part of the cost for the couples. The cost could be divided among all couples attending or just an additional fee for any couple needing child care. It is suggested that those individuals providing the child care will need to arrive 30 minutes before each session starts and remain 30 minutes after the ending in case couples choose to stay later to clarify a concept with the Facilitator Couple. If possible, having the same child care workers for all the sessions provides consistency for the children and their parents.
- C. **Food:** Facilitator Couples must determine how and when food, if any, will be served. This can be as simple or as elaborate as the facilitators and assistants choose. The anticipated cost of any food items would need to be added to the basic cost. Always keep in mind the effect this will have on time, preparation, community, and cost.
 1. At a minimum, each couple could be provided with a beverage and a small treat (i.e., mints, candies, etc.).

2. If resources are available (persons to purchase or make the food and couple(s) to serve), a little more elaborate snack could be provided. Suggestions: cheese and crackers or bite-sized fruit, pretzels, chips and dip or salsa, etc., varying with each session.
3. A dessert could be served before or after each session. When two presentations are given in one session, the dessert could be provided between the two session presentations.
4. A full simple meal could be provided before each session. This creates a “date night” atmosphere and may be appreciated by the couples. However, it also creates substantial extra volunteers to do the cooking, serving, and clean up as well as additional expense. Table cloths and/or centerpieces add a special touch. A requirement for this approach would be to increase the cost of the program to cover the additional cost of the food.
5. Meals could be served at the first and last sessions, or whatever arrangement facilitators choose. See comments for this under 4. above.
6. Similar to 4. above, the meals could be catered. The expense of doing this should be considered in the final Experience program cost.

D. Figuring the Cost of the Experience: We recommend that the couples pay up front prior to the Experience. The total cost for the Experience should be paid when couples make their reservation and should include:

1. The fee to National MEUM – currently \$50.00 per couple. **(UM ONLY)**
2. Cost to Marriage Encounter for the use of the DVD material (DVD, Facilitator’s Guide, and Workbooks)
3. Facility charges
4. Food expenditures
5. Child care providers
6. Miscellaneous expenses such as tablecloths, centerpieces, or other items to add atmosphere.

E. Make Up Sessions: Couples who do not attend a session must either make up the session prior to the next scheduled session or discontinue the Marriage Encounter Experience. Under no circumstances will loaning the DVD to couples be allowed. The facilitators must be present during all DVD make up sessions.

The Facilitator Couple must be willing to devote extra time for any couple that is unable to attend any session. The Facilitator Couple must be present to run the DVD, exercises, and answer any questions or concerns. The Facilitator Couple must determine:

1. **Where the make-up sessions will be held.** Make up sessions could be at the same location as all other sessions, pending availability of the facility, at the facilitator’s home, or at the home of the couple who could not attend the regularly scheduled session. Obviously, the location must be able to show the DVD.
2. **Date and time for the make-up session** which must be done prior to the next scheduled session must be agreed upon. To help shorten the make-up time frame, any dialoguing time in the session (writing and sharing) could be done in the privacy of the couple’s home without the Facilitator Couple being present.

F. Possible Alternative Session Format: The total number of sessions could be adjusted from the eight sessions suggested to a fewer number of sessions, but each of those sessions would require a longer time frame. If fewer sessions are desired, each session would be a combination of two regular sessions, necessitating the allocation of a 4-6 hour block of time for the new session format. The advantage of having fewer sessions may fit the availability of the facility better than a 7 or 8 session format. The disadvantage is each session will be fairly lengthy. Longer sessions will require considerations of child care accommodations and meal alternatives. Also, couples will have more homework between sessions with fewer sessions. The closing service should be done at the end of the last session.

G. Eight (8) Sessions are Recommended: One advantage of holding an optional Session 8 as your last session is that it could be used as a reunion, or first Flame. The participating couples will also be informed of the time commitment ahead of the Experience allowing them to schedule it.

However, the Session 8 information could be provided differently. The primary Marriage Encounter information is given in Sessions 1–7 with the DVD format. If the Facilitator Couple chooses to only hold sessions 1–7, the information for Session 8 could be disseminated in an alternative way, similar to how Weekend Reunions are held for traditional Marriage Encounter Weekends.