

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

OUTREACH MANUAL

Presenting an outreach Marriage Encounter weekend is a viable part of expanding the dream in encountering more couples. Coordinated effort will yield the best result in expanding the dream! Reaching out into new or previously active areas takes a lot of planning and organizing! The following guidelines and forms will assist with the coordination .

Outreach is an effort of all in the District in which it is presented. Outreach efforts can be extended to geographical locations which have never had an LME presence or can be a way revitalize and regenerate an inactive area. A weekend can be held for the purpose of establishing a new area or to offer a weekend experience on a one time basis where a desire surfaces. An outreach weekend may be the result of a couple in a given area contacting LME desiring a weekend or an outreach weekend may be the result of active LME couples reaching into an area presently inactive. Care should be taken to assure that the Mission and Vision of Lutheran Marriage Encounter is being supported. Post weekend support is essential even if it is connecting the newly encountered with an established community of another participating denomination. An additional weekend 9 – 12 months later should be scheduled so couples attending the weekend can have a date for their inviting.

Offering opportunities to serve in the ministry is essential on outreach weekends. Couples who are eligible need to be given the opportunity to consider participating in the ministry as presenters. Other couples can participate in other ways. With the tools available in our world today, couples can live miles away from an established area and still be supportive of the area and the outreach location.

Utilizing non-residential weekends, camping weekends, retreat center weekends, and other “non-traditional” locations may make a weekend viable where appropriate and the cost is of concern.

PROPOSED OUTREACH DEFINITIONS AND JOB DESCRIPTIONS

NAR outreach couple:

Job description

- appointed staff member of NAR
- sends an updated report for the bi-annual NAR meetings to report on outreach activity scheduled in each district
- maintains frequent contact with District outreach couples to encourage and support
- coordinates and helps provide resources for Districts outreach weekends

DISTRICT OUTREACH COUPLE

Job description:

- appointed by District Execs
- be a presenting couple who has presented sufficient weekends to be knowledgeable in all the workings of coordinating a ME weekend
- use information available regarding locations/ concentration of Lutherans for church publicity and attendance
- be able to coordinate and/or bring all materials needed including supplies, banners, prayer couples, etc, if necessary, to a weekend.
- work with area contact couples for needed assistance in supplies, weekend support.
- work with DPCC to secure presenting couples for the weekend
- secure a couple who will act as registration couple for the weekend – may be area registration couple in close proximity
- if possible, work with a couple or pastor in the outreach area to secure a hotel and make sure it has a sufficient conference room. This will eliminate travel to view facility for location/cleanliness, etc.
- work with the hotel regarding the facility requirements and food service. May need to travel to location, but most information can be done via email or telephone.
- be FLEXIBLE to meet the unique needs of that location in support of the weekend, i.e. prayer couples, sing-off
- make sure all non-negotiables, LME guidelines and weekend timetables are met
- encourage outreach activity in the district and areas

AREA OUTREACH COUPLE

Some districts may prefer to appoint an area outreach couple to focus specifically in a particular area. Work would be in proximity of an active area and supplies, registration, support could all be utilized from the area.

Job description:

- appointed by area execs
- be responsible to area execs who will then be responsible to district execs
- be a presenting couple who has presented sufficient weekends to be knowledgeable in all the workings of coordinating a ME weekend
- use information available regarding locations/ concentration of Lutherans for church publicity and attendance
- be able to coordinate and/or bring all materials needed including supplies, banners, prayer couples, etc, if necessary, to a weekend.
- Contact APCC for presenting couples
- if possible, work with a couple or pastor in the outreach area to secure a hotel with sufficient conference room, location, cleanliness
- work with the hotel regarding the facility requirements and food service. May need to travel to location, but most information can be done via email or telephone.
- be FLEXIBLE to meet the unique needs of that location in support of the weekend, i.e. prayer couples, sing-off
- make sure all non-negotiables, LME guidelines and weekend timetables are met

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

All outreach reimbursement requests will be paid from the District finance couple. Reimbursement requests should be accompanied by an expense reimbursement form and the original receipts.

Supplies that can be borrowed , i.e. banners, table supplies can be borrowed from the area. Notebooks, pens, workbooks and inserts will be purchased and reimbursed through the District.

Try to make as many hotel inquiries as possible by phone or email. A local contact couple will be able to choose a facility appropriate in location and cleanliness without travel expense.

Travel to weekend renewal is an appropriate outreach expense – however, only one of the teams need attend.

Try to present any possible Kick-Off I to couples before or after the renewal to help make the travel more efficient.

It may be necessary to support the first couple love circle meetings in an area where community does not currently exist. Please have one of those trips include information and training for writing circle presentations. Try to utilize other faith expressions to help develop Lutheran love circle or include weekend couples into their love circle.

Outreach manual – weekend facility needs:

This is offered as a starting point for negotiation with facility and information for outreach coordinators. Flexibility is required in order to adapt to each outreach situation. Use good judgment and common sense as your guide to get the best facility possible while being good stewards of LME funds.

CONFERENCE ROOM – needed Friday evening from 4PM to Sunday evening 5PM.

IDEAL would be to get the conference room and dining room comped by the hotel. When negotiating the contract discuss the possibility with the marketing agent. Often hotels will have a minimum number of sleeping rooms reserved or a minimum cost for food as their qualification.

- Raised platform for presenting couples with rectangular tables set up for four persons with table cloth and skirt, four chairs. Should have access to electrical outlet
- Theater style seating – two to four rows deep, even number of seats on each row OR classroom style with 2-4 people at each table (depending on size of tables) facing presenters.
- Two extra tables – set up along back of room – one for water and glasses, one for table supplies, i.e. aspirin, tissues, etc.

FRIDAY EVENING REGISTRATION

Table with cloth, four chairs set up in a visible area near the hotel entrance or conference room entrance.

Hosting couple will need room keys, (two keys per room), list of couple room assignments and diagrams of hotel layout. Please walk through the hotel so that proper directions can be given for locating rooms and conference room.

If pictures of couples will be done – someone will need to be assigned to that task.

ROOMS

Hotel will need the names of the attending couples prior to the weekend. Hotel will assign room numbers and provide the hosting couple that list Friday upon arrival.

- Rooms should be near the conference room, if possible, preferably on same floor
- Presenting couple room will need to be available for check-in by 3:00 on Friday.

- **Check out for all rooms should be 6PM Sunday**
- No maid service is needed during the weekend. Ask hotel to put out extra towels and coffee packets in conference room. No-maid service may be a negotiating tool.

MEALS

If the hotel has a restaurant they will be able to provide the meal service, however, it may be a separate contract. If there is no food service at the hotel a caterer will need to be secured – along with scheduled time delivery. For an outreach weekend and possible limited support couples to help it would be advisable to choose a hotel that has food service.

Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner and Sunday breakfast, lunch will need to be provided. Breakfast should be more than rolls and coffee! Lunch can be the lightest meal. Often desserts are included in the “package”, but it could be a negotiating possibility also.

Provide the meal service with the times of each meal. Meals must be served at the designated times to keep the schedule moving. Ask that food service have food on the tables at the designated time. If the presentations are running late, it is the fault of the presenters and cold food may result.

Tables should be 3-4 couples at each table. Dining near the conference room is the best time saver.

It would be nice if Saturday meal could be individual couple tables for a romantic meal, but that isn't always possible.

SING-OFF, RECEPTION

Check with hotel about bringing in special cake and punch. Often they will provide plates and forks, and sometimes a server.

The number of people attending the reception will depend on whether prayer couples will be attending. The reception room will need to be large enough to accommodate weekend couples and prayer couples if available.

BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

Marriage Encounter does direct billing, with no deposit required. At the end of the weekend someone will need to check over the bill to make sure that all costs are accurate (cost of room x number of attendees, conference room if there is a charge, any additional expenses i.e. video rental) The bill will need to be signed by the presenter or host couple responsible so that when it is sent to the finance they know it has been checked. If food contract is separate, it will need to be checked and signed also. Additional paperwork may be required by a hotel before accepting the direct billing and any questions can be directed to the M.E. finance couple or district execs.

SPECIFIC DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO –

- Clear all decisions with district outreach who is responsible to district execs
- Stay in contact with hotel marketing representative who will explain all paperwork needed and will accept all information necessary for a smooth weekend.
- Remind hotel that maid service is NOT needed
- Check with hotel about late registration on Sunday and check your own keys at noon to make sure they are working. It is often a computer glitch and can cause distress for couples.
- Provide meal service with times scheduled for meals. Ask that salads, of anything possible be put on the table before couples are seated. If time runs long – it is the weekend problem and a cold meal may result. It is not the fault of the food service.
- Ask for additional towels, coffee packets to be placed in the conference in case anyone needs them. There will be NO maid service.

Attachments:

- Weekend time schedule
- List of Non-negotiables or WWME
- Outreach plan of action
- Outreach reimbursement form
- Hotel contact form