

Post Encounter Program – PEP Series
Contents

Jan. 4, 1996

Dear Lovers,

We are proud, finally, to provide to United Methodist Encounter this electronic library containing a substantial library of excellent Post Encounter Program material. Flames should feel free to use this information, print it and copy it as desired for Marriage Encounter Flame use and other Encounter use.

This library should be considered a living, growing entity. But it will only grow as new material is provided. If you have any resource materials which would benefit these libraries, please send them to us for the benefit of MEUM couples and Flames everywhere.

This disk was generated in Word for Windows but it is formatted as RTF (Rich Text Format) meaning it is Text format including document format information. It should be readable by most of the popular modern personal word processing software. If you have any trouble accessing this library in a readable form and need a different format, please call us.

Please use this library for the benefit of couples and Flames. We have put a great deal of time into compiling this resource and need only its use to make it a Joy.

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PEP SERIES I

REFRESHING THE WEEKEND CONCEPTS

A POST-ENCOUNTER PROGRAM FOR NEWLY ENCOUNTERED COUPLES

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #1 - INTRODUCTION

I. EXPLANATION OF THE POST ENCOUNTER PROGRAM (PEP)

A. Why are we here?

1. To support and encourage one another.
2. To review the main concepts of the Weekend.
3. To answer questions that couldn't be answered on the Weekend because of time.
4. To share our love.

B. Why was post encounter conceived?

1. Through experience, it was found that after the Weekend we retain only about 10-15% of the concepts of the Weekend,
2. By giving the couples an opportunity to review the Weekend, we have found that it has a more lasting impact on their lives and they will be able to retain the unity they discovered on their Weekend.
3. This is a means to introduce couples to community, to let them know we all care and struggle together.

C. PEP format for each meeting: (Optional - This information is for the P.E.P. Couples and is up to them whether they give this to the couples or not.)

1. Open meetings with a prayer. (Optional)
2. Instructional portion.
3. Presentation by PEP Couple.
4. Dialogue and private sharing with spouse.
5. Open sharing on a light dialogue question. (SHARING IS VOLUNTARY.)
6. Coffee break and stretch time, (If you are going to have an actual coffee break, we suggest strongly that you have it after the sharing.)
7. Question and answer period.
8. Announcements and reminders.
9. Introduction to next week's topic.
10. Closing song and/or prayer.

NOTE for pep couples only - make sure you sing or pray BEFORE the first couple has to leave.

D. TOPICS OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

1. Joys and Struggles of Dialogue.
2. Masks and their importance to our relationship.
3. Married Singles.
4. We, God, and the World.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #1 – INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

II. ITEMS TO BE COVERED BY THE PEP COUPLE (If possible, expound on these items.)

- A. Reinforce their attendance at their Rookie Renewal and tell them you, as their PEP Couple, will make every effort to attend with them. Check on the date of the Rookie and mark it on your calendar.
- B. Do not judge Post Encounter until after you have experienced all of the Post Encounter Program.
- C. They made their own Weekend and, like the Weekend, they will only get out of Post Encounter what they put into it.
- D. Always bring notebooks and pens.
- E. Point out the value of their original notebooks. (See growth.)
- F. Offer "Secrets of Staying in Love" by Powell. Encourage them to purchase one from a book store,
- G. Explain hugging. (An expression of affection and a total acceptance of the other person.)
- H. Mention closing time of meetings for those with babysitters. Also mention that the meetings can be held at their homes if they wish.
- I. Prayer couples - we can write sample prayer letters during PEP evenings.
- J. Explain the open prayer - everyone is welcome to join in.
- K. Tell them there will be a dialogue question each evening and point out the dialogue spots in the house, so as not to break the mood later.
- L. Feel free to take notes anytime. Hold questions until after the presentation and the open sharing time.
- M. Remember on your Weekend on Saturday evening and Sunday before worship you were asked to share with the group. Our open sharing time is just like that.
- N. Rules for sharing:
 - 1. Sharing is always voluntary.
 - 2. Share only what is going on inside of you now - not stories about other people.
 - 3. Share for yourself only, singular, the I phase.
 - 4. All sharings are to be kept confidential - everything shared in this room should stay here. We build a trust between us through our sharings.
 - 5. These are not problem solving evenings. In your sharing, don't try to solve the other person's problems either subtly or directly.
 - 6. We may find it necessary, between sharings, to redirect the question, if it gets off the subject or becomes a story. (We will do this as lovingly as possible.)
 - 7. Point out that by not sharing, they may be depriving someone else from an experience that may be meaningful to them.
 - 8. Please DO NOT monopolize the sharing time.
 - 9. Never judge or criticize someone else's sharing.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #1 – INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

O. Recruiting

1. Ask them to recall their list of names from their Weekend. Remind them about information nights and the best way to get someone to an information night is to take them personally.
2. Tell them to go to information night even if they have no one to take because their presence could be the thing that will convince someone else to sign up.
3. Recruiting tips:
 - a. Share what the Weekend meant to them rather than what happened there.
 - b. Ask them to come and hear about the Weekend. Not to necessarily sign up.
 - c. Tell them you're only asking them to give you about an hour and a half.
 - d. They can bring as many couples as possible. The record so far is 18.
 - e. Anything else you as a P.E.P. Couple can add.

III. SHARING

A. Presentation (10 minute maximum) (PEP Couple Only)

Share your feelings of Friday when arriving at the facility, where the weekend changed you (if it did), and your feelings on Sunday at the end of the weekend and when leaving the facility.

NOTE for PEP couple: If you wish, after your presentation, you may play a song to help create the mood. Suggested songs are: "I Love You Just The Way You Are", "Lady", and "The Wedding Song".

- B. Suggested Question for Dialogue: What part of the Weekend had the biggest impact on my life? HDTMMF?
- C. Suggested Question for Sharing: How has the Weekend changed me?

IV. COFFEE BREAK AND STRETCH TIME. (Optional)

V. INTRODUCTION TO NEXT WEEKS TOPIC

- A. Just give-a short introduction to Joys and Struggles.
- B. Read an average or typical loveletter of yours. This shows them that our loveletters are very similar to theirs. It also shows them the difference between a presentation and a loveletter.
- C. Tell them how your dialogue is right now. Be honest.
- D. Tell them how your dialogue was the first week or so after the Weekend,
- E. Give them dialogue questions to use between the meetings. Really encourage them to use these questions because they lead them right into the next topic.

VI. CLOSE WITH PRAYER OR SONG. We suggest you have copies of the song for the couples.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #1

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS:

1. What effect has dialogue made in our relationship? HDTMMF?
2. HDIF telling you every day in a letter that I Love You?
3. Do I see the value of dialogue for our relationship? HDTMMF?
4. Was there a time when I really made an effort to dialogue even when it was difficult?
HDTMMF?
5. HDIF when through dialogue I have reached a new awareness of you?
6. How do I see myself as "Growing" or "Not Growing" in our relationship? HDTMMF?
7. Where in my list of priorities do I put our dialogue and HDTMMF?

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #2 – JOYS AND STRUGGLES OF DIALOGUE

I. WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

Dialogue in Marriage Encounter terms, is a communication tool, using the process of the W.E.D.S. (Write, Exchange, Dialogue, Select) to share our feelings with our spouse.

II. WHY DIALOGUE?

- A. To make us the center of our life.
- B. To grow in our ability to communicate on a "feeling level" which leads to:
 - 1. Intimacy - The sharing of all of who you are, what you feel, do and think. Sharing, both at pleasurable times and times of inner struggle.
 - 2. Trust - That we will be accepted no matter what.
- C. To grow in our "healing" graces.
- D. To live "God's Desire" for our marriage, which is to be one in mind, heart and affection.
- E. To have a "springboard" to further communication.

III. ROADBLOCKS TO DIALOGUE

Garbage Dumping, Manipulation and Ventilation are "I-centered", whereas, dialogue is "Other-centered" because it is a gift of yourself to another special person.

- A. Garbage Dumping
 - 1. Putting your spouse down on paper.
 - 2. Blaming your spouse for your feelings.
 - 3. Bringing up past history.
- B. Ventilation: Airing out your bottled-up, negative feelings on your spouse.
- C. Manipulation: This is a sleight-of-hand way of pressuring another into fulfilling your own needs. The unexpressed question in manipulation asks only "What can you do for me?" The manipulator makes the other feel responsible for his problems. Whereas, Love asks only "What can I do for you?"
- D. "When partners in dialogue habitually use manipulation, ventilation and garbage-dumping, they degrade themselves and destroy their relationship. They soon drift off into a monologue, and that is the way to alienation, to loneliness, to nowhere."
- E. Dialogue Without Writing? Stress the importance of writing in dialoguing. Accentuate the negative affect that non-verbals can have on what we say.

IV. WEDS

Remember on the Weekend the teams gave you WEDS! It is a description of Dialogue.

- A. **W is for Write** - "It is the eagerness and yearning in us for our relationship that makes our reflections love-letters, not the words and phrases. If the eagerness is there, the words and phrases will be there also".
 - 1. WHY WRITE? We discover more when we write versus talk. Writing is necessary because our non-verbals will have a negative effect on what we say to each other.
 - 2. Every time we write, we also encounter ourselves.
 - 3. Remember the "I Think" versus the "I Feel" rule. (EXPLAIN)

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #2 – JOYS AND STRUGGLES OF DIALOGUE (cont'd)

- B. **E is for Exchange** - Exchange books lovingly, with the awareness that we are giving and receiving the greatest of gifts - the gift of another person. Remember your positive non-verbals - the necessity and value of touch and eye contact. Exchange your books with a special caress or kiss.
- C. **D is for Dialogue** - PURPOSE - to reach out to feel one another's feelings, to experience one another as persons in relationship. Eye contact is a very important part of dialogue - distraction is minimal - helps you to experience each other more.
- D. **S is for Select** - "Questions should be selected immediately after dialoguing and should be from our own relationship - from our day-to-day lives together". If we don't select the question tonight, we may have a strong tendency to skip dialogue tomorrow.

V. GOD'S STAKE IN US

We don't know where you are with God, but we include Him in our dialogue and sometimes write a prayer to Him at the top of the page, before writing our love-letter.

VI. CONTENT OF DIALOGUE

Trust is a decision just as love is a decision. Trust requires an act of will. Trusting another person with our deepest feelings in a love-letter is the most precious gift we can give.

- A. Rejecting a feeling of our spouse is rejecting our spouse.
- B. Feelings are neither right nor wrong. (EXPLAIN)
- C. "Feelings" express the core of who I am.
 - 1. The object of dialogue is acceptance - which is experiencing what it feels like to feel my feeling.
 - 2. In the attempt to accept my feelings, you will be closer to me and be more able to respond to me lovingly.
- D. The PEP Couple should share their own struggles to find their feelings. (BRIEFLY)
- E. Description of feelings (Give examples of the ways to describe feelings.)
 - 1. Take a "feeling" word, write your description and share on it.
 - 2. "We feel the same" - GO DEEPER, No two people can ever really feel exactly the same.
 - 3. How to find a feeling - draw a picture of a feeling and ask questions of each other.
 - a. Name the feeling.
 - b. How does it feel physically?
 - c. What does it make me want to do?
 - d. What makes it-increase or decrease?
 - e. Have I felt this way before?
 - f. How does this feeling make me feel? '
 - g. Avoid the words "why" and "because" *
 - h. Share a most ENDEARING quality in the love-letter.
- F. We can dialogue on our feelings about a judgment question. (In the loveletter, answer the question briefly, then describe in detail how you feel NOW.)
- G. Prime Time - If no time seems to be perfect - dialogue whenever you can. Any dialogue is better than no dialogue. Keep talking about your prime time.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #2 – JOYS AND STRUGGLES OF DIALOGUE (cont'd)

H. Listening includes openness: Listening is one of the most difficult human activities. It is not simply a matter of catching and decoding sound waves. Listening includes an openness for the undertones of the personality. Such undertones come to the surface in the quality and timbre of voice in facial expression and in the language of the eyes. The gestures and posture of the speaker often express a deeper meaning even before a word is said. Sound waves are sometimes only superficial translations of the depth of a person's total personality. Often a sender is unable to verbally express the deeper levels of feeling. But sometimes the listener (receiver) may be able to recognize these feelings by listening with his/her heart.

Another danger in listening occurs because the receiver is stimulated to think of similar feelings of their own and to identify with this feeling instead of experiencing the spouse's feeling. This is called subjectifying, imposing our feelings on our spouse. Our desire (quest) is to experience our spouse's feeling without injecting our own feelings, to objectify. To put ourselves aside and to be in tune with our spouse and to listen with our heart. This underscores the need for each of us to "check out" with our spouse by paraphrasing - "what I heard you say was..." and allow a clarification process to take place.

Listening does not come automatically, it demands much practice and much honesty. The receiver needs to be willing to take his or her own preoccupations into account when listening.

The sender is asking: Is anybody there? Does anybody hear what I'm saying? Does anybody-care?

VII. PEP COUPLE SHARING (10 Minute MAXIMUM)

Presentation - Share how you feel and how you see your spouse when you are dialoguing and in relationship and when you are not dialoguing and out of relationship. Be candid with your couples. At the end of the presentation, let them know that you still struggle with dialogue. (The desire is there but the modern world or our own selfishness gets in our way.)

NOTE for PEP couples: If you wish, after your presentation, you may wish to play a song to help create the mood. Suggested songs for this night are: "Feelings", "Annie's Song", "Lady", and "You Light Up My Life".

VIII. DIALOGUE QUESTION

Dialogue is a chance for me to become a part of you! HDTMMF?

IX. OPEN SHARING QUESTION:

What difference do I see in our relationship when we do or do not dialogue?

X. COFFEE AND STRETCH TIME

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #2 – JOYS AND STRUGGLES OF DIALOGUE (cont'd)

XI. QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

Give the couples a chance to ask any question they have and answer the best you can. If you don't have the answer, tell them you will find out and have it for them at the next meeting.

XII. INTRODUCTION TO NEXT WEEK (3rd evening) (BRIEFLY)

- A. We'll be into the "I" phase of the Weekend, covering part of the "Encounter with Self" talk.
- B. Specifically, we'll look at what a mask is, why we wear it and what affect it has on our relationship with others.
- C. During this coming week:
 - 1. Try to find a 1-2 word description of yourself.
 - 2. Ask others what type of person you are.
- D. Give out homework dialogue questions.

XIII. PRAYER AND OR SONG

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #2 – JOYS AND STRUGGLES OF DIALOGUE

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS:

1. What quality of yours do I most admire and HDTMMF?
2. How do I act so that others will accept me and HDTMMF?
3. What do I do in a group of strangers to be accepted and HDTMMF?
4. Looking back over my day, what act or achievement makes me feel best about myself and HDTMMF?
5. What kind of compliment makes me feel good? Describe the feeling!
6. What is my greatest compulsion and HDIFAT?

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #3 – MASKS

NOTE: This is one of the most important of the Post Encounter Evenings.

I. THE AIM OF THIS PRESENTATION: The aim of this presentation in Post Encounter is to get you to examine yourself, your motivations, and your behavior... to find out "Who You Are" and then to share that with your spouse so that he/she can better understand your behavior and through his/her sharing of the mask you can better understand his/her behavior. The understanding of our mask frees us to be more willing to share who we are when we're not wearing our mask.

II. MOTIVATION AND DEFINITION

- A. A mask is the way we act with our spouse and with others to be accepted and to feel good about ourselves. It is not a phony thing in that it covers up our outer self. It is the way we function in life. The only thing it covers up is, perhaps, our poor self-image.
- B. It is when the mask is used to exaggeration that it becomes a real problem for us as it irritates others and keeps us from relating openly and honestly with others. Through our mask we set goals for ourselves which are frequently impossible to live up to and our failure to live up to these goals results in reinforcing our poor self-image.
- C. Our mask is at the bottom of all difficulties that we have with one another; e.g., in wanting to wear my mask, I inflict internal pressure upon myself to always be what I've decided I should be. This drive channels all my efforts into a single direction - my mask. I see no other choice; I look for ways to be this way; I have to act like this and yet this behavior often hurts and crushes others, resulting in exactly the opposite of what I had hoped.
- D. We call it a "Mask" because it gets your attention and makes you think about "Who You Are"!

III. TYPES - OUR MASKS GENERALLY FALL INTO ONE OF THREE CATEGORIES

Stress that we all have characteristics of each of the three categories, BUT, finally, we see that we each are predominant in one of the areas... our compulsions in one will override our desires to fulfill in the others. These may be covered completely at this point, or, at your discretion, at the next meeting, after the couples have attempted to find and write up their mask,

We recommend that pass outs with each category neatly described NOT be given at this meeting because frequently individuals will choose the category they wish to be in and then fit themselves into that category. We want the couples to really look at themselves and to discover Who They Are.

- A. **LOGICAL THINKER:** Some of the Characteristics of the Logical Thinker can be:
 - 1. Feelings aren't facts ... only facts are facts.
 - 2. It is important to know the right answer.
 - 3. Feels good and accepted when he can solve your problem.
 - 4. "Mr. Cool"...nothing flusters him. The In-Control person. Strong, silent type... withdraws to analyze and tells you after he figures it all out... sticklers for detail.
 - 5. One upmanship ... always one better.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #3 – MASKS (cont'd)

6. As a child under stress ... he withdraws.
 7. Most distressed when he is wrong or has made a mistake.
 8. Main vice is arrogance,
- B. **ACHIEVER:** Some of the Characteristics of the Achiever can be:
1. Has to have a list of things to accomplish ... on paper or in head.
 2. Feels good when has things done ... can cross items off list.
 3. The "good mother", "good father", "good provider", "good housekeeper".
 4. Executive type...gets others to do things ... likes everyone to be busy. May be a perfectionist.
 5. The athlete ... likes to take on a challenge.
 6. As a child under stress ... tries to win back favor by doing something. Most distressed by failure, doing a bad job, or not completing a job.
 7. Main vice is pride.
- C. **FRIENDLY HELPER.:** Some of the Characteristics of the Friendly Helper can be:
1. Needs everybody to be happy and needs to be needed.
 2. The shoulder to cry on.
 3. Nice guy, good listener, volunteer, mother hen.
 4. Champion of the underdog.
 5. Eternal optimist.
 6. Dreamer of a better world.
 7. As a child under stress, will cuddle.
 8. Most distressed when unable to help.
 9. Main vice is overly-sensitive.

IV. PEP COUPLE SHARING

- A. What is the mask I wear?
- B. How do I see myself?
- C. How does my behavior affect others negatively - at work, at home, with friends and with spouse?
- D. What happens to you when you feel a compulsion to wear your mask?

NOTE: If you wish, after your presentation and before the dialogue time, you may wish to play a song to help create the mood. Suggested songs for this night are: "All the Time" by Manalov, "I Am You" by Rosco Reed, "Honesty".

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What behavior of mine disturbs you the most? HDMAMMF?

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Which part of this evening affected me the most?

VII. COFFEE BREAK AND STRETCH TIME

VIII. QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #3 – MASKS (cont'd)

IV. HOMEWORK

- A. For next week, ask the couples to write "their" mask. Stress honesty and looking at themselves as they are, not as they would like to be. Stress dialoguing on the suggested questions for masks if they have not already done so.
- B. Clues to help the couples in finding their mask: Give the following questions to the couples to take home and answer. Answering these questions for themselves will give them an insight into Who They Are.
 - 1. How do I want others to see me?
 - 2. What are my best qualities?
 - 3. What do I do to gain acceptance and/or to fit in emotionally?
 - 4. What roles do I play?
 - 5. What criticism most destroys me?
 - 6. How do I react to compliments?
 - 7. How do I act when I enter a group of strangers?
- C. Hand out the questions they should use for their personal dialogues during the week. Reinforce the importance of using these questions as they will help lead them into our next topic which is Married Singles.
 - 1. When I withdraw into my shell, HDTMMF?
 - 2. When you withdraw into your shell, HDTMMF?
 - 3. In what ways were we married singles before? How has Marriage Encounter helped us change this and how do I feel about these changes?
 - 4. In what areas of our relationship am I still a married single because I don't trust you to understand? HDTMMF?
 - 5. Have I made a DECISION TO LOVE this week and HDTMMF?
 - 6. How does my mask prevent me from listening to you with my heart and HDTMMF?

X. CLOSING PRAYER AND/OR SONG

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #3 – MASKS

HOMEWORK HANDOUT

I. DISCOVERING MY MASK

Clues to help you discover your mask. Answering these questions for yourself will give you an insight into Who You Are.

1. How do I want others to see me?
2. What are my best qualities?
3. What do I do to gain acceptance and/or to fit in emotionally?
4. What roles do I play?
5. What criticism most destroys me?
6. How do I react to compliments?
7. How do I act when I enter a group of strangers?

II. DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

These are to use in your personal dialogues during the week. It is important to use these questions as they will help lead into our next topic which is Married Singles.

1. When I withdraw into my shell, HDTMMF?
2. When you withdraw into your shell, HDTMMF?
3. In what ways were we married singles before? How has Marriage Encounter helped us change this and how do I feel about these changes?
4. In what areas of our relationship am I still a married single because I don't trust you to understand? HDTMMF?
5. Have I made a DECISION TO LOVE this week and HDTMMF?
6. How does my mask prevent me from listening to you with my heart and HDTMMF?

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #4 – MARRIED SINGLES

I. THE AIM OF THIS PRESENTATION

To get couples to re-examine the ways that they are "Married Singles" and to see that there really is a better way to relate. We can fight for something more than a "good" marriage.

II. REVIEW OF "MASKS"

- A. Ask couples for sharings on "Masks". If not written, share ideas and thoughts and/or have spouse comment on behavior that most alienates them and how they feel about that.
- B. Encourage continuing work on "Masks" as they continue to affect all relationships.

III. DEFINITION OF MARRIED SINGLES

This concept is presented on Saturday morning after "Encounter with Self". "Married Single" is how we live separate independent lifestyles, as husband and wife; always tempted to live this way, "Married Single" is more -than doing things apart, it's an interior, independent attitude that causes a lifestyle of "mine" and "yours" instead of "ours".

- A. The attitude we have about what we do is what makes us Married Singles. We are not asking couples to give up all their activities, but to examine the MOTIVE behind the activity, e.g., "to get away from", "to get out of the way", "to have private time for", to avoid confrontations, communication, etc.
- B. Motivation - "Why learn about Married Singles"? Separate activities DO NOT NECESSARILY make us "Married Singles". We DO NOT have to be apart. We can be driving together, sitting together, making love, playing a game, watching TV, etc., TOGETHER, and still be a "MARRIED SINGLE".
- C. We must examine the motivations behind our actions and activities in order to build a better relationship. Example: Have you ever felt alone sitting next to your spouse? We can be together in FLESH, but not in SPIRIT.
- D. LONELINESS: As the Modern World directs, we choose a life that is independent and separate from one another and self-centered. This brings us to a state of deep loneliness which causes the MARRIED SINGLES. We choose these activities to cover the ache of the loneliness inside us. Refer to the three stages of love (ROMANCE, DISILLUSIONMENT, AND TRUE JOY) from your Deeper Weekend.
- E. Guidelines for constructive fighting:
 - 1. Make decision to fight.
 - 2. Hold hands while fighting.
 - 3. Stick to the subject.
 - 4. Fight fair.
 - 5. Don't repeat past history.
 - 6. Don't call each other names,
 - 7. Finish fight - don't walk away.How have you used these guidelines? (PEP Couple)
- F. Fight for your relationship.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #4 – MARRIED SINGLES (cont'd)

G. To love is a decision:

1. We each have to be open enough to trust the other with what is in our heart...
VULNERABILITY,
2. It is also a decision to accept our spouse's feelings without judging, overreacting, and rejecting... one leads to the other.

IV. PEP COUPLE SHARING: How do I behave as a Married Single in our relationship?

- A. Be as personal and as honest as you can be. Your relating honestly, your struggles and searching for the attitudes that you have refused to admit even to yourself, will force you to grow and your couples will be richer for it and also will grow.
- B. Give your personal reaction to hearing this on your original weekend and how it applied to you. Include your obvious "Married Singles"... e.g., job, telephone, TV, sports, children, etc.
- C. Tell where you are with it now, the real moaning, to you personally. E.G., "I found it wasn't what I did, but why I did it. Give your personal experiences, and the motives that you had/have. Include your superiorities (e.g., "Where do I think you are superior to me, and where do I think I am superior to you"?)
- D. Share the subtle things you are still struggling with inside ... The things you are still reluctant to share feelings on are numerous and they include our inner thoughts, feelings, judgments, opinions, money, sex, job, faith., children, fantasies, ambitions, hopes, death, and disillusionments.
- E. Especially share your Married Single behavior in the area of sex. This is one area in particular that couples readily deny due to the fact that it is a very personal act in the relationship, e.g., headaches, falling asleep on the couch, staying up too late and having a busy day tomorrow, etc. Your mask even plays a part in your sex life... e.g., an Achiever (Male or Female) usually has to achieve at sex, also.
- F. Give your personal reaction to having heard this on the weekend, and how you applied it to your own marital relationship, e.g., "It didn't apply to me... but, he sure needs to hear this!", OR "We don't have any individual outside activities so this does not apply to us". Describe to the couples what the term "Married Singles" now means to you.

NOTE: Refer to your Dialogue Books from your Original Weekend for help in writing this talk, as well as the dialogues on the Deeper Weekend. Also, refer to the symptoms of Disillusionment on the Weekend. These might give you a clue to those that you didn't get around to because of your "Married Single" behavior...Then and Now.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: "How am I now more aware of being a "Married Single" and HDTMMF?"

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: "What is in me that keeps me living as a "Married Single"?"

VII. COFFEE BREAK/STRETCH TIME

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #4 – MARRIED SINGLES (cont'd)

VIII. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

IX. GIVE OUT SUGGESTED DIALOGUE QUESTIONS FOR THE FIFTH WEEK

To give you an idea of what we will cover next week...

1. Since Marriage Encounter, are we trying to explain our values to our children and HDTMMF?
2. Since Marriage Encounter, have we tried to share our values with unencountered couples and HDTMMF?
3. Have we recruited a couple for Marriage Encounter, and HDMAMMF?
4. Has our sacrament of marriage been a visible sign to our family and HDMAMMF?
5. Have my feelings about church changed since Marriage Encounter?
6. Do I find my self-worth in my possessions? HDMAMMF?

X CLOSING SONG AND PRAYER

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #4 – MARRIED SINGLES

DIALOGUE HOMEWORK HANDOUT

1. Since Marriage Encounter, are we trying to explain our values to our children and HDTMMF?
2. Since Marriage Encounter, have we tried to share our values with unencountered couples and HDTMMF?
3. Have we recruited a couple for Marriage Encounter, and HDMAMMF?
4. Has our sacrament of marriage been a visible sign to our family and HDMAMMF?
5. Have my feelings about church changed since Marriage Encounter?
6. Do I find my self-worth in my possessions? HDMAMMF?

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #5 – WE, GOD AND THE WORLD

I. THE AIM OF THIS PRESENTATION

Our vocation in life, as a couple, is to love each other as completely as is humanly possible - it's God's Plan!! We are Sacrament and Church. We have to share us!!

II. REVIEW OF "MARRIED SINGLES"

Ask for new insights into "Married Singles", that they may have discovered over the past week... and even how they discovered themselves, using their Masks" to excuse being "Married Singles". (Briefly)

III. INTRODUCTION TO MARRIAGE IN GOD'S PLAN

Last week, we talked about the World's Plan, which leads us to isolation and loneliness, which separates us from each other and leads us to our empty life of "Married Singles" (just a statement).

On our Weekend, on Saturday before dinner, we were re-introduced to God's Plan for our marriage (that is when we were asked to write the three (3) instances of closeness).

- A. Our observation that the most encompassing love relationship, in human terms, is that of a couple.
- B. "God's Plan" from the beginning can be heard in the Genesis passage: "God created man in his image. In the image of God he created him. Male and Female He created them".
 1. PEP Couple shares what this passage means to them.
 2. We are the most elementary love community. This is our vocation in life. PEP Couple shares what knowing their marriage is a vocation means to them. What we observed is actually God's Plan.
- C. "God's Desire" for us is to be one. (Seeking unity as a couple). We can do this by living to become one in heart, one in mind and one in affection,
 1. PEP Couple shares one example of living "one in heart". Can be worked at through dialogue, when we strive for oneness of feelings.
 2. PEP Couple shares one example of living "one in mind". Can be worked at through discussion, when we really try to make his/her ideas part of me
 3. PEP Couple shares one example of living "one in affection". Can be worked at by constantly evaluating their continuing yes to each other in all areas, especially sex.
- D. "Two in One Flesh" is our call from God. (A magnificent, fantastic call - Give instances of closeness when we're really in tune. PEP Couple shares on HDTMMF?)

IV. PEP COUPLE SHARING

- A. Having the experience of living "God's Desire" has made me want to live it.
- B. How have I changed in my striving for unity with my spouse?

V. OPEN SHARING (Same questions as IV.)

VI. COFFEE BREAK/STRETCH TIME

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #5 – WE, GOD AND THE WORLD (cont'd)

VII. REMEMBERING SUNDAY MORNING

On Sunday morning, just before the 70/70, in the talk "Marriage as Covenant", we were introduced to ourselves as "Sacrament" and as a "Little Church". This all goes along with living "God's Desire" to be a "couple in love."

- A. PEP Couples shares their awareness of "We are a Sacrament". Briefly include we were commissioned to be a Sacrament on our wedding day, by the people of our Church throughout history and even everybody who is Church now. Talk about the simple beauty of being called to be a couple by God and to a sign of the Church.
- B. PEP Couple shares their awareness of being a "Little Church", a sign of the big Church. Share personally how we are living the marks of the Big Church; One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic in our couple relationship:
 - 1. One - When we make visible the fact that we are striving to live a life of being totally for each other.
 - 2. Holy - This has nothing to do with prayer. It is the visible signs of our affections for one another; teasing, touching, talking when hurting, forgiving and wanting to live romantically with one another. This is the spirituality of a married couple.
 - 3. Catholic - Make spouse #1, being "other"-centered universal.
 - 4. Apostolic - Live that way because of our heritage comes from the Apostles because we are living the call of the Church and accepting the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

VIII. WHY WE MUST GO OUT FROM THIS GROUP AND BE AN OPEN AND APOSTOLIC CARING:

- A. Others need us and we need others to support our dialogue and our living of "God's Plan". It is not the things we do, but how we make our couple love visible to others. To share the "Good News" of our love, WE ARE IT!! We need to be free to gather with others, including one another. We have to ask ourselves questions:
 - 1. Who are the people who most need to experience our Sacrament (us)? (Chance for teens to experience "God's Desire" for marriage.)
 - 2. Are we aware of our "Couple Power"? What happens when others witness us loving each other?
- B. We touch each other and become a part of each other. PEP Couple shares how their group has become part of them and also how the group has become part of each other. Share briefly, ways you, as a couple, have decided to share your "Sacramental Presence". Include why you said "yes" to being a PEP Couple. What has it done for you?
- C. Read from "Wherever you go"...or play record or tape.

IX. DIALOGUE QUESTION: HDIF about living and sharing our love with others?

X. REMIND COUPLES TO ATTEND THEIR ROOKIE RENEWAL. (Give date.)

XI. ENCOURAGE EXCHANGE OF PHONE NUMBERS.

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #5 – WE, GOD AND THE WORLD (cont'd)

XII. PASSOUT DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

XIII. PRAYER AND M/E SONG

DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. In what ways am I going to change the world? HDMAMMF?
2. When do I see Christ in you? HDTMMF?
3. Our growth in relationship is a never-ending process. HDIFAT?
4. How do I feel when I hear the words, "Love one another as I have loved you"?
5. It is not the things we do, but how we make our couple love visible to others. HDIFAT?
6. What is the Good News about our relationship? HDIFAT?

GOD BE WITH YOU

PEP SERIES I - EVENING #5 – WE, GOD AND THE WORLD

DIALOGUE HOMEWORK HANDOUT

1. In what ways am I going to change the world? HDMAMMF?
2. When do I see Christ in you? HDTMMF?
3. Our growth in relationship is a never-ending process... HDIFAT?
4. How do I feel when I hear the words, "Love one another as I have loved you"?
5. It is not the things we do, but how we make our couple love visible to others. HDIFAT?
6. What is the Good News about our relationship? HDIFAT?

PEP SERIES II

HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOVE YOU?

A POST-ENCOUNTER PROGRAM FOR COUPLES ON ROMANCE

PURPOSE: This program is designed to make couples more aware of nurturing romance in their lives every day, to be aware of the barriers that inhibit romance in their relationships, and to discover ways to change their behavior that will promote romance.

FOR WHOM: Any couples who have been off their weekend 30 days and/or have attended their Rookie Renewal. 25 couples maximum.

TRAINING FOR PRESENTING COUPLE: The presenting couple should have a good understanding of the mentality of the romance/disillusionment/joy cycle in the Marriage in the Modern World talk. They should also read and dialogue on the program material prior to writing the presentation,

FREQUENCY: One day experience of four presentations in a series. The program could be modified into a series of three consecutive evenings, however, it would be desirable to schedule Talk #1 on evening #1, Talks #2 and #3 on evening #2, and Talk #4 on evening #3. Otherwise it might be very difficult to get the couples to return if Talk #2 is presented alone.

WHERE IS IT LEADING THEM: To be more aware of how important romance is to living God's Plan for us as a couple.

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #1: THE WAY WE WERE

ADVANCE PREPARATION: Couples should be asked to bring a memento of their courtship to the first talk, for example: a photo, a wilted flower, ticket stubs, wedding album, empty wine bottle, ring box, or something that is meaningful for that couple. The presenting couple should also bring a memento to share.

I. OPENING REMARKS (10 mins.)

- A. Prayer or song.
- B. Warm welcome.
- C. Loving reminder of the discipline.
 - 1. Be prompt.
 - 2. Focus only on spouse.
 - 3. Flow of the series (presentation, dialogue time, group sharing).
 - 4. Brief guidelines for sharing.
- D. Presenting couple introduces themselves and explain the significance of their memento. Couples are then invited to do likewise.

II. DREAM-ALONG (15 mins.)

- A. Presenting couple begins an "I remember when..." sharing of how they met and fell in love. Be brief. (5 mins.)
 - 1. WHY we wanted to be romantic, our motives: we had a sincere desire to let the other person know how we felt about him/her; romance was a way of expressing our appreciation for the other person's loving attention and care; I had a desire to make myself more appealing and acceptable so I acted romantic.
 - 2. HOW did we nurture romance in our courtship and early marriage, what was our behavior? What sacrifices did we make for each other, how did we plot our romance, what crazy things did we do? (e.g., driving long distances just to see each other for a very short time, walks in the rain, rushing home from a date together so we could call on the phone, silly cards and little gifts we sent each other, fixing a special dinner, serenades under the dormitory window, little notes in the lunch bag, etc. The presenting couples should share 2-3 personal examples, as well as 2-3 typical examples.)
- B. Effects of romance (5 mins.)
 - 1. On my self-image (husband/wife both share): That one person cared about me more than about anyone else; viewed myself as good and acceptable to have won the other's love, became other-centered.
 - 2. How I saw us: uniqueness of our relationship, no one could be as much in love as we were, as long as we had each other we could conquer anything, we were meant for each other, how lucky we were to have each other, etc.
 - 3. How others saw us: looked at us fondly, envied us, saw us as a couple, our affection was contagious, we made others happy to be around us, we were admired.

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #1: THE WAY WE WERE (cont'd)

- C. Our hopes and dreams for us: That we would always be this close; that we would always be appreciated by each other; our love was going to be more important than anything else in our lives; we would never lose what we had; we would never ignore special smiles, little touches, holding hands, hugging, teasing each other, sitting close together or talking in whispers, little things would always be important. (5 mins.)

III. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What is my fondest memory of our courtship? HDTMMF? (10 mins.)

IV. OPEN SHARING: Sharing groups should be no larger than 4-5 couples. (25 mins.) "Share with us the first time you knew he/she was the one for you."

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #1: THE WAY WE WERE

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What was our favorite song when we were courting, and HDIF remembering it?
2. HDIF when I think about some of the crazy-things we did for each other?
3. What about you turned me on the most? HDIF about that quality now?
4. HDIF about us when others notice how much we love each other?
5. HDIF when I remember our wedding day?
6. HDIF when I get a surprise note or phone call from you?
7. WAMF knowing you care more about me than about anyone else?

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #2:
YOU DON'T SING ME LOVE SONGS ANYMORE

I. INTRODUCTION

Pick up on the little romantic gestures that meant so much at the end of Talk #1 and elaborate on how they carried over into our early marriage. Presenting couple can share 1-2 specific examples briefly. (2 mins.)

II. THE ABSENCE OF ROMANCE

A. Gradually our new responsibilities became more important than romancing each other, so little gestures began to disappear. (10 mins.)

1. WHY? (Presenting couple should make clear that they are sharing awareness that they have now about the way they were behaving then.) Examine our attitudes:

SAMPLES

- a. "The game is over" - the things we did to compensate for no sex in our courtship are not necessary now,
 - b. Now that I have my security, I don't have to try so hard.
 - c. We're beyond that now.
 - d. What will they say about us?
2. HOW? What behaviors changed and became less romantic: stopped opening the car door; less concerned about appearance; please and thank-you became less frequent; withheld compliments; less talk about us; increased involvement in activities outside of us; sitting at opposite ends of the car seat; stopped mid-day phone calls, etc. (Presenting couple should share 3-5 personal examples, 1-2 other typical examples.)

B. Effects of the absence of romance (7 mins.)

1. On our communication: we didn't verbalize hurts, only anger; we were less likely to listen to each other; paid less attention to each other's nonverbal.
2. Judgments and assumptions we made about each other: SAMPLES
 - a. I'm the only one who cares about this relationship anymore.
 - b. Well, that's the way he/she is because the father/ mother was like that.
 - c. I wonder what he/she really wants for that hug, touch, kiss, smile, compliment???
 - (Suspicious of the other's motives.)
 - d. Scorekeeping, pettiness - When you be nice to me I'll be nice to you,
3. Loneliness and decreased trust.
4. Effect on my self-image - how I became me-centered instead of other-centered. Presenting couple should elaborate on how we are responsible for the formation of each other's self-image, and if all I reflect to my spouse is his/her self-centeredness, that's how he'll behave (Aldonza).
5. Effect on others: not being a sign to others; who needs marriage?

C. What happened to my hopes and dreams during the absence of romance? How did I see us? i.e. We've lost our spark; the best we can hope for is companionship; we're ordinary; marriage is dull; I can't talk to him/her like I used to. (7 mins.)

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #2: YOU DON'T SING ME LOVE SONGS ANYMORE (cont'd)

III. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Go down the list of attitudes and put a checkmark next to any attitude that I have had about our romance. Pick one attitude and cite a behavior that has reinforced that attitude (e.g., If my attitude is that romance is only for foreplay, then the behavior that might reinforce that attitude is that I only hug you and touch you when we are about to have sex.) After looking at my behavior, write a loveletter on "How does this behavior affect our relationship, and HDTMMF?"

1. Not in public, dear!
2. Romance is foreplay.
3. Romance is just for young kids.
4. We're too mature for that.
5. Don't let the kids see us.
6. What will they think of us?
7. Don't start something you can't finish.
8. Looking into your eyes is embarrassing,
9. We need to have something to talk about.
10. I feel foolish holding your hand in front of others.
11. We're too busy to be romantic.
12. He/she knows I mean please or thank-you, I don't have to say it.

IV. OPEN SHARING: What romantic gestures were there during our courtship and early marriage that aren't there now and how does that affect us? (25 mins.)

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #2: YOU DON'T SING ME LOVE SONGS ANYMORE

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What do I think you miss most about our romance? HDTMMF?
2. How does my mask interfere with our romance? HDTMMF?
3. HDIF when our other activities become more important than the two of us?
4. What guideline for fighting do I find most difficult to practice? HDIFAT?
5. HDIF when I have judged you unfairly?
6. In what area of our relationship am I experiencing loneliness? HDTMMF?
7. How do I fail to listen to you when I am disillusioned? HDTMMF?

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #3: LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART

I. AWARENESSES WE GAINED ABOUT ROMANCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AS A RESULT OF OUR WEEKEND.

Presenting couple should share on the highlights of the weekend, such as, the importance of feelings, love is a decision, openness to romance, having confidence in each other to be lovers, how romance makes us holy, etc., and the effects that these concepts had on us. How did we see ourselves as a romantic couple again? What renewed hope and determination did we experience to be a romantic couple? (6 mins.)

II. OBSTACLES WE FACED IN BEING ROMANTIC AFTER OUR WEEKEND: (10 mins.)

A. Unrealistic expectations for our romance to be the way it used to be, and the frustration we experienced: SAMPLES

1. I'd love to go out for a night on the town but we can't afford it.
2. I wish I could send her flowers for no special reason but they're so expensive,
3. How can I wear his favorite negligee with the children around?
4. We can't linger over a candlelight dinner at home, there isn't enough time.
5. We're encountered now; we should be romantic all the time.
6. Why don't we reach unity in our dialogue every night?

Presenting couple can share on these or any other examples that reflect what an obstacle money, time, children, being an M.E. couple can be to romance.

B. Embarrassment and/or awkwardness: SAMPLES

1. The guys at work will tease him if I put a love-note in his lunch.
2. We've never kissed outside our home.
3. We haven't done this for years.
4. Sitting side-by-side in the car is for kids.
5. Our friends will think we're silly.

C Attitudes about romance and sex: If we hug at the sink will he/she immediately think I want to make love? How can we nurture our intimacy with one another at times other than right before lovemaking, or during periods when we cannot make love?

III. EFFECTS OF A AND B ON ME INDIVIDUALLY (10 mins.)

- A. What fears do I have of failing you by not providing you with material signs of our romance?
- B. How much am I willing to risk to be romantic with you?
- C. How vulnerable can I make myself in our romance?
- D. If I tell my spouse how I really see him/her being for us, can I make him/her my Dulcinea?

IV. EFFECTS OF A AND B ON OUR RELATIONSHIP

Realization that we need to change, to tailor-make our romance for where we are now; recognizing the need to be creative. Presenting couple can share some specific changes they have made.

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #3: LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART (cont'd)

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What change am I most excited to make to enhance our romance? HDTMMF? (10 mins.)

VI. OPEN SHARING: What effect did our Marriage Encounter Weekend have on our romance? (25 mins.)

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #3: LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. How can I be more sensitive to you? HDTMMF?
2. HDIF when you compliment me?
3. HDIF when we make time for us?
4. What sacrifices am I willing to make to be more romantic with you? HDIFAT?
5. HDIF when I think we are not as romantic as others?
6. How can I make you my Dulcinea today? HDTMMF?
7. Do I see our dialogue as a part of our romance? HDIFAT?

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #4: YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE

I. DREAM-ALONG

Think back to the memories you had earlier about your early romance. Wouldn't you like to be that way again? (10 mins.) Presenting couple should personalize each point with specific examples.

- A. We need to recapture the 24 hour-a-day attitude toward romance.
- B. Romance is a discipline, we have to work at it, and work at forgetting about me to concentrate on we.
- C. Romance is a daily decision, so if we're not in romance, where are we?

II. THINGS WE'VE LEARNED (15 mins.)

- A. We have to define what we mean by romance, what it is and what it is not (i.e. is it just warm fuzzies and feeling high on each other?). We cannot decide to "feel" romantic, but we can decide to do something.
- B. We realize that we cannot duplicate our courtship, we have to be creative and realistic about nurturing our romance now.
- C. It's not what we do, but why we're doing it that's important, Even simple things can be special. (E.G., getting up with him cheerfully in the morning, bringing her breakfast in bed, leaving a love-note under the pillow, etc.)
- D. We cannot compare our romance to that of other couples, What is romantic and meaningful to us is unique to us as a couple.
- E. Dialogue is a part of our romance, Emphasize the importance and appreciation of writing and receiving loveletters, sharing feelings.
- F. The Church calls us to be romantic; it is a part of our spirituality. Presenting couple should emphasize that this call to be romantic is not a heavy burden or obligation, but a dignity and a joy. It is something the couples said yes to on their wedding day, even if they didn't know it then. It is God's Plan for us to be romantic and to make the effects of our romance visible to others.

III. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What are my hopes and dreams for our romance now and HDTMMF? (10 mins.)

IV. OPEN SHARING: Ask the couples to look into each other's eyes and share on "What is my experience of being absorbed in you?" (25 mins.)

PEP SERIES II - EVENING #4: YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE

HOMEWORK DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. Romance is a decision, HDIFAT?
2. What song would I dedicate to you today? HDIFAT?
3. How do I want you to romance me? HDTMMF?
4. Do I see our romance as part of our holiness? HDTMMF?
5. WAMFA being creative in our romance?
6. How can I be loving to you even when we can't make love? HDTMMF?
7. How are we living God's Plan for our romance? HDTMMF?

PEP SERIES III

RE-EVALUATION, AN ON-GOING PROCESS

A POST-ENCOUNTER PROGRAM FOR COUPLES ON RE-EVALUATION

PURPOSE: To help couples to recognize that re-evaluation is a continual commitment that helps us to understand and strive to live God's Plan, to achieve unity. To look at the things that stand in the way, to create a desire to want to change, to give guidelines as to how change is possible for their sake and the sake of the world.

FOR WHOM: Any couples who have been off their weekend at least 30 days.

TRAINING FOR PRESENTING COUPLE: Read and dialogue on the program material prior to giving the series,

LINK BETWEEN NIGHTS: Homework handouts that emphasize the content of the presentation given, and lay the groundwork for the next one.

FREQUENCY: Once a week for four weeks.

WHERE IS IT LEADING THEM: To begin and continue regularly to prune and trim out the things in ourselves that keep us from putting our love relationship first, so that we will be prepared to answer a resounding “yes” to our Father's call to the task for which he has chosen us,

***NOTE:** It is suggested that a fifth evening be added one month following the last evening as a renewal night to share the progress that has been made by the couples. It would be loosely structured, basically consisting of scripture, shared prayer, open sharing and dialogue. The purpose of which would be to gain reinforcement through the difficulties of re-evaluation and to motivate each other to continue. Also, from this evening the presenting couple could select couples, or obtain volunteers to develop and present a Community Night on re-evaluation.

PEP SERIES III - RE-EVALUATION, AN ON-GOING PROCESS (cont'd)

PRESENTING COUPLES GUIDELINE FOR EVENINGS 2, 3 & 4

The first evening's format is self-explanatory. It is the scene setter for the remaining sessions, and touches on the context of the entire program.

The following is to help you prepare for, and more fully understand the presentations for the second, third and fourth evenings. The format is consistent on each of these nights. The variables are the time allotted for each section, the placement of the scripture reading(s), the exercises which do not appear in each presentation, and the homework assignments.

I. OPENING REMARKS

II. SHARED PRAYER: The scripture reading can be a shared prayer, and/or at the conclusion. The suggested text is "The Way" or "Good News for Modern Man". If the group is large (over six couples), the presenting couple ONLY should pray, and end with a community prayer such as the, "Our Father."

III. RE-CAP OF PREVIOUS EVENING: This is to assist them in putting aside the distractions of the day, and to re-focus why they are here.

IV. SHARING QUESTION: If the group is over six couples, have them break into small groups of 4 - 6 couples. Presenting couples may sit with a group or circulate individually or as a couple. The purpose is to have them look at the results of their homework this past week and what effects, if any, these dialogues and exercises have had on their relationship. We are trying to help them see that it is possible to create at home an intense absorption period with each other similar to their weekend. The rules for sharing should be explained. They are as follows:

1. Share yourselves only - feelings, thoughts, attitudes or judgments.
2. Do not comment on other's feelings.
3. Sharing is voluntary. Avoid going pressure on someone who may not be ready yet.
4. Sharing is done with trust. No one's sharing will be revealed outside the group.
5. Make sure everyone has had the opportunity to speak before you speak a second time.

Stress openness and honesty to your couples, and the value of participation in the sharing groups.

The coffee break follows here rather than at the end of the evening. This will leave them free to discuss where they are now, and there will be a minimal break in continuity between the presentation (Section V) and their open-ended dialogue at home.

PEP SERIES III - RE-EVALUATION, AN ON-GOING PROCESS (cont'd)

- V. PRESENTATION:** The talk can be written or delivered from the outlines. All items must be covered, either from personal experience, or as it would apply, to others. Don't be afraid to pointedly say, "Have you done this?" or "It's important that you look at that?" etc. The presentation should be motivational but not unachievable, challenging but not threatening. The idea is to shake them out of complacency, and help them to recognize that we are still encountering each other. And to do this, continual re-evaluation is just as important to our relationship as dialogue, WHY we are re-evaluating should be stated clearly and with impact during each of the four evenings. The presentation may contain an exercise to be done in place. You won't ask them to separate or exchange these exercises during the evening.
- VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION:** Briefly explain the importance of honesty, feelings and trust, and that we are not dialoguing to answer a question, but to experience each other more deeply. On each succeeding evening there should be a mini-motivation on dialogue mentioning some of the key concepts of the weekend such as feelings are not right or wrong, listening, love is a decision, WEDS, and confidence (not in what my spouse does or how he acts, but in his/her goodness he will accept my feelings).
- VII. HOMEWORK HANDOUTS:** Explain homework clearly, but also tell them you are available for questions. Give your phone number and when you can or cannot be reached during the following week. It's important that they feel the stake that you have in them just as the team on their weekend did.
- VIII. CLOSING PRAYER (AND SCRIPTURE):** A spontaneous prayer by the presenting couple and attending couples if they respond. Encourage your couples to go right home so that they will have prime time for their dialogue.

GENERAL NOTES:

- ❖ A commitment to all four evenings should be made by the couples wishing to attend. Dates should be published well in advance so that this will be possible.
- ❖ Start on time. If you establish this precedent on the first evening you will have little difficulty with it on the subsequent ones. You should finish no later than 10:00 P.M. so that they can go home and dialogue early.
- ❖ As preparation for talk #4 find out statistics on divorce, abortions, unwed mothers, child-beating, decrease in vocations, the number of unchurched, etc., and share in Section V.
- ❖ It's important that you do the homework each week so that you will be sharing in the same experiences as your couples.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #1:

WHAT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US AS A COUPLE?

(two hours maximum)

TIME:

MEETING PLACE:

SUPPLIES: Pens, paper, homework handouts, Bible, exercise handouts

I. OPENING REMARKS (2 mins.)

- A. Give warm welcome to the group
 - 1. The presenting couples introduce themselves.
 - 2. Couples introduce themselves: name, weekend.
- B. Reminder of the discipline (be warm and encouraging)
 - 1. Why promptness is important.
 - 2. Focus on spouse as on the weekend.
 - 3. Time to share with each other later.
 - 4. Set aside the busys and find each other.
 - 5. Why are we here?

II. SHARED PRAYER (7 mins.)

- A. Read Scripture passage - I Corinthians 13:4-8 (end with “love goes on forever”).
- B. Without comment on passage, join hands and begin prayer (see presenting couples guide).

III. Purpose of Series - This series of four evenings is for all of you and us beautiful couples who dare to be different. Couples who dare to live God Desire for us in the midst of a world that is pulling at us to live the world's plan. If we want to continue to live our vocation in life as a couple, loving each other as completely as is humanly possible, then we need to renew our decision to re-evaluate and change the things that prevent us from achieving God's Plan.

In these four evenings together we will be hearing about God's Desire for us and what it is. What to re-evaluate, those large and small things which prevent us from the closeness we experienced of our weekend. How to re-evaluate; and finally WHY re-evaluate? Why do we need to change to make one another our #1 priority? This is the purpose of these four evenings, to give us a renewed urgency to change and to say “yes” to God’s Plan. We want to continually work for the unity and the closeness we experience in striving for it.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #1: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US AS A COUPLE? (cont'd)

IV. PRESENTATION (30 mins.) - In preparation the presenting couple should read their 90/90.

- A. Give title - "What is God's Desire for us."
- B. Give the purpose of this presentation - "We want to explore God's Desire for us - is it very different than what we wanted for us when we began our life together? Doesn't God want for us the reality of being one we experienced on our Wedding Day and in the months that followed that special day? Isn't He asking us to experience every facet of each other so that we can grow closer and closer? God's Desire for us is unity. In those first years together that unity was foremost in our minds and hearts and seemed to happen with very little effort but as the distractions and pressures of our da gradually began to lose touch with the closeness we wanted and we began to live the world's plan. Then we made our weekend..."
- C. Describe the lived experience of your 70/70 - bring alive the renewed excitement of being a couple. Share the warmth, joy, tears, laughter, and closeness. (This closeness is God's Desire for you.) "On Sunday morning of our weekend..."
 1. How you wanted to hold on to this closeness.
 2. How you were willing and eager to make changes to have this closeness forever.
- D. Changes to live God's Desire - share some of the changes you wrote in your love-letters (dialogue, more time for each other, placing each other before kids, housework, job, hobbies, any other changes that apply to you).
 1. How anxious you were to start living in this new way.
 2. Did these changes affect your coupleness when you got home?
 3. Did others notice the change in you as a couple (kids, friends, relatives)
- E. Excuses for not continuing reevaluation and change - explain how you began to settle down and were satisfied with what you had. Mention a few of the excuses for not changing more. Make this personal.
 1. "We're so different than before".
 2. "We want to keep what we have now".
- F. Motivation for living God's Desire - explain why you wanted to continue to re-evaluate and change (you need to continue change to grow closer, to live God's Desire and this is what God wants and you want). Make this warm and personal.
 1. The joy we experience when we re-evaluate and change.
 2. Our life is different and more exciting living God's Desire.
 3. We begin to dialogue for dialogue sake. Without re-evaluation our dialogue becomes hum-drum and those who fail to re-evaluate stop dialoguing. Re-evaluation is as necessary as dialogue in living God's Desire for us.
- G. Conclusion - Be enthusiastic - Give a brief wrap-up statement explaining why you made the decision to live God's Desire.
 1. Why settle for less when you can strive for so much more in your relationship?
 2. We want to be different.
 3. "We need to live our lives really believing in the way we live and to live the way we believe".
 4. We want our love and closeness to grow.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #1: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US AS A COUPLE? (cont'd)

V. SHARING QUESTION (25-30 minutes)

- A. Rules for sharing (see presenting couples guide).
- B. Give questions with brief explanation: "Did others notice the change in you as a couple after your weekend and HDTMMF?" "How has the Modern World begun to distract me from making you my #1 priority and HDTMMF?"

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION (1-2 mins. - see guideline): "In what way can I show you how interested I am in you? HDIF sharing this with you?"

Give them 10 minutes to write ONLY. Encourage them to an open ended dialogue at home. After the writing period have them come back to receive their homework assignments.

VII. HOMEWORK HANDOUT - explain what they are to do and the value. (see guideline) (4-5 minutes)

VIII. QUESTION AND ANSWER (10 minutes)

IX. CLOSING PRAYER

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #1: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US AS A COUPLE?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- 1st NIGHT:** Read your 70/70 love-letter and enjoy!
- 2nd NIGHT:** Make a list of the re-evaluations in your 70/70 and discuss how you have or haven't made those changes. Put your list on the refrigerator to remind you of them.
- 3rd NIGHT:** Take the time to have a special dinner with candles, music, and soft lights.
- 4th NIGHT:** Read the scripture 15 John 9-13 to each other. Select the words: "Love one another as I have loved you" and write your loveletter on this: "When Jesus says these words to me, how do I feel about us?"
- 5th NIGHT:** Have a loving discussion on what God's Plan means to you.
- 6th NIGHT:** Have a good evening just being together in God's love.
- 7th NIGHT:** Discussion question: Do you see the value of reevaluation to keep your dialogue fresh and exciting?

NOTE: These exercises are meant to be a supplement to your dialogue.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2:
WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS

(two hours maximum)

TIME:

MEETING PLACE:

SUPPLIES: Pens, paper, homework handouts, Bible, exercise handouts

I. OPENING REMARKS (2 mins.)

- A. Give a warm welcome
- B. Reminder of the discipline (be warm and encouraging).
 - 1. Why promptness is important.
 - 2. Focus on spouse as on the Weekend.
 - 3. Time to share with each other later.
 - 4. Set aside the "busys" and find each other.
 - 5. Why we are here.

II. SHARED PRAYER (7 mins.)

- A. Read Scripture passage - 1 Peter 3:1-15.
- B. Without comment on passage, join hands and begin prayer. (see presenting couples guide)

III. RE-CAP (2-3 mins.)

- A. "What is God's Desire for us?" (a brief summary of evening #1)
- B. Discuss how our homework helped us toward achieving that goal.
- C. As a lead-in to Section IV, mention the barriers that you discovered this week that prevented you from putting each other totally #1.

IV. SHARING QUESTION (25-30 mins. which includes 10 min. break).

- A. Rules for sharing (see presenting couples guide).
- B. Give question with brief explanation: "What barriers to living God's Plan have I discovered that are still present in our relationship and HDTMMF? Is there a difference in the excitement we had for each other after our 70/70 on our weekend and the excitement we have for each other now? HDTMMF?"
NOTE: You may give this question in two parts, using the second part if there is time. Without pointing it out, you are trying to have them name some of the things now, that they discover need some re-evaluation.
- C. Coffee break (10 mins.) - see presenting couples guide.

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2: WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS
(cont'd)**

V. PRESENTATION (30 mins.) (Exercises 15 mins.)

- A. Give title - "What do we need to re-evaluate?" - an ongoing process.
- B. Give the purpose of this presentation - "We will be looking into those things large and small which prevent us from having the closeness we experienced on our weekend. If we truly want to strive for unity, we must first recognize the importance of dialogue. The next step is to understand that frequent re-evaluation is just as important to our continued growth, and that it is not just a one-time thing. All too often we find ourselves shirking the responsibility that we have to change for each other. We can't be satisfied with the re-evaluations and changes that we've already made. To do that is to settle for our "good marriage" (mediocrity) and that's what we were doing before dialogue. Even our re-evaluations have to be scrutinized from time to time to see if our oneness is still the purpose of what we are doing."
- C. Barriers: "Before we can look at what to re-evaluate we need to look at the barriers that still exist in us that prevent on-going re-evaluation." (Name the categories that you will be covering. Ask them to take notes, and explain that there will be time to reflect on each barrier as we go along. Writing will be done in place, without separation. They will not be exchanging at this time, nor be asked to share what they wrote with the group.)
 1. Masks - give definition. "My mask is the way I behave. It's not something I take off and put on, nor is it something I hide behind. It's how I act, the way I want others to see me. And yet my mask can prevent the very thing that I want most - close relationships and acceptance because it's not the whole me, the me that God knows."
 - a. "I wear the mask of..."
 - b. "The negative effects are..."

NOTE: In sharing on a and b, just name your mask and give 3 or 4 descriptions of how you act this out. Keep it short and simple: i.e. "I wear the mask of Goody-Two Shoes. I'm so concerned about keeping everything pleasant between us that I give up and give in any time it appears that we may be headed for a conflict. Consequently, I stifle open, honest communication between us, etc."
 - c. Exercise (2 mins.): On paper, name your mask and describe ways that it interferes with your relationship.
 2. Attitudes - explain how we hide behind them and that can be our justification for what we don't want to do. Personalize the following and add any additional attitudes that you can think of from your own experience or those you've come in contact with (do not use names).
 - a. "We're encountered, and how we have it all together".
 - b. "We've already re-evaluated". (That's like saying we've always communicated or he/she is always #1).
 - c. "Why do I have to change he/she won't? Give a personal example of how you keep score and its effects.)
 - d. Exercise (2 mins.): Make a list of the attitudes that you have about re-evaluation: i.e., thoughts you've had or excuses you've made that prevented you from changing your actions, lifestyle, etc.

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2: WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS
(cont'd)**

3. Fears - explain how real these fears are, and the difficulty in overcoming them. Also the difficulty in recognizing them and admitting ownership of them.
 - a. "I know what I have now, but will I have it if I/we change?"
 - b. "Re-evaluation means change, change can make waves and I don't like waves."
 - c. "Will I lose my identity?"
 - d. "How will our lifestyle be affected?"
 - e. "How will this affect my job, our family, our friends?"
 - f. "What will reevaluation cost me: time, effort, job, friends, hobbies, etc.?"
 - g. "I'm afraid to be seen as different."
 - h. Exercise (2-3 mins.): Make a list of your fears about making changes. (Remind them that changes could be as large as finding different employment and as small as taking time to talk when you'd rather be alone.)
4. Activities - it's important that they understand that it's not so much WHAT I'm doing, but to examine why I'm doing the things I'm doing. Personalize how-the following activities can be harmful to our relationship.
 - a. Marriage Encounter, church, scouts, volunteer work - they are all worthwhile, but are they couple activities, or have we just changed the way we are married singles?
 - b. PTA, etc. - they need us, no one else will do it. Does it cut into our time to be together, our time to dialogue? Have any of these organizations folded because one couple resigned to find an activity that enhanced their relationship?
 - c. Prayer groups, bridge groups - do I encourage her to go so she'll be happy so that I can justify my need to play golf?
 - d. Night out with the guys, T.V. watching - do I encourage him to relax this way so that I can justify my desire to read a good book or go to bed early?
 - e. We both have our hobbies - I build things, she sews - we save a lot of money that way. But does she really want you to be in the workshop all day Saturday? Does he really want you to be sewing in the evenings? Have you asked?
 - f. I'm their Mother. It's my responsibility to bathe the kids, teach them to cook and sew, help them with their homework. (Add any other examples you can think of.)
 - g. I'm their Father. It's my responsibility to be at all the ball games, to be the disciplinarian, to do manly things with the boys. (Add any other examples you can think of)
 - h. Do I read the newspaper or talk on the telephone when I could be spending that time with him/her?
 - i. Exercise (3-4 mins.): Make a list of the activities large and small that were not chosen on the basis of your coupleness. (Explain that this is a time to examine their motives such as activities that are escapes, or for self-reward or self-fulfillment; ones that are privacies - ones that are selfish).

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2: WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS
(cont'd)**

5. Pressures - explain that these are the things that we face daily as we try to live God's Plan in the modern world, and that they didn't go away just because we made the weekend. Share personally the turmoil that goes on as we try to re-evaluate and still live in this pressured environment.
 - a. Job commitments-- overtime, entertainment, etc.
 - b. Financial commitments.
 - c. Time commitments - my day is too full now.
 - d. Acceptance by peer group.
 - e. Relatives - family commitments and attitudes - they don't understand why we've changed and they criticize.
 - f. Our children - can they accept our new way of life when they seemed secure in the old one. Will they think we are strange? Will they resent the time we're spending with each other?
 - g. Exercise (3-4 mins.): Make a list of any of the pressures that you have faced since your Weekend that make re-evaluation and change difficult for you.
6. Mention additional items to consider for re-evaluation, i.e., possessions, time, friends, our home, my poor self-image, etc. (Add any additional things you can think of that have not been previously covered.)

D. Motivation to re-evaluate - personalize the following points: (2-3 mins.)

1. God's Plan calls us to live in unity - to put each other #1.
2. Complacency leads to apathy - apathy leads to disillusionment.
3. Change requires trust, confidence, risk, listening, openness, honesty, giving, patience and love.
4. State again WHY we are re-evaluating - what we hope to gain.
5. End with this thought - "If we could start our life over today, is what we have now what we would have planned for? If not, it's time for re-evaluation."

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION: (1-2 mins. - see guidelines) "When was the last time we sat down together and planned to re-evaluate something for each other? HDIFAMA?"

Give them 10 minutes to write ONLY. Encourage them to have an open-ended dialogue at home. After the writing period have them come back to receive their homework assignments.

VII. HOMEWORK HANDOUT: Explain what they are to do and the value. (See guideline, 4-5 mins.)

VIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (10 mins.)

IX. CLOSING PRAYER

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2: WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS

EXERCISE: DISCOVERING BARRIERS

(one per person)

1. I wear the mask of _____

2. Attitudes _____

3. Fears _____

4. Activities _____

5. Pressures _____

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #2: WHAT TO RE-EVALUATE - AN ON-GOING PROCESS

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- 1st NIGHT:** 1. Make a list of each time you could have acted differently today so that your spouse would be #1. (i.e., not be on the phone when he came home, not turned on the T.V. while she did the dishes.)
2. Make a list of each time you think your spouse could have acted differently today so that you would be #1. (i.e., call me during the day, get up with me in the morning.)
3. Exchange your lists with your spouse and discuss the contents. Then select one item from your first list and make a commitment to change that action for the remainder of the week.
4. Next pick one item from your spouses- second list and make a commitment to change that action for the remainder of the week.
5. Write these two commitments on a piece of paper, sign it and place it on your refrigerator for the remainder of the week as a gift of love to your spouse.
- 2nd NIGHT:** Talk about the masks that you have. Ask your spouse to describe to you your behavior as he/she sees it and how it affects him/her. Ask your spouse how you can change.
- 3rd NIGHT:** Share your barriers lists on attitudes and fears that you wrote during the presentation on "What to Re-evaluate". Select the attitude that will be the most difficult to change, and the fear that is the most difficult to overcome. Talk about them and develop a dialogue question on one of these barriers,
- 4th NIGHT:** Share your activities list. Select an activity from your spouse's list that you would like to see him/her change. Each of you talk about what motivates you to continue with this activity, and what would motivate you to discontinue. Share your pressures list. Name the pressure that is the most difficult to cope with, and write a love-letter on the question, "How can you help me to remove that pressure? HDTMMF?"
- 5th NIGHT:** Read the scripture 1 Peter 3:1-15 to each other. Select a passage or line that has meaning to you, and write your love-letter on, "When Jesus says these words to me, how do I feel about us?"
- 6th NIGHT:** Free night - select a dialogue question on anything that is important to your relationship right now, Spend some time in shared prayer before you go to sleep.
- 7th NIGHT:** Review the commitments to change that you had made on the first night. Talk about the progress you have or have not made and why. Develop a dialogue question on those commitments.

NOTE: A dialogue question has not been suggested as part on each of these home-work exercises. That does not mean to imply that we don't want you to dialogue, we just want to free you to select a question that is meaningful to you.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #3:
HOW TO RE-EVALUATE – IT’S ON-GOING

(two hours maximum)

TIME:

MEETING PLACE:

SUPPLIES: Pens, paper, homework handouts, Bible

I. OPENING REMARKS (2 mins.)

- A. Give a warm welcome
- B. Reminder of the discipline (be warm and encouraging).
 - 1. Why promptness is important.
 - 2. Focus on spouse as on the Weekend.
 - 3. Time to share with each other later.
 - 4. Set aside the "busys" and find each other.
 - 5. Why we are here.

II. SHARED PRAYER (7 mins.)

- A. Read Scripture passage - Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.
- B. Without comment on passage, join hands and begin prayer. (see presenting couples guide)

III. RE-CAP (2-3 mins.)

- A. What to re-evaluate (a summary of Evening #2).
- B. Stress that the small things that keep us making each other our #1 priority can be the most difficult to re-evaluate. (Staying on the telephone while our spouse waits to be greeted, reading the paper when it could wait till later, keeping an eye on the T.V. while our spouse is trying to share with us, having to finish the chapter in that good book before you take time to visit, etc.) These are the very real barriers.

IV. SHARING QUESTION (25-30 mins.) (includes 10 min. break)

- A. Rules for sharing (see presenting couples guidelines).
- B. Give question with brief explanation: "Do you find the small things in your lifestyle harder to change? If so, discuss some of them."
- C. Coffee break (10 mins.) (See presenting couples guide.)

V. PRESENTATION

- A. Give title - "How to re-evaluate – It’s on going."

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #3: HOW TO RE-EVALUATE – IT’S ON-GOING (cont’d)

- B. Give the purpose of this presentation - “We want to keep in mind that our oneness and unity is what God is calling us to and how important it is to share with one another whatever there is that is standing in the way of our unity. To remain one and close it is necessary to keep weeding out what doesn’t belong in our lifestyle or changing what exists, or shifting our priorities so that our coupleness is first and family and all else follows. As husband and wife we want accept, understand, and agree on why we make re-evaluations in our marriage. When this is so, then the "how to" of re-evaluation makes sense and actually becomes a part of our life.”
- C. Tools to help us re-evaluate (personalize)
 - 1. Dialogue - explain knowing each other’s feelings is the first step in creating the openness and trust needed to re-evaluate.
 - a. Share a re-evaluation dialogue that helped you (preferably one on a simple and small thing, like having dinner 1/2 hour later to make time for sitting and talking together.) Include how you had to get to your feelings through your dialogue before you made the change.
 - b. To dialogue for re-evaluation you have to be willing to be submissive for the good of your relationship and unity. (Do I recognize that I'm not giving up or giving in but just giving?)
 - c. Select questions for dialogue that give you that “we can’t dialogue on that” feeling. These are most likely areas that need re-evaluating.
 - d. Share how re-evaluation keeps your dialogue fresh and exciting.
 - 2. Prayer - (not just at dialogue time) - prayer helps build the trust that is necessary for re-evaluation.
 - a. Spontaneous prayers:
 - 1) Praying together and aloud makes us vulnerable to one another – it’s a great way to let down your mask.
 - 2) Praying alone and silently - take quiet moments during the day to turn your mind and heart over to the Lord. Be aware of our attitude when we pray, to face ourselves honestly and remove obstacles that prevent us from hearing our Father and doing His will for us.
 - 3) Scripture dialogue - Scripture is God's love-letters to us. It opens us up to God and to His plan for us to be one. His words are a beautiful source for us to see where we need to re-valuate and change.
 - b. Share how prayer has helped your re-evaluation. (This should be simple, warm and personal.)
- D. Discussion Time - Loving discussions
 - 1. Discussions should center around what needs to be changed or removed to keep us one. Our relationship is first, we've been entrusted with children, job, money, apostolate, etc., to care for, and we need to be one and in agreement to live out our life according to our calling to love and commitment.
 - 2. Set aside a specific time for discussions.

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #3: HOW TO RE-EVALUATE – IT’S ON-GOING (cont’d)

- E. Planning - to put into effect the changes we want to make.
 - 1. Put the change you want to make on the refrigerator door to remind you.
 - 2. List the changes you decided on according to priority and concentrate on the first one to begin with.
 - 3. Set aside one day a month for a 60/60 (Progress you have made on the changes you selected and further re-evaluation).
 - 4. Share any other ideas you have for planning.
- F. Listening - Non-verbal
Do I see impatience in my spouse, edginess, anger, joy, lightheartedness, carefree attitude? The way I respond and get involved in that non-verbal makes the change happen in our life. If I see the non-verbal and do nothing, nothing will happen to us. Re-evaluation becomes more a part of us when we’re more totally aware of one another.
- G. Encourage them to use these tools, to re-evaluate to live God’s Plan.

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTIONS (10-12 mins.) (see guide)

- A. HDIFA challenging us to make changes in our marriage to be more for one another?
- B. Write only, dialogue at home.

VII. HOMEWORK HANDOUT - explain briefly.

VIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

IX. CLOSING PRAYER (10 mins.)

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #3: HOW TO RE-EVALUATE – IT’S ON-GOING

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. I Corinthians 13: 1-13: Read together and take small verses to dialogue on, choose an area to be re-evaluated and dialogue on feelings. This may take two or more dialogues before all the feelings are shared and explored.
2. Choose an evening to have a loving discussion, then set goals and most important, a length of time in which the re-evaluation can be accomplished, this depends on the type of re-evaluation. Don't take on more than one major area at a time.
3. Suggested dialogue question: "When we're apart is our coupleness apparent? HDTMMF?"
4. Pray aloud together and petition our Father for His direction.
5. Romance one another in special little ways. (Flowers, notes in lunches, etc.)

Have a beautiful week --- SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

PEP SERIES III – EVENING #4:
WHY DO WE RE-EVALUATE – WHY DO WE MAKE CHANGES?
(two hours maximum)

TIME:

MEETING PLACE:

SUPPLIES: Pens, paper, homework handouts, Bible

I. OPENING REMARKS (2 mins.)

- A. Warm welcome.
- B. Share your excitement about their progress.
- C. Brief motivation to recognize that this is not the final evening of re-evaluation, but the beginning of a lasting commitment to each other and to living God's Plan.

II. SHARED PRAYER (7 mins.)

- A. Read scripture passage - 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.
- B. Without comment, join hands and begin prayer (see Presenting Couples Guide).

III. RE-CAP (3-5 mins.)

- A. "How to Re-evaluate" (a brief summary of Evening #3)
 - 1. Use dialogue and loving discussion, scripture and prayer as tools.
 - 2. Share the importance of planning and how.
 - b. Difficulty in locating the small re-evaluations (the life-blood of our relationship).
Personalize.
- B. Discuss how your homework helped us to achieve that goal.

IV. SHARING QUESTION (25-30 mins.) (includes 10 min. break)

- A. Give question with brief explanation: "Specifically share what methods you have used to plan for and implement your re-evaluation commitments. (i.e., listing and prioritizing, dialoguing on changes, requesting changes from each other, using scripture, etc.)"
- B. "What effects have your re-evaluations had on your relationship, on others?"
- C. Break for coffee (10 mins.)

V. PRESENTATION (35-40 mins.)

- A. Give title - "Why do we re-evaluate? Why do we make changes?"

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #4:
WHY DO WE RE-EVALUATE – WHY DO WE MAKE CHANGES? (cont'd)**

- B. Give purpose - "Everything we've covered in this series has been leading up to the question, 'Why?' The simple answer is that to live God's Plan means to strive for unity. To achieve this we cannot stagnate or stand still and settle for less than greatness. We are imperfect people in an imperfect world with changing times, changing pressures, changing values. Yet, we're striving to be perfect lovers... to live the eleventh commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. This does not seem possible unless we live each day as our first, as a new beginning. It's a time to grow, a time to learn, a time to risk, a time to care, a time to love. It's a time to re-evaluate for your sake and the sake of the world."
- C. Personalize the following:
1. Purpose of the Weekend is NOT just to go home, dialogue and have a nice, close relationship.
 2. Purpose is to take their strong relationship into God's world and share their love. This is our goal. (Remind them that it is God's world).
 3. Reasons we need and want to re-evaluate. (This is the heart of this presentation.)
 - a. Because dialogue stimulates a desire to be more for each other. (Share a personal example of breaking through a barrier in your relationship and wanting more.)
 - b. To experience our wedding day joy as a way of life.
 - c. To be an example to our children that our Sacrament is living as Christ lived, loving as Christ loved. (Share the Today's World concept of marriage, i.e., self-fulfillment, separatism, money and achievements as the marks of a successful life, etc., vs. God's Plan and how we want our kids to desire what we have.)
 - d. To stand still is to backslide. (Talk about how this happened in your marriage, and how ordinary it became, how disillusioning it was. The same thing can happen now, but it will be more painful because you've experienced real joy and closeness again.)
 - e. I want him/her to know that he/she is why I want to go on living. (Brief 70/70 memories,)
 - f. We need to bring hope to the world. (Share some statistics - see Presenting Couples Guide.)
 - g. To effect change we must change first. (Explain the logic in this.)
 - h. Are you satisfied with the spirit in your church, with your schools, community, government?
 - i. Are you anxious to leave the world as it is as a legacy to your children, grandchildren?
 - j. Summary (i.e. These are the big dreams, but not impossible ones. If I re-evaluate., no matter how small, and effect 10 other couples... and they do the same, I've already touched the lives of 100 families. But it begins with me and in our relationship. What we want to do here is to emphasize that the dream is not possible without the commitment to change for each other.)

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #4:
WHY DO WE RE-EVALUATE – WHY DO WE MAKE CHANGES? (cont'd)**

NOTE: This section is to instill in them an Open and Apostolic mentality, but the emphasis needs to be on the importance of putting each other #1 to be effective. Otherwise we'll just be good people who do good works. This is God's greatest calling, to live the four marks of the Church. But remember that the mark of "One" comes first.

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION (17 mins. - includes writing time)

- A. Give question - "If I don't choose to change, who stands to lose the most? HDMAMMF?"
- B. Writing time (15 mins.) Come back for wrap-up.

VII. HOMEWORK/WRAP-UP (20 mins.)

- A. Give out homework and explain briefly.
- B. Give a personal testimony about what re-evaluation has meant in your life.
- C. Allow your couples to do the same.

VIII. CLOSING PRAYER (9 mins.)

- A. Thank couples for their participation in this series. Reflect back to them the joy that you are witnessing in their relationships.
- B. Read scripture - John 15:9-21 and close with a prayer.
- C. Sing "There's a New World Somewhere".
- D. Encourage them to go home and dialogue.

**PEP SERIES III – EVENING #4:
WHY DO WE RE-EVALUATE – WHY DO WE MAKE CHANGES?**

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Read John 15 in its entirety together. Dialogue question: HDIF when I hear Jesus speaking these words to us, "It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit"? After dialogue and loving discussion, talk about the message you each received from this scripture.
2. List the areas of major concern in your relationship that need re-evaluation. Select an area and develop a question for a 60/60 to be done on the weekend that follows. Keep your list for future 60/60s, adding to or subtracting from it as applicable.
3. Stay in touch with the other couples that shared the 4 evenings of re-evaluation with you.
4. Contact a team in your area to discuss how to find an apostolate in which to share your couple love.
5. Make a commitment to scripture dialogue at least once a week.
6. Write a letter to the Encounter Newsletter about what on-going re-evaluation means to your relationship.
7. Make a commitment to add re-evaluation planning to your commitment to dialogue. This planning could be done weekly, bimonthly or monthly.

ENJOY!!!!

PEP SERIES IV

LIVING THE WEEKEND SERIES

EVENING I: FEELINGS ARE NEITHER RIGHT NOR WRONG.

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included - they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing from the floor.
- The whole presentation is followed by a Dialogue.
- The evening is planned for just under 2 hours. That way, it can be started or ended with Agape, with coffee and cake, or presented by itself.

I. DEFINITION OF "FEELING".

A feeling is a spontaneous inner reaction to a person, place or situation that I am experiencing or thinking about.

II. HOW JUDGING MY OWN FEELINGS AFFECTS ME

- A. When I judge my feeling is inappropriate for this situation:
 - 1. I defend it.
 - 2. I am ashamed of it.
 - 3. I try to convince myself I feel another way.
 - 4. I decide I have no feelings.
 - 5. I compare myself to others, I feel "different".
- B. When I judge my feeling to be morally wrong:
 - 1. I judge myself unworthy of love.
 - 2. I hide my feeling from myself and others.
 - 3. I feel despairing.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us how judging your feelings wrong or inappropriate affects you.

III. HOW JUDGING EACH OTHER'S FEELING AFFECTS OUR RELATIONSHIP

- A. I decide your feeling is wrong - I don't want you to have it for your sake or for my sake.
Then:
 - 1. The one having the feeling closes up. He won't reveal it -- perhaps won't admit it to himself.
 - 2. We try to do something about the feeling rather than reach out for it. The feeling becomes a problem to solve.

**PEP SERIES IV - EVENING I:
FEELINGS ARE NEITHER RIGHT NOR WRONG. (cont'd)**

- B. I decide your feeling is a good feeling. Then:
 - 1. The one having the feeling feels pressured to have that feeling often.
 - 2. We develop a peace at any price attitude. We don't want to rock the boat by looking deeper.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us the difficulties you've run into.

IV. FEELINGS IN RELATIONSHIP

- A. Some feelings are pleasant, some unpleasant. Some bring peace, some turmoil. Outside of dialogue, we can replace feelings:
 - 1. By clarifying a misunderstanding of yours.
 - 2. By changing an attitude of my own.
 - 3. By discussing the issue behind the feelings.
 - 4. By reaching out to each other with sympathy and understanding.
- B. Three misconceptions about feelings
 - 1. "We must do this because this is the way I feel." (Decisions aren't based on feelings.)
 - 2. "You made me feel this way." (Only I am responsible for my feelings.)
 - 3. "This is the way I feel. We have to live with it." (I can't hide behind feelings.)
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your successes and failures in dealing with feelings outside of dialogue.

- V. DIALOGUE QUESTION:** "My feelings aren't right or wrong, and neither are yours." How does that statement make me feel?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #2: GOD DOESN'T MAKE JUNK

(I am a unique and good person loved by God and so are you.)

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included - they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing/rap from the floor.
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I. HOW I REACT WHEN I FEEL LIKE JUNK

- A. I wall myself in; I cope with my world.
- B. I become the judge of my worth.
- C. I run from myself, I run from others.
- D. I become depressed.
- E. I react with anger and defensiveness and resentment.
- F. I have a sense of hopelessness - "No matter what I do, I can't seem to change."
 - 1. Resulting in a sense of inappropriateness at times.
 - 2. I rely on and accelerate the image I present to bring my likability to others' attention more and more.
- G. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your view of yourself when you are unable to believe in your own full worth.

II. HOW THIS AFFECTS OUR RELATIONSHIP

- A. When I become my own judge, my spouse isn't important to me, except as a doer. I refuse to find my worth in his/her eyes.
- B. I judge that I am unimportant to him/her, too. I become a doer.
- C. I can't see my spouse's beauty. I judge myself as failing and I see other people as failing.
- D. I complain about him because I'm protecting myself and concentrating on my need to build myself up.
- E. We live together as singles, coping and protective of ourselves, unable to present ourselves to each other, because we judge we won't be acceptable.
- F. We compete with each other.
- G. We refuse to trust in the other's belief in Us.
- H. Open Sharing Question: Share with us how your difficulties in seeing your full worth affects your relationship.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #2: GOD DOESN'T MAKE JUNK (cont'd)

III. THE DECISION TO BELIEVE "GOD DOESN'T MAKE JUNK"

- A. I can find my worth only through my spouse's eyes. I will never believe I am good on a desert island.
- B. It is a decision to believe that I AM the valuable person he/she tells me I am.
- C. It is my vocation to show my spouse his beauty. To make him see himself as unique.
- D. When I like myself, I am free to like you. The decision is, to not worry about myself. To focus on showing you how lovable you are.
- E. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your encouragements and disappointments in "Trying to see each other's worth in each other's eyes."

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: How do I feel about God not making junk now?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #3: TO LOVE IS A DECISION

(It is also a decision to let myself be loved. It is not always accompanied by loving feelings.)

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into two separate topics, each on a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included -- they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing from the floor.
- The whole presentation is followed by a Dialogue.
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I. WHAT “TO LOVE IS A DECISION” MEANS TO ME.

- A. Love is active, not passive. It's something you do or do not do, not something you're in or out of. It is not a feeling, though it is supported by warm tender feelings. It is my choice, to decide to love and to allow myself to be loved.
- B. I must decide to do something about loving myself.
 - 1. To change some attitudes about myself,
 - a. that my worth is in what I do for you.
 - b. that I have nothing to offer.
 - c. that I have to be perfect.
 - d. that I fail at everything I attempt.
 - e. that the best thing I have to offer to you is the image I feel comfortable projecting.
 - 2. To reveal my feelings to you; to let go of myself and the doubts and fears that keep me isolated.
 - 3. To stop judging myself -- to believe in the beauty others (especially my spouse) reveal to me.
 - 4. To allow myself to be loved.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us the steps you are taking or should be taking, in deciding to love yourself.

II. WHAT THE DECISION TO LOVE IS NOT.

- A. It's not gritting your teeth and deciding anyway, but the decision to be responsive.
- B. It's not peace at any price - deciding to keep things nice and smooth.
- C. It's not surrender of myself; the Martyr; the Doormat.
- D. It's not assuming how your spouse should respond to you. “I know her - this is what she needs.”
- E. It's not 50/50. I'll decide as long as you keep deciding too. It's not measuring.
- F. It's not dumping feelings just to get them off your chest.
- G. It's not expecting something in return.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #3: TO LOVE IS A DECISION (cont'd)

- H. Open Sharing Question: How have misconceptions of "To love is a decision" affected our relationship?

III. WHAT DOES “TO LOVE IS A DECISION” MEAN TO US AS A COUPLE?

The decision is to create the atmosphere that makes love possible for it is actions -- some physical some mental, some vocal.

- A. The tasks we perform with the other in mind.
- B. The positions we choose or forgo for the sake of the other.
- C. The acts we overlook or forgive for the other.
- D. The act of faith I make to believe you when you tell me of my importance to you.
- E. The revelations we make of our feelings about ourselves.
- F. The affirmations we make of the others' importance to us.
- G. The awareness we show and gratitude we express for the other's goodness.
- H. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your successes and failures in acting out your decisions to love.

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: HDIF about deciding to love you now?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #4: RELIVING OUR 70 AND 70

This presentation is to renew in us the excitement and closeness we shared from our 70 and 70. The closeness we felt gave us the urgency to want to re-evaluate in order to hold on to what we had found, and the tool of dialogue gave us the means to accomplish that goal.

I. WHAT WAS MY REACTION TO THE QUESTION, "WHY DO I WANT TO GO ON LIVING"?

- A. Husband/wife share.
- B. Share feelings as you wrote your 70/70 (positive/negative).

II. SHARE THE CLOSENESS YOU FELT AFTER SHARING YOUR 90/90 WITH EACH OTHER.

- A. What were your dreams?
- B. Plans?
- C. Excitement?

III. WHAT RE-EVALUATION DID WE MAKE TO MAKE OUR DREAMS AND PLANS COME TRUE?

- A. Time for each other.
- B. Job.
- C. Children.
- D. Activities.
- E. Other.

IV. DID WE LIVE OUT THESE RE-EVALUATIONS? HOW DO WE CONTINUE TO DO THIS?

- A. Dialogue.
- B. Discussion.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: HDIF when I remember our 70/70?

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: What major reevaluation did we make as a result of our weekend? What effect did it have on our relationship?

VII. SCRIPTURE READING: Song of Solomon - Chapter 2: 1-5

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE:

1. Why do I want to go on living?
2. Why do I want to go on living with you?
3. What areas in our relationship do we have to re-evaluate? HDIFAT?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #5: WHY WE DIALOGUE

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics; each one is a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included - they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing/rap from the floor.
- The whole presentation is followed by a Dialogue.
- The evening is planned for just under 2 hours. That way, it can be started or ended with Agape, with coffee and cake, or presented by itself.

I. WHY WE DIALOGUE

- A. The closeness we discovered on our initial weekend. What it meant to us.
- B. The personal reasons in our relationship that make our dialogue important. e.g.:
 1. the loneliness we dread,
 2. the specialness of that time together,
 3. the barriers broken down,
 4. the fear of losing what we have,
 5. the reassurance that I am loved, I am lovable.
- C. Personal testimony of what dialogue has meant in our lives.
- D. Open Sharing Question: Share with-us your reasons for dialoguing.

II. OUR DIALOGUE IS HINDERED: (Give personal examples of several)

- A. When we deny the value of guidelines.
- B. When the execution and perfection of the technique is our goal.
- C. When we approach it as a duty.
- D. When we look on dialogue as the basis of our relationship rather than a product of it.
- E. By our lack of awareness of our worth as individuals or our dignity as a couple.
- F. When we compare our dialogue to the dialogue of others.
- G. By our insistence on success in an individual dialogue.
- H. When insights or suggestions are presented or construed as rules.
- I. When we look on oneness of feelings as an unattainable goal.
- J. When I don't recognize that you're as important as I am.
- K. Open Sharing Question: Share with us what hinders your dialogue.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #5: WHY WE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

III. OUR DIALOGUE IS ENHANCED: (Give personal examples of several)

- A. When we use the guidelines of dialogue to free us.
- B. By the enthusiasm with which we approach it.
- C. By Our belief that God is present.
- D. When we realize dialogue is a tool not an end in itself.
- E. By a decision to believe in my spouse's goodness.
- F. By a decision to believe in my spouse's revelation of my goodness.
- G. When we believe the experience of our weekend can be relived in our everyday lives
- H. By our awareness of the importance of us as a couple.
- I. When our focus is on our closeness, not on the technique.
- J. When we recognize that its joys, benefits, and openness are spilling over into our lives.
- K. When we recognize that while the technique is vital, we do not become bound by it, and practice it to go beyond it.
- L. Open Sharing Question: Share with us what enhances your dialogue.

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: How do I feel about remaining open to you through our dialogue?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #6:
OPENNESS TO SPOUSE IS OPENNESS TO GOD

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included - they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
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I. WHEN WE DENY THAT "OPENNESS TO SPOUSE IS OPENNESS TO GOD"

- A. The possibilities:
 1. The Father's plan (our unity as a couple) fades as our goal.
 2. My spouse has no value in my spiritual life (spiritual singles).
 3. We leave ourselves in danger of building a private relationship with a God of our own making.
 4. We seek our spirituality outside our relationship.
 5. We deny the truth of God as relationship.
- B. Share instances in your relationship where the above points have proved true for you.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share what happens to you when you deny that "Openness to Spouse is Openness to God."

II. THE PARALLELS BETWEEN RELATIONSHIP WITH SPOUSE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Take 4 areas you have examined together and show how through dialogue, and the openness it brings, you've recognized parallels in your relationship with your spouse and with God. (Draw from the following types of areas.)

- A. Areas where you judged that you suffered in comparison with your spouse and God.
 1. Her/his (and God's) sensitivity stronger than yours.
 2. Her/his (and God's) patience stronger than yours.
 3. Her/his (and God's) wisdom greater than yours.
- B. Areas where you were confused and unsure of where you stood.
 1. He/She (and God) seemed far away from you.
 2. He/She (and God) seemed only interested in what you could do for them.
 3. He/She (and God) seemed a mystery to you -- what did they want?

NOTE: Show how you responded in these areas, and how they affected your relationship.

- C. Open Sharing Question: Share your most recent awareness of where your relationship with your spouse parallels your relationship with God.

**PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #6:
OPENNESS TO SPOUSE IS OPENNESS TO GOD (cont'd)**

III. THE STAKE GOD HAS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP

- A. Give instances in your experience when you felt close to each other and became aware of God's Presence.
 - 1. A sense of Peace and tranquillity.
 - 2. We look at the things around us differently, in nature, our children, situations.
 - 3. We react to pressure differently.
 - 4. We are aware of our relationship as another miracle.
- B. Show how experiencing and growing in our relationship has enhanced our spirituality. (Love one another as I have loved you.)
 - 1. We have listened to each other and we have changed.
 - 2. We have given life to each other.
 - 3. We have experienced freedom.
 - 4. We have become more aware of our roots in our faith.
 - 5. The more fully human we are the more God-like we are. That is His gift to us.
 - 6. We have given life to others through our relationship.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your awareness of the presence of God in your relationship with your spouse.

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: HOW do I feel knowing that the way I see you is the way I see God?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #7: COMMUNITY OF LOVE

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included -- they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing/rap from the floor.
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I. IT IS COMFORTABLE TO RELATE TO OTHERS, TO THE COMMUNITY

A. The attractiveness of community.

1. I need only project an acceptable, tried and true image of myself. I put my best foot forward, eager to be well thought of.
2. I know what's expected of me in a group - or else I don't have to care.
3. I am willing to be generous - I enjoy being generous.
 - a. Self-gratification (I feel useful and worthwhile).
 - b. No fear of future expectations (I'll have to live up to this).
 - c. I am appreciated and complimented.
4. Sacrifices are not demanded of me.
5. I can be open with other people.,
 - a. They won't be here tomorrow to remind me of who I claimed to be.
 - b. There is not a constant commitment to others - I can walk away.
 - c. I can talk in generalities nothing need come of this - no promise is inferred.

B. The challenge is to be aware that out core community of love is us as a couple, and that all else only flows from that. The fact is that we are often more enthusiastic, more comfortable and more generous with others than with our spouse, because there is less vulnerability and commitment involved.

C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us areas where you find involvement with others easier than with your spouse.

II. WE CAN BE FOR EACH OTHER -- WE ARE A COMMUNITY OF LOVE

A. The Struggle

1. I want to grow but I don't want to change.
 - a. "I love to talk about the insights but I wouldn't want to live that way."
 - b. Does change mean become different or become more; to change style or to add dimensions. "I'm comfortable with my spirituality - I don't want to talk to you about prayer or Scripture."
 - c. "I like my way of handling the kids. I don't want to add any of your ideas."
2. My feelings get in the way of our relationship. I cling to them.
3. My desire for independence. I resist intimacy.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #7: COMMUNITY OF LOVE (cont'd)

B. Hindrances to Relationship

1. Fear causes me to try to dominate my spouse. (I'm fearful of my ability as a breadwinner, so I question every cent she spends.)
2. Guilt causes me to blame myself and my spouse. (I'm aware that I nag, then immediately blame my spouse for not pitching in to help.)
3. Frustration with myself causes me to judge my spouse. (I'm frustrated with my own irritation with the children, so I judge my spouse for not becoming involved with them.)
4. Loneliness brings rejection. I put my spouse off, then wallow in loneliness. (I refuse to respond to his reaching out to me, preferring to feel sorry for myself.)
5. Inferiority causes me to criticize my spouse. (I judge I'm not as good a conversationalist as she, then criticize her for talking too much.)

C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your struggles to be the couple you discovered yourselves to be on your original weekend.

III. "IN OUR IMAGE WE CREATED HIM, MALE AND FEMALE WE CREATED THEM."

The Trinity is three Persons in total relationship. We are two persons striving for that same unity, and so, are a mirror of the Trinity. God's plan for us is for total relationship, to be one, to be united, and so we strive for total relationship.

A. Our beauty as a couple.

1. The thrill of seeing myself through my spouse's eyes. (I needn't be limited by what I have decided I am. He/she shows and permits me to be so much more - all that God made me.)
2. The inner peace of the dual gift of a sense of self-worth. I see that I stimulate joy in you (I am a lover) and that you stimulate joy in me (I am loved). You see that you are stimulating joy in me (you are a lover) and that I am stimulating joy in you (you are loved).
3. We can participate in the act of creation.
 - a. We can give life to each other on a daily basis.
 - b. We can create a whole new entity -- us as a couple.

B. Enhancements to becoming "that couple".

1. Mercy without resentment
2. Kindness without expectation
3. Humility without self-pride
4. Meekness without weakness
5. Patience without condescension.

Note: Share your experience when these virtues were real to you in your Sacrament.

C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your most glorious experience of God's hope for you - "And the two shall become one."

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: How does the statement "How much of a couple do you want to be" make you feel?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #8: CONFIDENCE

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included; they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
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I. CONFIDENCE, A DECISION

Defined on the weekend as the decision to share a difficult feeling with my spouse, trusting that he/she will accept my feeling. It is a decision.

A. What do I wish confidence was?

1. A feeling. It's simpler to reveal a feeling when I feel like it; it should come naturally.
2. My spouse's decision. He should notice I'm upset; she should ask me what's the matter.
3. Unimportant or irrelevant. What's one feeling among many; it will be gone in a day or so. So what if I don't decide?
4. The decision to reveal last month's feeling, or yesterday's feeling, or this afternoon's feeling - but not a feeling that I'm feeling right now - that's too naked.
5. A problem we could solve. If only I could outline the problem that causes my feeling, we could solve it, the feeling would go away and I wouldn't have to tell it.

B. What is it really?

1. Here's a piece of me that I can add to our relationship. Can I decide to reveal that piece of me when it seems:
 - a. Inappropriate. (How can I feel glad that you've failed at something?)
 - b. Morally wrong. (How can I feel bored when I pray?)
 - c. Fleeting. (If I feel alive and joyful now, will I be expected to tomorrow?)
 - d. Possible that you'll laugh or cry or scoff or pat me. (That's probably what I'd do.)
2. A moment of truth for trust (also a decision). The decision is possible to make:
 - a. When I believe that our relationship will benefit and grow through this sharing,
 - b. Though in revealing this difficult feeling and leaving myself naked and in mid-air,
 - 1) I know you want to be there to catch and comfort me.
 - 2) I know that without you I'd never accept these parts of me.
 - 3) I want you to experience how very good and special you are to me.

C. Open Sharing Question: Share what runs through your mind when you first realize you have a feeling you wish you didn't have.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #8: CONFIDENCE (cont'd)

II. THE SPILLOVER

- A. Share on where you are on revealing feelings you wish you didn't have outside of the dialogue. Do you have any of the following attitudes or opinions?
 - 1. Feelings are only important in dialogue.
 - 2. Feelings only have to be accepted in dialogue.
 - 3. There comes a point where feelings are no more than interesting.
 - 4. I don't trust you when the rules don't apply.
- B. Share on your response or reaction when a feeling is revealed to you outside dialogue.
 - 1. What do I do now?
 - 2. That's interesting, but . . .
 - 3. How come you still get that feeling?
 - 4. This is a problem we have to solve.
- C. Creating an atmosphere where decision is possible.
 - 1. By the daily dialogue: the building of openness and trust.
 - 2. By affirming each other's goodness rather than criticizing.
 - 3. By our belief that God has a stake in our relationship.
- D. Open Sharing Question: Share how you have responded or reacted when your spouse has revealed a feeling you wish he hadn't.

III. TURMOIL, DECISION AND HOPE

- A. Share your struggle to decide to reveal a specific feeling in or out of dialogue in the past 2 weeks. Possible fears:
 - 1. Our relationship may change.
 - 2. I will hurt him/her.
 - 3. He/she will not respond.
 - 4. I don't think I really have this feeling at all.
- B. What allowed you to say yes?
 - 1. The accumulation of trust in our relationship.
 - 2. My past experience of his/her goodness and the closeness past decisions have brought us.
 - 3. Even if she does react sharply, I have faith in her love for me, and I understand she's not perfect either.
 - 4. The awareness that our growing relationship is worth the risk of deciding.
 - 5. It's a positive step -- a building block -- this is God's plan for us.
- C. The results.
 - 1. What happened? (positive or negative)
 - 2. No matter what happened, was your relationship strengthened or weakened? How?
 - 3. What will you do the next time? Why?
- D. Open Sharing Question: Share with us an example of your struggle to make the decision to place confidence, and how your relationship was affected by it.

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Our relationship is directly impacted by my level of confidence. HDIFAT?

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #9: MATRIMONY – A SACRAMENT

FORMAT OF THE EVENING:

- The concept is divided into 3 separate topics, each one a 15-minute talk. The ideas should be personalized with concrete, day-by-day examples of how the points outlined continue to affect you and your relationship as a couple. Each point doesn't have to be included -- they are a list to be drawn from or added to by you.
- After each topic, the sharing question should be given, followed by a 15-minute discussion/sharing/rap from the floor.
- The whole presentation is followed by a Dialogue.
- The evening is planned for just under two hours. That way, it can be started or ended with Agape, with coffee and cake, or presented by itself.

I. WHAT OUR WEEKEND MAKES POSSIBLE

- A. Saturday builds our love relationship (marriage).
 - 1. Love is a decision:
 - a. Love of self
 - b. Love of spouse
 - 2. Decision involves openness, choice and a coming together.
 - 3. Coming together is God's plan for us (unity).
- B. Sunday reveals and dignifies our love relationship as a Sacrament (Matrimony).
 - 1. Our Sacrament is relationship -- with a purpose beyond itself. With it we can breathe life into the Church, and the Church can breathe life into the world.
 - 2. What is this purpose? What is this "Life"? -- "My Father loves you", the Good News for Modern Man.
 - a. A sign to each other that you are loved and lovable.
 - b. As a couple, a sign to others that they are loved and lovable.
- C. Open Sharing Question: Share with us your experience of the difference between marriage and matrimony.

II. "TELL ME THE WORDS, TELL ME THE WORDS".

Paul's letter to the Ephesians does that for us. (Read Ephesians 5:21-33)

- A. Men should love their wives as their own bodies. (Is body skin and bones or wants and satisfaction?)
- B. Wives submit to your husbands. (Is submission surrender, or giving in love?)
- C. Love your spouse in the same way Christ loved the Church, and gave His life for it. (Is giving your life one heroic act or putting yourself aside moment by moment?)
- D. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and the two shall become one. (Do two become one at the altar or by continual decisions to love?)
- E. Open Sharing Question: Share with us what this passage means to you right now.

PEP SERIES IV – EVENING #9: MATRIMONY – A SACRAMENT (cont'd)

III. WE ARE THE CHURCH -- "where two or more are gathered in My name".

A. A Little Church

1. Our human relationship -- our community of love: for richer and for poorer, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.
2. We are present to each other.
 - a. I will listen to you and be responsive to your needs.
 - b. I am faithful to you and committed to you.
 - c. I have chosen you and am eager to give you life.

B. The Big Church

1. Wedded to other human relationships -- the broader community of love: for richer and for poorer, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.
2. We are present to our Church.
 - a. I will listen to you and be responsive to your needs.
 - b. I am faithful to you and committed to you.
 - c. I have chosen you and am eager to give you life.

C. The Church is people

1. Us - past, present and future (here assembled).
2. Universal Church -- past, present and future (from age to age the world over). (All any of us ever were, are now or ever will be - that is the Catholic Church)

D. Open Sharing Question: The Church is people. What does this realization mean to you tonight?

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: "Wherever two or more are gathered in My name, I am there." How does Jesus saying those words to us make me feel?

PEP SERIES V

MISCELLANEOUS FLAME PRESENTATIONS

EVENING #1: GOD

I. OPEN WITH PRAYER.

II. SETTING

Light a candle and place it in the center of the room. Ask the couples to sit as close to the candle as they feel to God that night.

III. Open Sharing:

Present the following sharing questions one at a time encouraging each couple to share on each as they feel moved to:

- A. If God had a face, describe the look He would most probably give you.
- B. If you could ask for one thing from God, what would it be?
- C. Imagine JESUS stepping into our group right now and ministering to each of us. How would He minister to you right now? (Perhaps you are in desperate need of encouragement or forgiveness. What is your deepest need at this moment?)

IV. SONG: “Day by Day” from the Godspell Album

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWQEUzOACm4>

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What were your feelings at the time in your life when God seemed most real to you?

VI. OPEN SHARING

PEP SERIES V

EVENING #2: TRUST

I. OPEN WITH PRAYER.

II. SETTING: Light a candle which represents God's Love.

III. SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 4: 35-41. Picture yourself in the setting at the Sea of Galilee with the disciples and experience their feelings.

IV. PRESENT THE FOLLOWING SHARING QUESTIONS:

A. How would you feel....

1. before the storm
2. at the beginning of the storm
3. at the height of the storm
4. after the storm

B. Ask yourself: In what sense am I now going through a storm?

V. SONG: "Follow me" by John Denver.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPHTQgj1t2E>

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION: How does trusting God to guide our lives make me feel?

VI. AGAPE: A ceremony to express unity and love. This was done in the early days of Christ. Glasses of wine and slices of bread are passed around for everyone to share. (This can be done at any time during the evening.)

PEP SERIES V

EVENING #3: DIALOGUE

I. OPENING PRAYER

II. FORMAT:

Reading: “The Secret of Staying in Love” by John Powell, page 188

“Dialogue is to love what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue. There are no winners and losers in dialogue, only winners. Neither partner is ever required to give up or to give in but only to give, to give of himself. In dialogue, we can never end up with less than we were but only more. To live in dialogue with another is to live twice. Joys are doubled by exchange and burdens are cut in half by sharing. The listening and the speaking of dialogue each with its own particular set of consequences are each directed to the other. Dialogue is essentially an act of the purest love and The Secret of Staying in Love.”

III. PRESENTATION: 15 minutes by the presenting couple.

- A. What dialogue means to us.
 - 1. How it strengthened our relationship.
 - 2. How it renews our love.
 - 3. Share our own experiences.
- B. What hinders our dialogue?
 - 1. Prime time.
 - 2. Getting hung up on how to do it.
 - 3. Disillusionments.
- C. Changes that took place through dialogue.
 - 1. Closeness.
 - 2. Dialogue is the tool which we used to grow with.
- D. Where are we going with our dialogue?
Share yourselves.

IV. SONG: “We’ve Only Just Begun: by the Carpenters.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JgEptmz_eE

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Where are we going with our Dialogue? HDMAMMF?

VI. RETURN TO SHARING CIRCLE: Lovingly encourage others to share on the following question. Share with us your experiences with dialogue.

Helpful questions to dialogue on before presenting the talk:

- 1. What are my feelings when you heal me in dialogue?
- 2. What effect has dialogue made in our lives and HDMAMMF?
- 3. How do I feel when we miss dialogue?
- 4. HDIF when I/you put activities before our relationship?
- 5. What are my feelings attempting to keep you present to me during the day?

PEP SERIES V

EVENING #4: REACHING OUT

I. OPENING PRAYER.

II. ENDEARING QUALITY

Privately each couple shares with their spouse the endearing quality that they saw in him/her that week.

III. READING: Poem “Love”

A bell isn't a bell until you ring it.
A song isn't a song until you sing it.
And the love that's in you wasn't put
There to stay,
Love isn't love until you give it away.

IV. PRESENTATION: 15 minutes.

- A. How have we reached out to one another in dialogue?
 - 1. Trust and sharing of feelings.
 - 2. Accepting of each other's feelings.
 - 3. Share yourselves.
- B. How have we not reached out to one another in dialogue?
 - 1. Too busy
 - 2. Garbage dumping.
- C. How have we reached out to others.
 - 1. Is our relationship noticed by others and how do we share it/
 - 2. Share your feelings when you have.
- D. How have we or have we not reached out to God?
 - 1. How do we see God in our relationship?
 - 2. Share where you are.

V. SONG: “Impossible Dream” from Man of LaMancha
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWRMUP1k-4E>

VI. DIALOGUE QUESTION: In what way do I or do I not reach out to you in our dialogue?
HDMAMMF?

VII. RETURN TO THE SHARING CIRCLE: Start the sharing and lovingly encourage others to share on the following question: Share with us your experiences when you as a couple have reached out or have been reached out to.

PEP SERIES V - EVENING #4: REACHING OUT (cont'd)

VIII. SECRET COUPLE: The names, addresses and phone numbers of each couple at the evening is written on a slip of paper and placed in a bag. Each couple then in turn selects a name, not their own, from the bag. For one month, they do something nice or that couple without them knowing it. And at the end of the month they reveal themselves by a letter, get together, or a phone call. Examples of some of the things you can do: flowers, love notes, signs, baked goods, babysitting, etc.

Helpful questions to dialogue on before presenting the talk:

1. HDIF when I see you reach out to me with sympathy and understanding outside of dialogue?
2. HDIF about the words “love one another as I have loved you”?
3. WAMF when we share with other couples their goodness?
4. HDIF when we reach out to others?

PEP SERIES V - EVENING #5: WE ARE SPECIAL

I. OPENING PRAYER.

II. OPEN SHARING:

Present the following sharing questions one at a time and encourage each couple to share on each as they feel moved to.

- A. Share with us your thoughts and feelings on when you first met each other.
- B. Share with us your thoughts and feelings on your engagement.
- C. Share with us your thoughts and feelings on your wedding day.

III. SONG: “Wedding Song” by Captain & Tenille album “Song of Joy”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOF8ZXzgpL0>

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Read the dialogue question to the group: Life is beautiful when it is shared with you. HDTMMF?

PEP SERIES V - EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this evening is to help the couple to rekindle the urgency they have for one another. We want to help each couple remember the times in their lives when the most important thing was one another.

The externals of the evening are important. Everyone should be greeted with warmth, both on the part of people and in terms of the environment. Things should be simple, but special: flowers, table cloths, candlelight, soft music-things like this to set the mood. These kinds of things can be done in a home setting or in a hall. In fact, a hall is almost more effective because such warmth is unexpected.

Ask the couple to this evening with an invitation, not in the newsletter or by general announcement. Personal invitations, in person or over the phone, would be good. A more formal wedding or dance type invitation can also be used to set the tone of the evening.

Have the couple bring their wedding album or pictures of them when they were dating. Let the couples browse through them for about 15 minutes to allow for late arrivals and to set a fun mood.

After the presentation give the couples a chance to look at more of the albums and play some music and encourage dancing. Use anything- that will help them remember romance. You can get a camera and take pictures of couples in front of a banner (remember the proms and dances when' you were dating?) Anything used should be kept as simple as possible; we want them to remember one another, not the things that made them romantic.

From the perspective of several years of married life, being romantic has different connotations. Now it's candlelit dinners in expensive restaurants, or candy and flowers. Those are nice, but the fact is that for most of us when we were dating, those things were not the core of our romance. We might even conclude from this perspective that we weren't very romantic at all. Which is, of course, not true. Our romance is and was just being other-centered. The things we did were just an excuse to be together and for the most part we didn't care what we did. The atmosphere was us - we didn't have a lot of money and we found inexpensive ways to be with one another and enjoy one another. We cared about each other more than what others thought of us. That was reflected in our nonverbal signs of affection. We were spontaneous. Who cared who saw us holding hands or kissing? And wasn't it like that on Sunday night after our weekend?

The experiences shared in the talk should be from before marriage, early marriage and present day times of romance. (Very important is now too, not just somewhere in the past.) The talk should be primarily sharing of experiences; not telling people what to do. The warmth and caring you have for one another should come out in all areas.

This talk should be given by a couple who has experience in and love for the dialogue as a way of life.

Send the couples home with a list of suggested dialogue questions and separate lists of activities. (See attached list.) Men and women have separate lists so that the things they do for one another will be a surprise.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

We want to be sensitive to the couple who had little to no dating time before their marriage or whose courtship was problem filled, e.g. disapproving parents, religious differences. They can be encouraged to focus on the good they saw in one another, the things that drew them together, the desire they had to be together regardless of the circumstances. And this should extend into the early days of marriage. The idea is not to create a romantic fantasy that was identical to everyone else's, but to bring alive again how special we were to one another.

II. TIME SCHEDULE

- 15-30 min. - Welcoming, sharing albums and pictures informally, waiting for late arrivals.
- 10-15 min. (maximum) - large groups sharing (4 couples maximum): What one thing attracted you to him or her?
- 20 min. - Presentation
- 30 min. - Love letter and Dialogue: What is my most romantic memory of our courtship? WAMF?
- 30 min. - Small group sharing *(4 couples maximum):
 - 1) Share times in your life when you've had a particularly strong desire to be with one another.
or
 - 2) Share the fun or funny things you remember from your dating- or early marriage.
How did you meet?(Presenting couple should choose question - do not throw out both questions.)

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. End the evening by asking the men to take a flower from one of the vases and give it to their wife while they sing "New World", listen to a record, or dance together. Or whatever idea you have to have the couples focus back on each other after the group sharing.
- B. Allow time for sharing albums, dancing, pictures, etc.
- C. Group sharings - These are a very important part of the evening. The first is meant to be very brief. It is to set the tone of the evening, to let the couples get to know one another a little but to break up from the groups with the hunger to share still unsatisfied. Making this time period longer will allow the evening to lag.

This is only a warm-up and it is better to rush these sharings than to have one group finish and be waiting for the rest. The second sharing is more the meat of the evening. It calls for the couples to get involved in what they have heard in the presentation. It takes the presentation past the point where it could just be interesting or entertaining; it makes the ideas become part of the couples.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

- D. Dialogue - We don't want to label the dialogue as optional. We think it is an important experience for the couples to have on a night like this. It may be the first opportunity they have had in a while, if they are not dialoguing to share intimately something as warm and positive as this. Some couples who have trouble dialoguing regularly at home appreciate the structure and security of a group situation for their dialogue. On the other hand, the mentality behind this whole series is to lead the couples into an appreciation of their dialogue and there might be situations where the presenting couples might see it as more positive to not have a dialogue time in this first evening.

IV. PRESENTATION OUTLINE (20 min. max.)

- A. Share your experience of romance when you were dating and first married. (7 min.).
Share in a dreamy, reflective style.
Mentality: The purpose of this section is to set the mood. It is an extension of the brief groups sharing of "How We Met." We are sharing here the romantic things we did together and beyond that to what was behind these things. The most important thing is the sense of being special to and for one another - how we were so conscious of one another and the excitement we felt in being together. This can be shared through specific examples from our own history. The points in the outline are direction-setters. Add your own experience of one another in any area that fits the mood here.
1. What it was like when you were with one another.
 2. How you made every effort to be with one another.
 3. What made things like phone calls and letters special.
 4. What sacrifices you made for one another
 5. What kinds of plans you made to be romantic.
- B. Share your discovery of romance as part of your relationship now. (5 min.)
Mentality: We so often say romance and it clicks as a period in time long past. This section gives you the opportunity to share what romance you see in your life now. If you take the meaning of romance as our desire for one another, there is a lot of romance in our lives today. Reflect on each of the points listed and share how you have discovered that in your life today. This may be brief moments together of special- awareness of one another rather than a romantic high we are on for weeks. For instance the flowers brought home out of the blue or the small talk during a football game watched together. A specific note on the effort of making romance alive now: it would be easy to say "romance is a decision" and think of it as catchy and descriptive. Please don't. The effort through this whole series has been to avoid M.E. jargon in favor of your own personal sharing.
1. Romance is not just for when you are young.
 2. Romance involves a freedom to be yourself, to be spontaneous, to have fun.
 3. Romance involves too, a history - "memories are made of this . . ."
 4. Romance is a caring for one another with abandon - doing it for the other person.
 5. Romance doesn't always just happen; it may take effort and planning.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

- C. How dialogue helped you rediscover romance in your relationship (4 min.)

Mentality: Most of us experienced a rekindled flame for one another after our weekend. Romance was again alive and well and easy to see. There is a flush of enthusiasm and closeness when we discover new things in one another and after our weekend we were truly "high on each other. 11 Dialogue is what built that openness and paved the way for that closeness. It is through the trust fostered in dialogue that we can risk exploring for new parts of our relationship. The intensity of the weekend and our dialogue on the weekend leads to a new period of romance in our lives. (How you looked forward to writing, to getting home, maybe even passing up a drink with the guys; how you bought flowers for the table or fixed a special dinner; how you loved to sit -next to each other again or talked for hours about nothing and everything, etc.)

- D. What can you do to make your romance more a part of your life? (4 min.)

Mentality: This part gives you the chance to share what you hope to do with the discoveries you have made about romance in your lives. You probably have realized in writing that "Gee, that sounds like a good idea," or "I haven't done that in a long time." What are you going to walk away from giving this talk with? Hopefully a resolve to put some spontaneity and appreciate the desire to be together. Share specifics: e. g. calling from work now and then, going for a walk, meeting him at the door, picking up a small gift or special snack, saying I love you in some new way.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

V. WRITTEN EXAMPLE OF PRESENTATION

Jim: To set the mood tonight we will go around the circle and each of you tell what first attracted you to your spouse.

Jim: Early in March of 1946, I was discharged from the Army and began to decide what directions to go with my future life.

By April of 1946 I had obtained a job with the DeKalb Agricultural Ass'n. - a hybrid seed Corn company, my job being a supervisor for one of their growing areas, and I had planned on going back to college that fall. April and part of May I worked around the seed corn plant in Shenandoah, Iowa but by the middle of May I went to the growing area at Lenox, Iowa, about 65 miles east of Shenandoah.

When I came back to Shenandoah in June after the corn was all planted, several of the fellows at the plant asked me if I had seen the new girl in the office. Several comments were made about her looks and I became curious and decided to check this new girl out for myself, I liked what I saw and wanted to get to know her much better.

Since the only refrigerated drinking fountain was in the office I began wearing a path going into the office for drinks of water and making small talk with this pretty girl. My thirst for cold water the next few weeks was tremendous, and besides, this very pretty girl had agreed to go on several dates with me about the second-week of our acquaintance. Of course this pretty girl was Donie, and we had some wonderful times going to movies and dances, but I had to go back to my growing area to supervise the corn detasseling which was coming up,

The first few weeks I went back to Shenandoah only on weekends, for business reasons I said to myself at first, but soon I was going back over at least once during the week just to see Donie: By the last of July most of my area work was completed and I moved back to Shenandoah for the balance of the time before going back to college at Iowa State in Ames, Iowa.

Donie and I were now together at least 3 or 4 times a week and I had decided she was a very special person - however marriage was not on my mind although I enjoyed being with Donie more than any girl I had met before her,

Donie transferred from Lindenwood College in Missouri to Iowa University in Iowa City that fall and I was going to Iowa State in Ames. So we decided we would try to get together maybe every 4 to 6 weeks during the school year. I had purchased a 7 year old car so I had wheels.

The phone would ring at my fraternity house, would I like to come to Iowa City for the Iowa - Norte Dame football game, or, would I like to go to some special dance or party that was coming up the next weekend. I would call Donie and ask her to take the train into Des Moines and I'd pick you up as my fraternity was having a special party or dance or there was a special dance at the Union on Saturday night with a big name band playing.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

It was becoming apparent that this pretty dark eyed girl was someone that I wanted to be with more and more -- and I was getting the message that she might be . feeling the same way about me.

By Christmas time I had decided that this girl was the one I wanted to marry and after she said yes - we set a wedding date for that coming August.

Donie: Home from school for the summer, I took a part time job in the office of the company where Jim was working. I had known his sister and had seen the picture of him in his Army uniform. I thought he was good looking, but to me a man's looks weren't important, except for being fairly tall. However, I began to think this fellow was really attractive and when he finally asked me for a date, I already had a date and the same thing happened the next time he asked me.

Oh, frustration! I was afraid he wouldn't ask me again. One day he asked me to do some typing for him and I said I would finish it at home if he would like to drop by for it. He did and that was the beginning.

Jim was different from any other date I'd ever had. He was a few years older and smoother and ever so persistent and I knew within a few weeks that I wanted to marry him,

The courtship that began in the summer continued into the fall. What a marvelous time, house parties and football games and formal dances and campfires and singing, kisses under the campanile and being together and being together!

At Christmas time Jim gave me a blue teddy bear wearing a bracelet and also a diamond ring. I still have the diamond, the bracelet and the teddy bear. On New Year's Day my family had a party announcing the engagement of both their daughters. Darlene was to be married in May and me in August. We lived and breathed wedding for months.

But the best part of those months was the time Jim and I spent together. We made great plans and spent hours talking about how our life together would be. And we had fun. Jim was a good dancer and we went to a lot of dances. I loved the long dresses and tuxedos and corsages and dance cards, but, most of all I loved Jim and I could hardly wait for August to arrive,

At this point in the presentation we broke into small groups of 4 couples each and each person told of one funny incident from his or her courtship or wedding day. Allow about 15 to 20 minutes for this sharing and then meet again in the large circle.

Jim: Looking back over 35 years, I guess we had a wonderful wedding. Mostly I remember the terrific heat and trying to get shaved and dressed and looking cool with perspiration pouring out all over me. Air conditioning was unheard of and what a blessing it would have been that day. I can remember a few things that day besides the heat -- mainly the standing in front of the church waiting for Donie to come down the aisle I thought she had changed her mind as she didn't show up for such a long time. I didn't know until later that she was having trouble with the little flower girl and ring bearer, they didn't want to come down the aisle anyway, the long wait made me sweat even more.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

I was wondering if the soloist had regained his voice that he had lost the night before at my bachelor party. I do also remember walking up the aisle with Donie and standing in the reception line for hours. The rest is kind of blank on the wedding.

In my mind marriages are made up of a series of memories of the past and dreams for the future.

Some of my memories are the bridal suite in the Blackstone Hotel in Omaha our wedding night and getting lost and not finding any place the next night on our honeymoon but a basement room in a hotel with dripping water pipes over our bed. I still had my 1940 Chevy and it would heat up going up the mountains in Colorado and we would refill the radiator with water from a stream by using a hub cap from the car. The door on Donie's side of the car wanted to come open as we went around some of the mountain curves, but we had fun and now we have lots of memories.

I remember coming home from work one evening and Donie told me we could buy a brand new house for \$200 down since I was a veteran. We found out we could and borrowed the \$200 and did. We moved into a new house and later had a brand new daughter.

I remember the fun we had fixing up our new home and the worry about money to do everything we wanted to do.

I remember Donie's second pregnancy and the doctor saying she couldn't carry the baby for full term. And the car accident and after that she had no trouble at all with the baby and we had a wonderful son.

I remember wonderful friends. Christmases with the house full of relatives and presents, a very sick baby boy who we thought we would lose but he finally got well. We had our ups and downs with each other. There were times when you thought I was a terrible husband and I thought you were anything but a perfect wife. I changed jobs, lost the job and got a new job, moved to a new town, lost another job, got another job. We had another wonderful little boy and we moved here to Lincoln, Nebraska. All the time we had highs and lows in our love and marriage. What I realize now is that we didn't have very much romance in our marriage. All in all I guess we thought we were average so far as marriages went, using friends and acquaintances to gauge our own marriage by.

Finally after getting the 2 older kids married and moved out, the third decided to go to California to finish his last 2 years of college and finally we were just back to the two of us. Although I missed having the kids around, it was and still is just great just having the two of us together again.

Thank the Lord, a year and a half ago we had our weekend. You all know your feelings while driving to the weekend and ours were the same, But we found out that we still had lots to learn about each other and our love as become stronger and deeper ever since our weekend.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

Donie: When we were young adults there was little or no preparation for couples entering into marriage. Information on relationships (other than Dale Carnegie's Book on How to Win Friends and Influence People) or married love was just not available nor was it a subject to be discussed in any but the most general terms. I guess it was assumed that once you got married you'd figure it all out for yourself. So, what most of us did was to model our own marriages after the marriages we had observed. My model said a wife is dutiful, a helpmate to her husband. She cleans the house, has babies, cooks the meals and is a good mother, not necessarily in that order. Being compulsive by nature I set out to be a great cook perfect housekeeper and a super mom. My models showed me very little about being a wife or lover. Love making was an implied and enjoyable part of the married state but romance to me was sweet-talk and sort of a game playing and marriage was not a game,

A baby the first year seemed a normal expected state of affairs to me. It was many years before I knew how disappointed Jim was to have to share my time and affection so early in our marriage.

Our lives quickly settled into a routine of family, church and friends. We were busy and I thought we were pretty happy and doing everything right. In retrospect I think we were so foolish. We were married 12 years before we ever had a weekend away from the kids and 10 more years before we began having even a once a year time to give all our attention to each other. But after the vacation it was always back to the routine. We had been married 31 years when the youngest child finally left the nest. Jim was delighted, but I had mixed feelings. So much of my life was involved with the kids. I did enjoy having the house all for just Jim and me. We knew we still loved each other, but I had a bad cast of the blahs.

A young friend sent us a postcard inviting us to an ME information night. We'd never heard of Marriage Encounter and went to the meeting out of courtesy and registered for a weekend out of curiosity. The weekend was great and nothing before in my life had impacted me the way the letters from Jim in the following weeks did. It was like being 21 all over again like meeting a man I'd never known. I was so excited and could scarcely wait for our daily dialogue time to learn more and more about him. We were no longer leaving the dinner table and heading for the TV. We were talking like we did during our courtship. How I regretted the many, many years I put Jim and romance last on my priority list,

Jim: As I said in my last presentation, we have learned so much about one another during and since our weekend. You think "I know everything there is to know about Donie, what she thinks, what she is going to say next, what her reactions will be to something. Wrong? No, but only partly right. I have learned much more about her now. The amazing thing, I think, is that I've learned a lot about myself during all of this too, Things I didn't or wouldn't let myself think about, and many things I didn't even know-I had feelings or thoughts about.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

Most of my revelations have been due to our dialoguing, and mostly by just using the 90 day guarantee and the dialogue suggestions on the Marriage Encounter Calenders. For a time we tried making up some of our own tonics to dialogue about, but too often the one choosing a made up topic will try to slant it to their own use. As has been said before, dialogue is not a place to garbage dump, and believe me, that is so true.

Now don't let me mislead you into thinking we dialogue each and every day. We haven't.

We did great just off the weekend and most of that spring. Then it became more an off and on type of dialoguing. We even dialogued before going fishing while on our vacation last summer. But then with busier schedules, it became again a semiweekly or something like that type of a dialoguing pattern. What a shame. Donie and I feel closer and more loving toward each other when we dialogue and I guess when we get to noticing that we are beginning to get back in the old ways we say, "Hey! Wait a minute. Let's get back to our dialoguing again." So since our weekend, and with being more close due to our dialoguing, we sit closer together in church and when we are out in the public eye. We also hold hands a whole bunch of the time when out and that we hardly ever did before. We have even been known to give each other a little kiss in public. I wouldn't have thought about doing that before Marriage Encounter,

The little quick winks we give and receive, the little touches of love when out together, the little unexpected gifts, the fleeting kiss at home or even out someplace, the reminiscing of old times, the children, some of our new ME friends, all of these things are mainly due to ME and kept going with our dialoguing, even though spasmodic and our love for one another keeps growing to new unknown heights.

Donie: Are we a romantic couple. Yes, I think we are and are no longer afraid to let the world know it. Never during our engagement and rarely during our early marriage did we even hold hands in public. In recent years we've become great hand holders where ever we may be -- in church -- in the car, during our daily prayers. And although I would never have dreamed of walking across campus that way, we often take our evening walk with our arms around each other.

I've always loved our romantic vacations. We've had some marvelous times together, seeing new and exciting places and trying out some daring experiences I would have shunned when we had little children depending on us. But now the romance doesn't end with the vacation.

I enjoy the romantic gifts and cards Jim brings me, the pretty lingerie and jewelry, especially this little pin. My last birthday was number 55 - a big number. There is a heart and a number 10 on the pin. It came with a little card that said "Happy Birthday Honey. Five and five make a perfect 10. Now no 55 year old lady is a perfect 10, but she can feel like she is is she has a romantic husband.

We try to stay together at parties and group functions whenever possible, but if we do become separated a quick wink from across the room tells me Jim knows I'm there and I am special to him.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #6: REKINDLING THE ROMANCE (cont'd)

Dialoguing has made the big difference. Our love letters to each other brings us closer and how precious that closeness is. Romance has a lyrical connotation as if it should just happen naturally, but it doesn't always work that way. Dialogue is that special time set aside for just us to get to know each other better, to express our love more openly and more often and to remind us that we need romance now more than ever.

Last week when we were looking at some old slides, so many years and so many memories slid by. There was almost a sense of unreality about it, and I think that's because I now find myself living so fully in the present. I realize we are still in the process of making memories. I want to have romantic memories, and I want always to be in the process of making more of them with you with you.

While people were arriving at our Community Night we played romantic music.

We gave the group a 10 and 10 question and after they had written their love letters we had some simple little corsages for the men to pin on their wives before they exchanged their letters,

Read “We Haven’t Lost Love”

10/10 question: What is my most romantic memory from our courtship? WAMF? Before exchanging notebooks, each fellow pin a corsage on his wife.

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PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE

I. INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE

There are a number of difficulties faced by most couples approaching scripture dialogue for the first time...a fear stemming from an unfamiliarity with scripture ... a background of regarding scripture as an historical work...for other people and other times, or as something that as mainly the province of others, particularly clergy. So, approaching scripture with the aim of dialoguing on it is like a journey into unfamiliar ground as far as using it for dialogue. We think many couples have had the thought or question, "How can we dialogue on scripture?" "We're not biblical experts. We don't know anything about the Holy Land, or the way people lived then. We're also afraid we'll interpret passages wrong."

We need to accept that the scripture are love-letters ... written to us and for us ... to reveal Jesus and ourselves in relationship with Him. The books of the Bible are our books. We can respond to love-letters and our response, our feelings are neither right nor wrong. Our hope in writing this is to provide encouragement and support, and some help from our experiences to couples who've put off dialoguing on scripture because of these fears that hold us back. We have gained so much from our dialogue on scripture, that we'd like everyone to experience the growing closeness that we've experienced with Jesus and our Father. Scripture dialogue is a tool, a means of responding to the love-letters of our Father; it allows us to focus on our relationship with one another and the Lord, by focusing on our feelings in that relationship.

II. THE BASICS OF SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE

- A. Select a passage from scripture that is meaningful to you as a couple.
- B. Read enough before and after that particular passage to be able to "place" your passage as far as chronological sequence of events in Jesus' life, and the physical setting.
- C. With one another, try to set the scene...from the outside in.
 1. Physical setting, time of day, indoors, outdoors.
 2. Emotional climate of the passage ... the atmosphere.
 3. Zero-in on Jesus and yourself ... what does He look like, sound like? Where are you in this scene?
- D. Reread your particular passage.
- E. Write your love-letter immediately after setting the scene. The basic question for scripture dialogue is "What are my feelings hearing Jesus say these words to us as a couple?" Focus on your feelings.
- F. Follow dialogue technique for writing, exchange, dialogue, and select. In your dialogue, focus on responding to one another's love-letter.
- G. Discussion later could be focused on "What did His words mean to me?" Don't worry about being right. Where to start? For us, the start is in our prayer ... to draw on the love our Lord has promised us ... to strengthen us when we feel afraid, to give us the courage to make the decisions we make in opening ourselves up to one another.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

- H. Then we select a passage ... one involving Jesus, with Him speaking, and in a scene that is easier for us to see ourselves. The Last Supper is a good starter. The Gospel of John, chapters 13 through 16 are a sharing of the Last Supper, and these are rich treasure houses just waiting for us to enter in. We recommend starting here.

The next step is to set the scene, and an important thing that we have to remember is that no two people perceive the same event the same way. When we as a couple set the scene together, we share with one another how we see it ... neither one is right or wrong. There is no one right way! Since we are setting the scene for us as a couple, the way in which we individually see the scene becomes a blend. One of our difficulties was (and still is, at times) not spending enough time setting the scene. Setting the scene helps us to come alive ... to feel and respond. If we skimp on setting the scene, we're really skimping on ourselves.

We've found it very beneficial to draw on our own life experiences in setting the scene for scripture dialogue ... sharing a meal with close friends, a friend dropping in for coffee and sitting and talking intimately with us, walking along a beach or country road with close friends, or sailing in a boat with loved ones. All that we have experienced in our life is a rich source to help Jesus' love-letter come alive for us, and helps us to respond to Him.

We don't have to be experts on the life-style of Jesus' time ... His love-letters were written for all times and all peoples. We don't have to be fishermen, or farmers, or tax-collectors, or Romans or Jews...just ourselves. Using a selection from John, at the Last Supper, we start with the physical facts...it's supper time, the sun has gone down...it's dusk. Jesus and the apostles are sitting around a table, they have finished eating.

We call to mind how we are at the close of a dinner with loved friends ... we've shared a meal together. How are we? Relaxed? At ease? Stuffed? Do we have a lazy feeling? Do we have to strain to see someone across the table because of the dim light, and we don't want to move to light the lamp? Is it an effort to hear Jesus speaking to us? Do we have to exert ourselves just to listen? How does He look to us? What's the expression on His face? Is He intent? Sad? Angry? Determined? Desperate! Puzzled? Thrown out of our comfortable, after-dinner mood? Where are we in the room? Are we observing from outside? Or do we see ourselves at the table? Are we confused, "Why is He so intense?" Does His voice draw us? Is it compelling? What does it sound like? Did our father ever talk to us like this before he went away on a business trip, or before he went into the service,- perhaps? How did we react then?

What particular words that Jesus is saying really touch us as a couple? Zero-in on those words. In this atmosphere, He is saying those words to us as a couple ... He is looking directly at us ... at you and I. He is not only revealing something of Himself, He's also revealing something of us to us...how He feels about us ...

Approached with openness and curiosity, Scripture Dialogue can become another way to open new windows in our couple relationship. For some, approaching scripture with the aim of dialoguing on it may be like a journey into the unknown; and while that may be scary, it can also be fruitful!

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

At first we may hesitate because of unfamiliarity with scripture. We may have regarded scripture as a historical work about other people and other times. We may have thought of scripture interpretation as being the province of "others", particularly pastors or biblical scholars. We may say to ourselves, "How can we dialogue on scripture? We're not biblical experts. We don't know enough about the Holy land, biblical times, or the way people lived then. We're afraid we'll interpret the passages wrong."

These apprehensions can be quickly overcome as we realize that scripture dialogue does not require such specialized knowledge. It is not a time for in-depth bible study, nor for theological discussion. Rather, it is simply a time for sharing our personal feelings in response to a biblical passage, and our feelings are neither right nor wrong.

We may think of scripture as a love letter to us from God. As such, it can sharpen our awareness of our covenant and stimulate us to grow in it. The Old Testament records Israel's experience as a covenant community to whom God reached out over and over with strong expressions of love. The response expected of Israel was their own repeated decision to love God and one another. The record of this covenant has come to us in biography,, history, poetry, song, law, social criticism, prophecy, and parable.

In the New Testament, those who experienced the Love of God as they walked with Jesus or later in the community of the early church, reached out in Gospels, songs, letters, sermons, etc., to share that Love.

As we read our scripture, we are experiencing the love of those faith communities being poured out on us -- a love that ultimately comes from God.

In a sense, scripture dialogue is our personal love letter written in response to God's love letter, and it can be an exciting adventure of expanding our mutual awareness of each other, in relation to some of the great themes of human experience.

- I. The basics of scripture dialogue are:
 1. Select a passage from scripture that is meaningful to you as a couple.
 2. Read enough before and after that particular passage to be able to place your selection in context. Ask: Who is speaking? What happens before and after? What might the physical setting be? Why was this said or written? (motivation, occasion)
 3. With one another, try to set the scene -- from the outside in.
 - a. Physical setting -- time of day, indoors, outdoors, etc.
 - b. Emotional climate of the passage -- the atmosphere.
 - c. Imagine yourself in the scene. What does the speaker or writer look like? Sound like? Where are you in the scene?
 4. Re-read your particular passage.
 5. Write your love letter immediately after setting the scene. The basic question for scripture dialogue is "What are my feelings hearing these words said to us as a couple?" Focus on your feelings.
 6. Follow the WEDS dialogue technique for Writing, Exchange, Dialogue and Select. In your dialogue, focus on responding to one another's love letter.
 7. Discussion later could be focused on "what did these words mean to me?"

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

- J. **Select:** We select a passage that holds promise of being fruitful for us. It may be something we both value and want to share more deeply. It may be one of the many sayings or teachings or actions of Jesus. It may be from one of the prophets, from Paul, from the Psalms or some of the other writings. A very good place to start is in the Gospels with the words of Jesus.
- J. **Read:** We read it together or separately. We read twice -- once for the head and the second time for the heart. We try to listen for the emotional climate of the passage. How do we identify with the passage? Are we there as onlookers, descendants, listeners, learners, participants? Can we imagine this scene in today's world? What is the physical setting, time of day, weather, how many people are present? What feelings arise in me as I read and re-read this passage?
- K. **Set The Scene Together:** The next step is to set the scene. An important thing that we have to remember is that two people perceive the same event the same way. When we as a couple set the scene together, we share with one another how we see it -- neither one is right or wrong. There is no one right way! Since we are setting the scene for us as a couple, the way in which we individually see the scene becomes a blend. One of the difficulties was (and still is, at times) not spending enough time setting the scene. Setting the scene helps us to come alive -- to feel and respond. If we skimp on setting the scene, we're really skimping on ourselves.

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- L. **Re-Read:** Re-reading the selection after setting the scene gives it a rich focus in preparation for writing.
- M. **Write:** The basic question is: What are my feelings hearing these words said to us as a couple? We separate and write our love letters immediately. Our feelings are alive within us.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

III. SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- A. Mentality: An eagerness to share the warmth of Our Lord's love for us, and His expression of that love in His love letters; a desire to encourage and support couples beginning or continuing their Scripture Dialogue.
- B. Presentation: (no more than 30 minutes)
 - 1. Content: (15 minutes)
 - a. Awareness of scripture before dialogue.
Awareness of scripture now; love letter concept.
 - b. History of your own scripture dialogue.
 - 1) What feelings, thoughts, assumptions held you back from approaching scripture?
 - 2) What motivated your initial attempts?
 - 3) What helped you?
 - 4) What motivates you now? (focus of this section)
 - c. Basics of scripture dialogue; explain clearly how and why of each.
 - 1) Selecting passage.
 - 2) Setting scene together.
 - a) physical setting
 - b) emotional climate
 - c) focus on Jesus (or on Our Father if from the Old Testament)
 - 3) Selecting question writing love letter, exchange and dialogue.
 - 2. Team Sharing: (15 minutes): Your warmest experience as a couple of the Lord's love for you through scripture dialogue.
 - a. Passage you selected.
 - b. Way you set scene in full detail.
 - c. Feelings you experienced for your love letters.
 - d. Focus on your feelings of closeness to one another and to the Lord, and describe your dialogue and reaching out to one another.
 - e. Effect of this dialogue on your relationship through the day(s) following.

IV. DIALOGUE QUESTION: The Lord is longing for our response to His love letter.
HDTMMF?

V. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Please share with us your experience of scripture dialogue and when were you most aware of the Lord's tenderness and love for you as a Couple.

VI. COMMENTARY: For the content sharing: The presenting team has an opportunity to speak to the fears that hold couples back from scripture dialogue; the poor self-image that says "I'm unworthy to comment on God's words", the fear of privately interpreting scripture, and the fear of misusing scripture. There is also the opportunity to present scripture as the love letter of the church: it's our book, it was written for us, with us in mind, with all the love that we bring to our spouse in our love letters.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #7: SCRIPTURE DIALOGUE (cont'd)

VII. FOR THE TEAM SHARING:

In describing the scene, utilize every aspect of your own experience of similar scenes. e.g. the last Supper sharing a meal of celebration with close friends. Follow the outside in flow of setting the scene; the physical details, time of the day and the sequence of events in Jesus' life. Then bring to life the emotional climate, key in on your emotions in similar scenes, focus on where you are in the scene (out of the fringes, onlooker, participant, whatever), and then zero in on Jesus as you see Him - His facial expression, the tone of His voice, His emotions. This process of setting the scene makes that passage your own and should be fleshed out vividly in the team sharing. The team sharing can be a real gift of your warmth, your tenderness as you share your closeness to one another and to the Lord.

QUESTIONS TO HELP DEVELOP THE TALK:

1. What was my awareness of scripture before dialogue? Now?
2. Which of these moved within you?
 - Scripture is for pastors, nuns and holy people -- I'm not.
 - Scripture is for scholars who are familiar with biblical times -- I'm not.
 - I don't know the full meaning of the scripture, and what it means to me could be wrong.
 - Scripture was written 2,000 years ago and I have to live now. It doesn't apply now.
 - I've never read the Bible and I don't know where to start.
 - I'd need a strong historical background to set the scene for a script passage. I don't need it.
 - Would scripture dialogue really do anything for our relationship?
3. How did you face these and resolve them? (The ones that applied to you.)
4. In what ways did my self-image hold me back? How does my self-image affect my approach to scripture dialogue now?
5. What helped you to accept scripture as your book? How did "we are the church" affect your outlook on scripture?
6. How does your question for scripture dialogue help your dialogue? What happens if your focus is on the meaning of Jesus/ words instead of what feelings are stirred in me after reading His words to us?
7. What happens if you skimp on setting the scene? How has using your own lived experiences affected your scripture dialogue?
8. Where does discussion help you most in scripture dialogue?
9. What is your strongest motivation for using scripture dialogue?
10. SHARING:
 - a. What one scripture dialogue was the closest and warmest experience of the Lord's love and caring for you as a couple? Specific passage?
 - b. What helped that passage come alive for you? How did you set the scene?
 - c. What feeling did you focus on in your dialogue?
 - d. How can I/we best describe the impact and the experience of Our Lord's tenderness and caring for us as a Couple? Describe that experience as fully as you know how.
 - e. What was the effect of that dialogue on your life afterwards?
 - f. Did discussion after your dialogue play a role in the effect of that dialogue? How did that dialogue draw you closer as a couple?
11. What passages would you specifically recommend to a couple who has never used scripture dialogue? to a couple who has, but not lately?

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #8

LIVING THE WEEKEND IN OUR RELATIONSHIP

There are several concepts presented on the weekend that most couples hear for the first time. These concepts tend to build on each other and help the couples encounter each other. But after the weekend, it enhances our relationship to continue to live these concepts in our daily life. This presentation should motivate the couples to continue thinking about weekend concepts and to live them continuously. The way to motivate the couples is to share our joys and closeness while continuing to live the weekend. This is not a "how to" talk. Section III (To love is a decision) should be the focal point of this presentation. If "married singles" is shared, great caution must be exercised to not degrade married single activities and organizations, since we all derive satisfaction from such activities. Rather, the emphasis should be on the extra closeness and enjoyment we get from doing things together, or even from the loving of our spouse and sharing feelings later, though we were alone at the time. Throughout the talk, it is essential to give personal examples and to show how dialogue has benefited you.

I. MASKS.

- A. Explain briefly the concept of a mask (make sure that this doesn't come across as negative or bad, or something we need to take off. Masks are how we relate to others because of the benefits we derive. But they do limit us in our relationships with others.) Husband and wife share.
- B. Share what your main mask is and why you wear it (its benefits to you) and how it limits you. Husband and wife.
- C. Share how knowing more relationship after the about your own mask has benefited your weekend. Give specific example.

II. GOD DOES NOT MAKE JUNK.

- A. Share your reaction to this statement on your weekend.
- B. Share what it means to you today.
- C. Share how your present understanding of this concept has benefited your couple relationship. Give specific example.

III. TO LOVE IS A DECISION.

- A. Share your reaction to this concept when you first heard it.
- B. Share your reaction to this concept now.
- C. Share how living this concept in your daily lives has benefited your couple relationship. Give specific examples.

**PEP SERIES V – EVENING #8
LIVING THE WEEKEND IN OUR RELATIONSHIP (cont'd)**

IV. LIST OTHER WEEKEND CONCEPTS.

(God's Desire, Parallels, Feelings are neither right nor wrong, decision to be loved, unity, married singles, confidence, the key to dialogue, open and caring couple.)

- A. Name the concepts.
- B. Give very, very brief example of how you've used one of these concepts to benefit your relationship.
- C. Encourage everyone to think about weekend concepts in their daily lives. (If there were banners on their weekend, may be able to remember these, which are usually weekend concepts.) How do they apply to me today?

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What weekend concept do I find most difficult to live out. HDIF sharing this with you?

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Share some of the ways you've used weekend concepts to further your couple relationship.

PEP SERIES V – EVENING #9

EXPERIENCING OUR CONFIDENCE IN DIALOGUE

One of the most difficult things to do is to get past the confidence block. To share a confidence, a true confidence, takes true love and trust of our spouse. It's one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome in order to have a fantastic dialogue - which results in deeper love and understanding.

I. Share the state of your dialogue as related to confidence.

- A. On weekend
- B. Right after weekend
- C. Now
- D. What it can be and what we're striving for.

II. WEEKEND CONCEPTS ON CONFIDENCE.

- A. One of the key ingredients of dialogue.
- B. We must decide to have confidence.

III. TRUST AND LOVE -- THE KEY TO CONFIDENCE.

- A. Confidence could still be a stumbling block.
 - 1. What stops you from sharing a confidence?
 - 2. What makes you decide to share a confidence?
- B. How does love and trust allow you to share a confidence?

IV. THE "HOW TO" OF CONFIDENCE.

- A. Describe the kind of people you and spouse are.
- B. Why you have problems because of the kind of person you are.
Share internal struggles, judgments, etc.
- C. Share how you focus on your spouse and decide to trust.
- D. Share the joy that comes from sharing a confidence with your spouse.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: What feeling do I still have that I haven't been able to share with you?

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: How has sharing a difficult confidence made us grow?