

Lutheran Marriage Encounter

PRESENTING COUPLE SELECTION PROCESS LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER - NORTH AMERICAN REGION

CRITERIA FOR PRESENTING COUPLE SELECTION:

CRITERION 1a: FOR A 1ST AND 2ND SECOND SET PRESENTER BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE COMMUNING MEMBERS OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

When we share on the weekend, what we share is basically who we are in relationship. Part of who we are is our relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and how we live out that relationship. We worship and serve God.

CRITERION 1b: FOR 3RD SET AND CLERGY BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE LUTHERAN AND COMMUNING MEMBERS OF A LUTHERAN CHURCH.

When we share on the weekend, what we share is basically who we are in relationship. Part of who we are is our relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and how we live out that relationship. We worship and serve God primarily with a community of people we call the Lutheran Church and it is part of our identity.

CRITERION 2: COUPLES BE MARRIED 5 YEARS (IDEALLY) AND CLERGY ORDAINED AT LEAST 2 YEARS.

In the course of being a presenting couple, it will be necessary for a couple to draw upon their own marital experience and it has been observed that most couples married less than 5 years do not have enough experience to draw upon. In all reality they are beginning to live their lives as husband and wife. Second marriages where the couple has been married less than 5 years may also have difficulty focusing their experience on their present marriage. The same rationale applies when considering the 2 year requirement for clergy; they need to draw upon their experience in serving the congregation.

CRITERION 3: THEY ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE AND CONCEPTS OF THE WEEKEND.

Blatant disregard for the values and/or process of the weekend would cause the presenting couples on the weekend to no longer consider a couple.

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION

FRIDAY NIGHT: At the presenting couple meeting, the third set couple, as leaders will:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 as a prelude and discuss what Paul is saying about gifts that God gives the church and each individual. As we hand the weekend over to God, so also we hand the selection process over to God for His guidance.
2. Review Criteria 1, 2 & 3.
3. Identify all couples that meet Criteria 1 & 2.

SUNDAY EVENING: At the presenting couple meeting:

1. Finalize the eligible list by inviting all presenting couples to inform the other presenters if they have observed or heard:
 - (a) any blatant disregard for the discipline of the weekend,
 - (b) any disrespect for the concepts and/or values of the weekend,
 - (c) any prior related facts (outside of the weekend experience) pertaining to any of the eligible couples.
2. Pray for all couples, however they choose to serve.
3. Determine who is responsible for contacting the eligible couples and inform the Area Presenting Couple Coordinators.

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Deleted: primarily with a community of people we call the Lutheran Church and it is part of our identity. To ask a couple who is not Lutheran to serve as a presenting couple in Lutheran Marriage Encounter is unfair to them as well as the Encounter Family. It would mean either they must deny who they truly are or else dilute the fullness of the Lutheran experience. Either choice is unfair to everyone concerned

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PROCEDURE FOR INVITING ELIGIBLE COUPLES:

1. Soon after the weekend one of the presenting couples should visit or phone all couples on the eligible list in order to determine their involvement as communicant members of a Lutheran Church and their commitment to dialogue.

2. Extend an invitation to consider affirmation of the weekend and interest in the possibility of becoming a presenting couple. Possible wording of the invitation:

"We believe as a couple you have special gifts. Marriage Encounter offers many ways to use these gifts. One of the ways is to become a presenting couple. We would like you to prayerfully consider that possibility as well as others. You may like to dialogue on; 'How do I feel about sharing our relationship with other couples' (and other related dialogue topics). We would like to see you at Weekend Renewal and if you have any questions we'd be happy to answer them privately at that time."

3. At Renewal or shortly thereafter, do a follow up to reaffirm their commitment and ask if they wish to know more about the process of becoming a presenting couple by attending Kick-Off I. Give a specific date you will call them for an answer. (Suggestion: no more than one week for an answer)

4. Present Kick-Off I

Kick-Off I is a review of the weekend criteria and a discussion on their commitment to daily dialogue. This commitment is needed in order to be a valid presenting couple.

At this time, a review is made of the couple's participation of Holy Communion on the weekend. If they did not participate, it may be an expression of a struggle with a personal relationship with God or the church. It has always been Marriage Encounter's policy to not recommend a couple for presenting couple unless they both receive Communion at the closing worship service; however, there may be extenuating circumstances and we need to be sensitive to what they may be, i.e. illness or a temporary personal situation. They must know that they will be expected to commune on the weekends they present. At this time, reflect also on the couple's church attendance.

When the Kick-Off I is presented, the couples should be made aware of the expectations of a presenting couple. By this time they will have a pretty good idea if this ministry is for them. If so, the assignment (deeper preparation) is given, with a specific date for completion.

(Suggestion: the date of completion should be no longer than one month. To ascertain their commitment, the responsibility should be on the couple to complete the assignment on time without further prompting.)

5. Second assignment:

The second assignment after this Kick-Off will be to write and have workshopped a first draft of Encounter With Self. All of Section III should be completed. (This need not be a finished product but at least a taste of what is involved in writing talks).

6. Present Kick-Off II

It is permissible and highly recommended that couples continue writing presentations before they go on a deeper, especially if there is a considerable length of time elapsing between their original weekend and the Deeper. These may be considered first drafts instead of finished products.

7. Deeper Weekend

8. Continued workshopping and completion of the balance of the talks - First set or Clergy

DEEPER PREPARATION HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

1. Deeper preparation homework should be:
 - a) typewritten.
 - b) single spaced.

- c) full pages to save postage.
 - d) the questions need not be written before your answers
2. Answers should not be one liners; however, for most presentations one half page should be enough to answer the three questions.
 3. Five copies made, one kept, and four copies sent to the Kick-Off couple.
 4. The kick-Off couple will read to check for completeness and depth and send four copies to the Area Presenting Couple Coordinators.
 5. Area Presenting Couple Coordinators will keep 1 copy for the workshop couple and forward 1 copy to each of the Deeper Presenting Couples and the District Presenting Couple Coordinators simultaneously.

ADDENDUM #1

Adopted. 7/1/94

LAY BECOMING CLERGY:

While in the seminary, these couples may present as lay. After ordination they may not present the lay set of presentations. If they wish to be considered to become clergy presenters, they must attend a weekend. Then the guidelines for presenting couple selection will be followed.