

1984

## A journey into Christian marriage preparation

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## A journey into Christian marriage preparation

### Abstract

In 1981 the pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick in Cedar Falls, Iowa, requested one of the associate pastors to meet with several married couples in the parish and put together a process for marriage preparation within the parish community. Working closely with the parish staff of the Christian Community of St. Patrick, the associate pastor and four (later reduced to three because one couple moved away) married couples began to meet regularly over a period of fifteen months. Together they constructed a marriage preparation program which included six months of preparation before marriage and twelve months of support after the couples were married. This core group (three married couples and the parish priest) began their first pilot program in January 1983, and ten couples preparing for marriage took part in the process. The second core group (four married couples and the parish priest) began the second Sponsor Couple Process in September 1983, and at present have seven engaged couples and one married couple participating in the process. The core group is already gearing up for the third Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled to begin this September 1984; there are already eight engaged couples signed up for the third process.

A JOURNEY INTO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE  
PREPARATION

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A Research Paper  
Presented to  
The Department of Educational Administration  
and Counseling  
University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education

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by  
Paul Eldon Lippstock  
May 1984

This Research Paper by: Paul Eldon Lippstock

Entitled: A JOURNEY INTO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE PREPARATION

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

In 1981 the pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick in Cedar Falls, Iowa, requested one of the associate pastors to meet with several married couples in the parish and put together a process for marriage preparation within the parish community. Working closely with the parish staff of the Christian Community of St. Patrick, the associate pastor and four (later reduced to three because one couple moved away) married couples began to meet regularly over a period of fifteen months. Together they constructed a marriage preparation program which included six months of preparation before marriage and twelve months of support after the couples were married. This core group (three married couples and the parish priest) began their first pilot program in January 1983, and ten couples preparing for marriage took part in the process. The second core group (four married couples and the parish priest) began the second Sponsor Couple Process in September 1983, and at present have seven engaged couples and one married couple participating in the process. The core group is already gearing up for the third Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled to begin this September 1984; there are already eight engaged couples signed up for the third process.

#### Purpose

The core group began to evaluate the parish's ministry to the engaged. The core group discovered that marriage preparation was more



than preparing couples for their wedding-- one moment in their lives. Rather, the marriage preparation for the engaged is only part of a much larger continuum of life, and support for the newly married seemed to be more significant than even the pre-marriage preparation, at least from some of the studies from the review of literature in the field of marriage preparation.

Time was given to research the marriage preparation ministry, and this was done both on the secular and religious levels. Through the research of professional journals, the talents of the local clergy and the comparison of sixteen Catholic programs of marriage preparation a base was established for the eventual creation of a Sponsor Couple Process for couples preparing for marriage.

#### The Problem

How does one person-- a parish priest, a pastor, an interested married couple-- minister to the couple thinking about marriage, especially Christian marriage? How does one reach out to those myriad of couples: the engaged, the handicapped, the disadvantaged, the college and university students, couples living with their parents, a couple where one or both are minors, teenage couples, military couples, rural couples, couples where one or both have been married before, couples where one or both are Catholic, couples where one or both are unchurched and/or non-practicing, couples who have been married "outside" the Catholic Church, a situation where the couples live apart before (or after) marriage, a case of immaturity and a case of pregnancy before marriage (or the situation where there is one parent and a child out of

wedlock)? Does one create a program for each individual case, or does one include all such couples under one "umbrella policy"?

However, the problem is not that simple. This study discovered early that there is a difference between a marriage preparation policy and a marriage preparation program. The policy establishes norms and goals, while the program is a means to arrive at these goals. Hence, this paper attempts to touch upon both the policies and programs in the area of marriage preparation, and then suggest a rather unique and creative marriage preparation process (program). The policies for that particular program will be the subject of a book to be published later this year, which will give a detailed description of both the policy of the parish and the content of the program.

There is a need for marriage preparation on the part of the couples preparing for marriage, and this need is there both before and after marriage. The goal of this study is to probe into possible ways of helping couples form marital relationships that are successful, healthy and happy, and Christ-based.

#### Limitations

The study has its peculiar limitations. The review of literature is national in scope, while the survey of the forty-two churches in the city of Cedar Falls is very limited and local. The survey does have the advantage that it is ecumenical in nature. Chapter Four isolates the religious programs for marriage preparation, and limits the domain to the Catholic faith. The sixteen programs are of different types: (a) those prepared by individuals for use in the diocese; (b) those

prepared by the diocese (or dioceses of the state) for use in the diocese (or all the dioceses in the state); (c) those prepared by individuals for local use; (d) those prepared by a national group. Chapter Five then describes the development of a unique marriage preparation process, but is not able to treat the subject in its entirety (this is material for a separate book that will be published later). In a sense, this paper was done as "homework" to the writing of such a marriage preparation process that would meet the needs of the couples discerning Christian marriage.

The study raises many questions. For example, what is a good marriage? What is a happy marriage? What is a healthy marriage? Or, what is a Christian marriage? What are the relative roles of marital satisfaction and stability in good marriages? We speak of a process of preparing for marriage-- a journey-- but what do we know about marriage as a process, a journey? We presuppose that the clergy (and the lay married people) are educated in preparing people for marriage. But is this true?

Also, this study reflects the needs for marriage preparation as seen from the eyes of the clergy, and to some degree, the perspectives of the sponsor couples and the engaged (the results of the "mid-way" evaluation of the pilot group). A future study could poll the needs of the engaged couples themselves and the needs as seen from married couples in the parish and the wider community. Marriage preparation is not something that remains static, for people are constantly changing, and the needs of people change, and if we claim to be serving the needs

of those preparing for marriage, we need to listen and respond to them.

The whole question of effectiveness of the Sponsor Couple Process needs to be dealt with at some time. The process needs the important step of evaluation (not only self-reports). The need of a scientific study of this process and a control group is essential to determine the effectiveness of the Sponsor Couple Process.

And then there is the question as to what type of people this process would reach out to. Are there certain people to whom this process restricts itself to? Or is it open to all? Can the Church "refuse" or "delay" a marriage? There needs to be a consistency and equality in the Church's treatment of its people.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Crisis in Marriage and the Family

Montigou once said, "The land of marriage has this peculiarity, that strangers are desirous of inhabiting it, whilst its natural inhabitants would willingly be banished from thence" (Olson, 1972, p. 383). This opening comment spurred Olson (1972) to go on and write about the evolutionary changes that have taken place in the institutions of marriage and the family. In the 1970's people often heard a statement that "The last fifty years have apparently changed the marriage relation from a permanent and lifelong state to a union existing for the pleasure of the parties. The change thus swiftly wrought is so revolutionary, involving the very foundations of human society, that we must believe it to be the result not of any temporary condition" (Reiss, 1971, p. 317). The only surprising thing about this statement was that it was made in 1887. Kathrin Perutz (1972) wrote a book entitled Marriage is Hell. And then there was this quote from a family counselor-- "marriage stinks"-- quoted by Martha Lear (1972) in the New York Times. O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) compiled the following figures which are helpful in characterizing the family background of so many young couples today:

Only 13 percent of the nation's families include a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and one or more children. Sixty percent of all women with school-age children are employed.

There has been a 700 percent increase in divorce since the turn of the century. Between 1970 and 1980, there was a 65 percent increase. A couple who marries today has a 50 percent chance of remaining together until old age.

Between 1970 and 1980, there was a 157 percent increase in unmarried persons living together and a 64 percent increase in persons living alone.

Twenty percent of U.S. children now live in a single-parent household, and nearly half will do so before they finish high school. Most of these households are female-headed, with little or no financial support from the fathers of the children; thus a majority are below the poverty line, leading to what some have called "the feminization of poverty".

Two million children qualify as battered. Twenty million live with an alcoholic parent. One million run away each year. One out of nine youths will be arrested before the age of 18. The suicide rate among 15 to 19 year olds has tripled in less than 20 years.

One in every six American babies is now born out of wedlock, 50 percent more than a decade ago, and most to mothers past their teens. (p. 40)

And if these figures were not enough to suggest that marriage and family were entering their final phase as human institutions, there appeared the study of Masnick and Bane (1980). They made some startling projections about what American households would look like before the end of the century:

1. While viewed as abnormal by many, the marital and familial patterns of the current generation, characterized by fewer and later marriages, more divorces, and lower and later birth rates, are, in fact, consistent with the country's trend in the earlier part of this century. It was, in fact, their parents' generation (who produced the post-War baby boom) which deviated from this trend. This generation is simply reverting to the pattern that earlier prevailed, and thus we can continue to expect fewer and later marriages, more divorces, and lower and later birth rates.
2. Between 1980 and 1990, households made up of married couples will increase only slightly in number, while other types of households will increase dramatically. No one arrangement will be typical, which will lead to demands for a wide range of different kinds of housing, consumer goods, and public and private services.
3. Fewer and fewer households will have children living in them. (In the metropolitan Washington, DC area, 40 percent of all households are currently childless). Almost two-thirds of all households in the U.S. will be childless by 1990.

4. Although more wives are working, their contribution to family income is presently small (about 25 percent of the total family income). A revolution in the impact of women's work on family income is on the horizon, as women increasingly work full time, continuously in lifelong careers, and with salaries more commensurate with men's. (O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman, 1983, pp. 40-41)

Olson gave two reasons for problems in this area of marriage and the family. He said that many individuals bring many myths and unrealistic expectations into marriage. To further acquaint the readers about the prevalence of myths he referred them to his Premarital Attitude Scale (PMAS) which had been developed and used to assess the attitudes of family specialists and college students on many of these myths and unrealistic expectations about marriage (Olson, 1967; Olson and Gravatt, 1968). Olson also said that marriage and family has suffered because of the lack of preparation that society provides for this very significant decision in life. He commented:

Whereas one expects that individuals will take years of schooling to adequately prepare for their occupation choice, it is assumed that individuals need no guidance in making what is probably the most significant decision in their life. For unlike a job, or even an occupation, which is relatively easy to change, it still is legally and emotionally much more difficult to change, or at least dissolve, a marital relationship. Individuals are given few useful guidelines to follow and then wonder why marriages are not as fulfilling as expected or desired. (Olson, 1972, p. 384)

Because of these problems within marriage and the family, some people have taken the position that these institutions are in crisis or that they are dying. But the family is not dying, nor is the importance of marriage declining. Mace (1975) pointed out that there are millions of very good marriages in the United States. Simply put-- good marriages are not news. He said this about marriage:

What is really happening is that marriage is changing. It is adapting itself, healthily, to the needs of our new society. Its traditional utilitarian functions are diminishing in importance, while its role in providing the intimacy, warmth, and emotional security we so sorely need in our impersonal world is rapidly increasing. We are switching from the hierarchial, institutional marriage pattern that has now become a creaking anachronism to the "companionship" marriage so clearly defined 30 years ago by sociologist Ernest Burgess (1945) as the coming pattern of the future. Right now we are in the awkward process of swapping horses in midstream, and a lot of people are falling in the river and getting wet. (Mace, 1975, p. 10)

Mace (1977) elaborated more on this problem. He said that people have accepted the findings of Burgess in theory, but they have done little to implement their implications in practice. He addressed the present crisis by attacking the complacency about people in general:

....I would contend that we simply do not have a coherent and relevant social policy directed toward enabling marriages to function in our contemporary culture. What we are doing is mere improvisation-- disorganized, piecemeal, and without appropriate motivation. The result is that we are witnessing the breakdown of marriage on a hitherto unprecedented scale; yet, with no clear policy and little motivation to develop one, we are allowing the situation to drift toward possible social chaos, and we are paying an increasingly heavy price for the results of our complacency. (Mace, 1977, p. 238)

Olson (1972) indicated that dramatic changes are needed in the education and emotional preparation provided couples contemplating marriage, and, like Mace, changes in the social climate that continues to pressure individuals into marriage so early, so unaware, and so unprepared.

O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) stressed the importance of the family. A 1980 Gallop Poll stated that the majority of Americans believe that their families are the most important part of their lives. More than ninety percent of Americans marry at some point in their lives. And-- perhaps surprisingly-- the divorce rate may give



witness to the rising expectations people hold for marriage and family life. The high remarried rate would validate such a position. Eighty percent of divorced persons marry again. (O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman, 1983, p. 41) And within the context of Christian faith, the importance of religion to marriage and family life could not be overemphasized. O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) were able to validate the previous point through the work of Andrew Greeley (1980). Greeley was able to draw a correlation between the couple's marital satisfaction and their sharing religious images and values.

Finally, O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) believed that one of the most effective ways of helping couples prepare for marriage was for persons responsible for marriage preparation programs to have a contemporary and well-formulated theological and secular understanding of the family. They also felt that it was helpful to consider the historical and contemporary context of marriage preparation. The couple contemplating marriage are already members of families. The couple's dream of marriage is strongly influenced by the experiences and understandings they absorbed from their individual homes and from those in the broader community. Having discussed the crisis situation briefly in marriage and the family, the next step will be a consideration of the historical and contemporary context of marriage preparation.

#### History of Marriage Preparation

Mace (1977, pp. 236-237) indicated that the serious scientific study

of marriage began with the publication of Edward Westermarck's History of Human Marriage in 1891. Westermarck, a Finn, was for thirty years concurrently a professor at the University of Helsinki and at the University of London, England. His three-volume work on marriage, massive by any standard, was completed by the time he was twenty-eight years old; interestingly, Westermarck never married. He defined marriage as a "relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it" (Mace, 1977, p. 236).

This broad definition covered a wide variety of relationships between men and women. By contrast, marriage within the Christian tradition was very narrowly defined. Volumes have been written to establish the close frontiers within which a marriage can validly be considered Christian; two good examples were Marriage in Church and State (1912), by the Anglican scholar T. A. Lacey, and Christian Marriage (1933), by the Catholic scholar James H. Joyce.

Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) wrote that premarital programs have been proliferating throughout the U.S. since the first premarital educational program was developed at the Merrill-Palmer Institute in 1932. Schumm and Denton (1979) also traced the historical development of premarital counseling and listed the programs of Foster (1935), Mudd (1940), and Levine and Brodsky (1949). Schumm and Denton (1979) indicated that these programs had seen a need for a preventive approach in the area of marriage preparation; they wrote that the goals of these

programs were to increase family stability, marital happiness and the quality of family relationships (a need which we still need to respond to). Schumm and Denton explained that this historical development of premarital counseling and programs has been documented by Mace (1948), Stone (1949), Mudd (1951, 1957), Meschan (1964), Rolfe (1977a) and Rutledge (1968).

If Westermarck was the first true family sociologist, there would be widespread agreement that one of his outstanding successors in this field was Ernest W. Burgess, whose extensive and careful investigations were fully reported in the volume he published with his colleague Harvey J. Locke in 1945 (Mace, 1977). Mace then cited the work of another behavior scientist, Nelson Foote. Foote and a colleague, Leonard Cottrell, published Identity and Interpersonal Competence (1955). Foote's position was that Burgess had rightly called for new measures to guide marriage through its transitional phase and that the central task must be the retraining of men and women for relationships of a new kind, for which they had hitherto received no effective preparation. This lack in our culture was later neatly described by psychiatrist Rudolph Dreikurs when he said: "There is no tradition that teaches us how to live with each other as equals, in mutual respect and trust" (Dreikurs, 1968, p. 103). Foote proposed that if marriages were to function effectively in this new era, then training in "interpersonal competence" should be made widely available to all who entered the marriage relationship. In their book Foote and Cottrell offered some proposals for doing this. To this Mace (1977) commented:

The logic of this is inescapable. What Burgess had found was that marriages could no longer be held together by external coercion. What will keep them functioning is internal cohesion. And this can be made possible by appropriate training. A good analogy exists in the field of aeronautics. When we made the transition from piston planes to jets, all airplane pilots who were going to fly the new, better planes had to be retrained for a different and more complex type of operation.

In the field of marriage, no serious attempt has been made to do this. The warnings of Burgess and Foote have been largely unheeded, and their implied predictions are now being eloquently fulfilled" (p. 239).

Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) stated that the development and implementation of marriage preparation programs has been advocated by numerous authors over the past twenty-five years (1955-1980). They mentioned a study by Burgess and Locke (1953) which proposed that the cause of marital failure could be dealt with best before marriage and in the early years of marriage. Baber (1958) believed that marriage would be immeasurably strengthened and the frequency of divorce correspondingly reduced if couples preparing for marriage would work out their philosophy of marriage before they married. Schumm and Denton (1979) mentioned that a team of scholars at the University of Minnesota chose to focus on the critical role from engagement to marriage, while Mace (1972) laid much stress on the importance of the first few months of marriage in the development of marriage preparation programs.

#### Marriage Preparation Programs

Indeed, there are many marriage preparation programs available in the United States. And these programs have been devised to meet the needs of a variety of populations. Below are listed thirteen different populations and examples of programs for each specific population.

### 1. Engaged Couples

In the specific population of "engaged couples" there was an article entitled "The Effects of Specific New Information on Engaged Couples Participating in Premarital Preparation Programs" (Rosenfield, 1981). Specific programs included Schlein (1971), Horejsi (1974), Boike (1977) and De Jesus (1981). Horejsi (1974) described a counseling program in which small groups (see section labelled "general public") of three engaged couples each were presented with ten case situations or vignettes as focal points for their discussion about interpersonal difficulties, mainly centered in their sexual relationship. This approach has been found very helpful in generating exchanges and questions among the engaged couples, which in itself opens up a new manner of communication. Horejsi saw this improved communication and the sexual information obtained in the small groups as beneficial in the marriage.

### 2. Handicapped Couples

There were two programs designated for "handicapped couples"-- Stallings (1968) and Walker (1977). Walker (1977) used case illustrations to show structured, supportive premarital counseling with mildly and borderline retarded couples. A ten-week program included evaluation with the Lock Marital Adjustment Test (Kuhn, 1973), a didactic approach, and role-playing. The couples were presented with information and assistance before problems arose, with a healthier self-concept one of the goals. After the program, periodic follow-up continued twice or more each month, helping couples to recall and use their training and deal with life decisions. In his evaluation and conclusion about this premarital counseling for the developmentally disabled Walker (1977) said:

Beyond the direct service aspect of this counseling experience, there are implications related to community education concerning marriage for the developmentally disabled. It is sometimes difficult to interpret to the community that retarded and developmentally disabled individuals have the same right to risks in marriage as do the rest of the population. There is a tendency in social workers to want to assure a greater success factor for our developmentally disabled clients before family, community, and professional "blessings" are given. On the other hand, because the developmentally disabled already have access to more structured or intensive counseling and supportive services, their chances for success in marriage may be greater than for other segments of the population. This hypothesis suggests an interesting area for research in preventive family counseling. (p. 479)

### 3. Disadvantaged Couples

Two programs were available for the needs of "disadvantaged couples". Nash (1970) and Shonick (1975) offered ideas for programs in this special area.

### 4. College and University Students

In the fourth population-- "college and university students"-- there were more programs available. In the study by Bukstel, Roeder, Kilmann, Laughlin and Sotile (1978) with unmarried students at the University of South Carolina the authors noted the implications of their findings for premarital counseling. The authors concluded that premarital counseling should address couple members' expectations of extramarital sexual involvement. They said that these expectations should be discussed within the context of potential marital difficulties resulting from the extramarital sexual behavior. The programs consisted of ones prepared by Meadows and Taplin (1970), Hinkle and Moore (1971), Jackson (1972), Van Zoost (1973), D'Augelli, Deyss, Guernsey, Hershenberg and Sbordfsky (1974), Knox and Knox (1974), Miller, Nunnally and Wackman (1976), and Ginsberg and Vogelsong (1977). Meadows and Taplin (1970)

described a premarital counseling developmental model and its application in a university counseling center. Six engaged student couples participated in a series (one to ten) of individual and joint counseling interviews. The results of the questionnaire were discussed, and the authors shared that three of the six couples were no longer engaged; two of the couples attributed their change in status, at least in part, to the premarital counseling experience. The authors recommended the premarital counseling triad as an appropriate and needed service in the college setting. In the study by Knox and Knox (1974) 100 undergraduate couples who defined themselves as "involved" in a serious dating relationship completed a project in which the partners shared opinions on economics, religion, children, sex, in-laws, alcohol and recreation, took a four-mile hike, developed a budget, selected an apartment and furniture, went to church and visited future in-laws. Over one-half of the students noted that the exchange in opinions was the most meaningful aspect of the project. Religion was selected as the least meaningful. The authors concluded:

The preparation for marriage course is among the most important offered for the college student. To the degree that a student can learn more about himself and his future mate before marriage, the probability of an enjoyable relationship after marriage may be increased. If preparation for marriage beyond the classroom reduces the frequency of negative surprises after marriage ("I didn't know about that!"), more intelligent mate selection will have been achieved" (Knox and Knox, 1974, p. 22).

#### 5. Couples Living With Parents

In the specific population of "couples living with parents" there were several programs: Shulman (1970), Morrison and Price (1974) and Rolfe (1977b). Rolfe (1977b) talked about the use of a premarital

contract in working with teenage couples and their parents. The contract was an aid in focusing on the practical aspects of marriage preparation, allowing a more direct subsequent focus on the feelings of the family. Rolfe indicated that the contract outline was designed specifically for couples who would be living with one or the other set of parents after the wedding. Many of the topic areas applied to couples who either had a child, or expected one to be born in the first year of the marriage. These topics included financial, schooling, care of the baby, medical coverage, the timing of the wedding, religion, household duties, the use of the bathroom, yard duties, the automobile, the rights of grandparents, changes in the contract and the signature on the contract. For the contract to be effective, the couple planning to be married, with both sets of their parents, would get together and sort through the plans on each of the topic areas. This exercise could take several hours. The author recommended that one person in the group volunteer to take precise notes of the discussion.

#### 6. One or Two Minors

In the sixth population of "one or two minors" there were three articles. Ehrentraut (1976) wrote his dissertation on "The Effects of Premarital Counseling of Juvenile Marriages on Marital Communication and Relationship Patterns". Shonick (1975) and Elkin (1977) offered suggestions of programs for minors in the area of premarital counseling.

#### 7. Teenage Couples

For the group of "teenage couples" there was an excellent overview of the role of the high school guidance counselor in family counseling in the January issue of the School Counselor edited by Dave Capuzzi (1981).



In the same year Shostak described the new laws and programs which were designed to strengthen family life as proposed and endorsed by the 1980 White House Conference on Families. The first reform that he described would require high school classes in marriage preparation skills. He wrote:

Proponents remain undaunted by these attacks, and rebut by insisting that increased and mandatory course work in marriage success skills is as basic and relevant as anything a 20th century school might offer. They point to new research that suggests that most marriages are sufficiently alike to be readily prepared for, as with a 1981 report (Sobel, 1981) on the presence of nine major marital interaction patterns among over 1,000 couples. As well, they are cheered by the likes of a December, 1980, Gallup Youth Survey that found 89 percent of a national sample of teenagers agreeing that schools should teach courses on marriage and family life. Comparably encouraging was a second Gallup Survey in 1980, this time of American families, that found 87 percent in favor of public schools offering courses on marriage and family life. (Shostak, 1981, p. 522)

In an earlier work Schlesinger (1978) discussed the implications of premarital and marital counseling for the high school counselor. He insisted that the school guidance counselor can help teenagers in the area of premarital counseling. And by understanding the general dynamics of marital counseling, school guidance counselors could help quite a few parents to move into counseling and to restore health to their family life. This understanding would benefit the students involved. There were specific programs designed for the teenagers: Rue (1972), Reiner and Edwards (1974), Rolfe (1976), and Martin, Gawinski, Medler and Eddy (1981). Rolfe (1976) described a premarital assessment method which utilized interviews with the teenage couple, both sets of parents and all six as a group. He discussed the use of tests (e.g., Lüscher Color Test (Lüscher and Scott, 1947-1969), Marital Roles Inventory (Hurvitz, 1961,1965) and Financial Priorities Inventory (Rolfe, 1974) ) and

methods for examining the couple's relationship. Rolfe indicated that one goal of this program is to give these six people a renewed awareness that they are all involved in the events which are unfolding. The door is open for the parents to work through some of their guilt and feelings of self-denigration, the young couple will have an opportunity to grow up, and in a subtle way this process functions to build the marriages of the two sets of parents. He called upon marriage counselors, the court and the clergy to work together in the process of getting teenagers off to the best possible start in their marriages. Martin, Gawinski, Medler and Eddy (1981) designed a group premarital counseling workshop. This group met once a week for five weeks; each session was two hours long. The group consisted of four teenage couples and two facilitators. The major goals of this program included the increase and development of the couple communication processes, the discussion and identification of conflict areas in relationships, the provision of techniques for enriching relationships and the opportunity for couples to express their feelings openly and honestly. The authors pointed to a need for such premarital counseling, and that the approach should be developmental, preventive and educational. They suggested that the following points needed further study:

1. The primary relationship role model for young persons is their parents. Many young couples expressed the need to discuss relationship development with married couples who are nearer their age level.
2. Communication problems were given as the major difficulty or obstacle in developing a more meaningful relationship.
3. Many young couples do not have a full conceptualization of the economic, social, psychological, and emotional needs in a marriage relationship. It appears that marriage and family

educational programs could be of major benefit to high school students if they are focused upon their generational needs.

4. Generally, role stereotypes were of particular concern to women as they explored the ramifications of career and family. Most women wanted a career that would be of equal value in a marital relationship as that of the male.
5. Difficulties relating to sexual intimacy were often influenced by peer pressure and the need for social identification. (Martin, Gawinski, Medler and Eddy, 1981, p. 226)

They concluded that high school counselors can have a significant influence on helping teenage couples cultivate clearer communication patterns, explore the meaning and concept of love, enhance the decision making processes and develop more meaningful relationships.

#### 8. Military Couples

For the specific group of "military couples" there was one program designed by Glendening and Wilson (1972). They used a group approach in their premarital counseling.

#### 9. Rural Couples

In the ninth group-- "rural couples"-- there were two suggested programs. They included the studies by Oates (1953) and by Fairchild (1959).

#### 10. Remarrying Couples

The group of "remarrying couples" had one program designed for their specific needs. This was a study done by Messinger (1976).

#### 11. The General Public

In the next specific population-- "the general public"-- there were many programs. Some authors restricted themselves to an overview in premarital counseling, while others restricted themselves to a particular counseling theory or approach. Some authors suggested

that the counseling sessions could be drawn from a particular inventory. There was also the popular response to the group counseling technique. Finally, there were several authors that suggested both premarital and post-wedding counseling.

### An Overview

There were the overview articles by Mace (1972), Holoubek and Holoubek (1973), Roberts and Hart (1975), Trainer (1979) and Shostak (1981). In addition to the reform mentioned earlier about high school marriage preparation classes, Shostak (1981) talked about a mandated marriage readiness test, family incorporation and support for prenatal screening. These four reforms have been proposed and endorsed by the 1980 White House Conference on Families. Although the marriage readiness test was more controversial than the high school marriage preparation classes, there appeared to be value in assessing couples' readiness for marriage, especially in keeping the marriage relationship alive and healthy.

### Various Theories and Approaches

The theories and approaches to premarital counseling for "the general public" were diverse. Holoubek, Holoubek, Bergeron, Bacarisse, Inaina, Sanders and Baker (1974) and Bernstein (1977) recommended an interdisciplinary approach. Bernstein (1977) proposed that the interdisciplinary team consist of a lawyer and a counselor. Together they could emphasize the ramifications of this new relationship, including the rights of children, insurance programs, the disposition of the family home, savings accounts, finances, binding business agreements and the articles possessed by each party when they enter

into marriage. Such an approach could relieve present and future anxieties and tensions. He wrote:

As it frequently noted, rarely are marriages wrecked on the big rock of adversity; it is on the smaller pebbles that they flounder. Family, friends, churches, marriage counselors and social groups encourage couples planning to marry to take a realistic and mature look at the marital relationship about to be formed, so as to eliminate the pebbles. Couples are advised prior to marriage that they should meet privately with a family counselor or attend a marriage workshop....Yet, few couples enter into realistic pre-marital legal counseling with their attorney, nor is this recommended by their family counselor. The need for pre-marital legal counseling becomes increasingly important as each individual's status becomes affected by the complexity of the law and the involvement of one's personal family situation and finances. Pre-marital legal counseling is essential to the young and middle aged people with grown children to protect, estates to be devised, and a future to be insured. (Berstein, 1977, pp. 415-416)

As Rolfe (1977b) had presented the idea of a premarital contract in working with teens and their parents, Martin and Medler (1980) had designed a contract for premarital counseling.

DeWitt (1982) wrote about a premarital program based on Adler's individual psychology. Ball and Henning (1981) maintained that Rational Emotive Therapy is ideally suited to locating and correcting irrational thoughts that precipitate personal and interpersonal conflict. These authors demonstrated the utility of Rational Emotive Therapy premarital counseling by giving examples of specific irrational beliefs that counselors can use to help couples develop and maintain intimacy with minimal conflict. The authors made it known that the search for blame in times of crisis differs markedly from the problem-solving method. And there were several who advocated the behavioral approach to premarital counseling: Bienvenu (1974), McRae (1976), Ridley, Avery, Harrell, Leslie and O'Connor (1979), Markman and Floyd (1980), Ridley,

Avery, Harrell, Leslie and Dent (1981), Zodrow (1982) and Schaden (1982). Markman and Floyd (1980) described a model of prevention research and intervention, presented a program designed to enhance the premarital relationship and discussed the short term effects of the program and several methodological and conceptual issues in evaluating prevention programs for couples. They stated that the behavioral perspective provides a useful conceptual framework and the technical tools for the understanding and prevention of marital distress. They said that the two major interventions used by behavioral marital therapists are communication skill training and problem resolution training, and the primary technique used to help couples negotiate solutions to these problems is known as contracting. The authors also indicated that there are two major approaches to intervention with couples who are not experiencing relationship distress: premarital enhancement programs and marital enhancement programs. Both of these approaches are similar to Behavioral Marital Therapy in their emphasis on improving communication and problem solving skills. The authors' program was a social skills training program. The program consisted of six group meetings, each meeting lasting three hours. The intervention strategies included homework, lecturettes and roleplays, videotape feedback and interactions with the consultants. The program included the following content:

1. Cognitive Restructuring

- Learning a language system
- Learning the behavioral model
- Examining expectations
- The concept of "engaging the skills"
- Information about couples planning marriage
- Information about marital discord
- Information about sexual functioning and dysfunctioning

## 2. Skill Acquisition

Listening skills

Speaker skills

Behavior monitoring skills

Learning which behaviors are pleasing/displeasing to their partner

Making specific requests for behavioral change

Contracting skills

Pleasuring skills (Markman and Floyd, 1980, pp. 38-41)

Markman and Floyd (1980) concluded their presentation with a thought-provoking question:

From the behavioral perspective, the possibilities of preventing marital distress or enhancing premarital relationships rest on continued efforts to document the parameters of the relationship between premarital communication deficits and future dissatisfaction and distress, and on the results of studies evaluating the short- and long-term effect of premarital intervention programs. At the present point in time we have demonstrated our ability to change couples behaviors and to develop a technology to assess important behavioral dimensions of couples' relationships. We thus have the armamenture to devote serious efforts to developing and evaluating premarital intervention programs, and as noted, such programs of research are underway. Therefore, we can conclude that the possibility for preventing marital distress exists, yet it remains for future research to answer the question: Can we develop programs which successfully inoculate premarital couples against future distress? (p. 46)

Gurman and Kniskern (1977), Wood (1979), Avery, Ridley, Leslie and Milholland (1980), Bjorklund (1980) and Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan and Avery (1982) elaborated on themes of enhancement and enrichment. Gurman and Kniskern (1977) reviewed the existing empirical literature on the outcomes of marital and premarital enrichment programs. Wood (1979) presented a rationale and format for a program of premarital counseling of individual couples, using an initial interview and four counseling sessions. By means of an extensive series of questions the character of the couple's relationship is developed in the areas of family background, symbols of power and value (money, education, career), sexuality,

religion and personal identity. Provision is also made for meeting with each person separately. Avery, Ridley, Leslie and Milholland (1980) assessed the short- and long-term effectiveness of relationship enhancement on the self-disclosure and empathy skills of premarital dating couples. Their results indicated that the relationship enhancement program, relative to the lecture/discussion group, showed improved ability to communicate thoughts and feelings accurately and clearly and to respond with understanding and acceptance. Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan and Avery (1982) assessed the effects of a relationship enhancement program on the relationship adjustment, trust and intimacy, empathy, warmth and genuineness and communication of premarital couples. Viewed in the context of process theories of premarital interpersonal relationship development, these authors' findings suggested that self-disclosure and empathy training would have positive implications for maintaining a satisfying marriage.

Another popular approach to premarital counseling for "the general public" was the family systems approach. This was brought forth by Simova (1977), Kovacik and Vankova (1978) and Bagarozzi and Bagarozzi (1982). Bagarozzi and Bagarozzi (1982) described an experimental program that was conceptually grounded in the theories of family process and family intervention. The concept of family developmental tasks was used, and each content area contained tasks that had to be resolved by the couple: marital roles, finances, sex, in-laws, friends, recreation, religion and children. By discussing these issues the couples learned how to make structural changes, for they now had the skills necessary to solve problems and resolve differences in an equitable manner. The



authors saw this model as the first attempt to tie premarital intervention to recognized theories of family development and family intervention.

### The Use of Inventories

Some of the authors surveyed recommended the use of inventories for premarital counseling of the "general public". Phillips (1973) discussed some useful tests for marriage counseling. Kilgo (1969) talked about the use of the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (Edwards, 1953-1959) in premarital counseling, and Bienvenu (1975) mentioned the use of the Premarital Communication Inventory in premarital counseling, marriage preparation workshops and for teaching marriage education courses. Fournier, Springer and Olson (1977) stated that information obtained from the Inventory of Pre-Marital Conflict could be used to focus a couple's discussion, to aid in the formulation of treatment objectives in premarital counseling and to evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling or educational programs.

### Group Counseling Techniques

Numerous authors commented on the group counseling technique in premarital counseling: Levine and Brodsky (1949), Freemon (1965), Rutledge (1966), Peterson (1968), Meadows and Taplin (1970), Gangsei (1971), Guldner (1971), Hinkle and Moore (1971), Maxwell (1971), Collins (1972), Glendening and Wilson (1972), Rolfe (1973), Van Zoost (1973), Horejsi (1974), Gleason and Prescott (1977), Rolfe (1977a), Ross (1978), Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) and Martin, Gawinski and Medler (1982). Although Meadows and Taplin (1970), Hinkle and Moore (1971), Glendening and Wilson (1972), Rolfe (1973), Van Zoost (1973) and

Horejsi were mentioned earlier with other specific groups, these various programs did employ the group counseling technique. Gleason and Prescott (1977) discussed the need for premarital preparation, and said that group counseling was supported as the technique best suited to meet this need of couples. They cited the unquestioned membership of each group participant, the free interaction among group members, self-disclosure, the non-judgmental acceptance of others, a deep trust and the opportunity for feedback and the expression of feelings as the basic relationship necessary for effective group interaction. The authors wrote: "The chief rationale for group pre-marital counseling...lies in the belief that individuals are products of social interaction and relearning through the same media is most potent" (Gleason and Prescott, 1977, p. 278). The authors listed the benefits and limitations of the group counseling technique:

#### 1. Benefits

- Saves time for the counselor

- Reduces the need for denial with the concurrence of other couples

- Allows for a healthy competition to resolve conflicts

- Lets couples drop their romantic view of marriage sooner

- Speeds the learning of such skills as empathy and expression of feeling

- Is preferred by many young people

- Sounds less threatening

- Can help the couple's need for legitimization of involvement

- Is especially suited to instructional counseling because the interpersonal dynamics peculiar to group involvement are conducive to the thinking, feeling and behaviors valued in premarital experiences

- Offers couples an opportunity to experiment with new behaviors and alternative methods of handling difficult problems

- Gives participants an opportunity to become more aware of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors in themselves and in their partners

Allows each group member to not only present his/her problems, thoughts and self-image, but also to respond to the feedback and needs of others in the group (the group also encourages growth of human relationships on many levels!)

Clarifies and examines

Provides an atmosphere of acceptance, trust, openness and support

Can serve as a springboard for more in-depth counseling in private sessions, after the initial fear of counseling is overcome

## 2. Limitations

When one couple dominates the time with their needs/interests  
When the discussion of one topic generates interest in a different but related topic

When one couple identifies too closely with another couple in the group

The problem of restricted self-disclosure in the group setting

Gleason and Prescott (1977) indicated that the benefits appeared to far overpower the limitations with the use of the group technique for premarital counseling. The authors then discussed the two formats of pre-marital groups, content and process. The content interactions dealt with the subject matter of the groups' experiences, whereas the process dealt with the dynamics and meanings of what occurred among the group members during the meetings. They said that both of these aspects of human interaction were important for pre-marital group sessions. Finally, the authors contrasted the content and process groups, and discussed the value of each. Martin, Gawinski and Medler (1982) described a pre-marital group counseling program which involved thirty-five committed couples. They suggested that counselors consider group pre-marital counseling as a valuable process for their clients. Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) had constructed a marriage preparation program which used a small discussion-group format.

### Counseling Before and After Marriage

Finally, there were those authors-- Guldner (1971, 1977), Beeson (1978) and Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980)-- who recommended both pre- and post-marriage counseling. In his earlier article Guldner (1971) suggested that a minister (or counselor) might well utilize his/her time and efforts more constructively if the counselor would limit the premarital counseling to one session in which he/she would contract with the couple for post-marital counseling. Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) proposed a marriage preparation program that included both pre- and post-wedding sessions. Beeson (1978) described the post-wedding counseling program that he put together:

During the past three years I have constructed a Post-Wedding Counseling program of my own which I consider very effective in preparing newly married couples to cope with the personal and relationship adjustments of marriage. Post-Wedding counseling focuses on relational skills training with major counseling emphasis occurring after the wedding rather than before it. Participation is contracted with the couple prior to the marriage. Post-Wedding counseling content is experiential, heavily utilizing role-play and problem-solving exercises. I have devised several ways to determine marital concerns of the couple and I follow their counseling agenda rather than my own. The primary intent of the Post-Wedding program is to make counseling more productive by placing it in the context of the reality-based adjustment process that occurs as newly married couples begin to form their own unique patterns of interaction. (pp. 105-106)

In his article "Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment" Guldner (1977) made the point that premarital counseling and marriage enrichment are to be seen as two areas of a life continuum prevention program.

Guldner (1977) described this life-continuum:

To discuss preparation for marriage or marriage enrichment without seeing them as phases within a total preparation for living program is to have too narrow a vision. It is my belief that one of the major myths of our time is that a person somehow automatically or instinctively knows how to live his/her life, including how to deal

with the complexity of human relationships, without any clearly defined life skill preparation. We tend to believe that because people have been growing up, marrying, and having families since human kind has been around, we all know how to do it. Or we believe that because most of us have been reared in families, we will know all the skills necessary for establishing our own relationship and rearing our own families.

There are probably few other areas of living that have so little specific focus on the preparatory aspects. A child spends years learning to master the information of the world so that he/she is intelligent and knowledgeable. We aid individuals in the development of specific vocations whether these be skill jobs or professional ones. We teach people to cook, sew, drive, dance, and engage in sports. Yet, when it comes to interpersonal relationships, such as marriage and family living, it is considered by many an invasion of privacy, brainwashing, experimentation, conditioning, way-out, and undoubtedly harmful to try to provide learning contexts through which people can gain some understanding of the meanings, values, and skills necessary not only for entering into a close interpersonal relationship such as marriage but also for maintaining that relationship over time.

To enable individuals to "grow into the full stature of personhood" requires some understanding of the developmental life cycle, especially the transitional points in living that each person experiences. Prevention programs that are adequate, and not established to be mere fingerholds in the bursting dike, need to be developmental in focus and to teach the meaning of turning points in the cycle of life. (pp. 248-249)

Thus, premarital counseling is seen as the first step in the preparation for marriage, and this is followed six months to a year after marriage by a neomarital counseling experience. Guldner (1977) then elaborated on the content and process for this counseling experience.

#### 12. Members of Particular Religious Denominations

The twelfth population-- "members of particular religious denominations"-- also had a fair amount of premarital counseling programs. In an article entitled "Some Guides for Sex Education and Marriage Preparation" the Christian Family Life Department and the National Marriage Guidance Council of the United Church of Canada (1968) presented reading materials on marriage preparation from a Christian

point of view. The following authors presented programs for this particular group of people: Apple (1970), Guldner (1971), Corr (1975), Oates and Rowatt (1975), Rolfe (1975), Biegert (1976), Boike (1977), Guldner (1977), Mace (1977), Microys and Bader (1977), Wright (1977), Beeson (1978), Cheatle (1979), Schumm and Denton (1979), Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980), Sandin (1981) and Call (1982).

### 13. Couples Getting Married in the Catholic Church

The thirteenth population group consisted of programs available in the Catholic Church. Some had been prepared by individuals, while others had been written by the particular diocese; still others were carried locally within the diocese. Examples of programs written by individuals were Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b), Aitchison and Aitchison (1979), Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980), Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982), Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b), Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) and Friedman (1982).

There were examples of programs and/or common policies provided by six Catholic dioceses. The dioceses and their respective materials are listed below:

1. The Diocese of Kalamazoo
  - a. "Marriage Discovery" (Diocese of Kalamazoo, Marriage and Family Ministry, no date)
  - b. Rev. William A. Crenner (personal communication, June 23, 1983)
2. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph
  - a. Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri (Missouri Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Missouri, no date)
  - b. Emory Corrigan (personal communication, May 19, 1983)
  - c. Markey and Meis (1982)

3. The Diocese of Lansing
  - a. To Love and to Honor: A Pre-Marriage Ministry Resource Manual (Diocese of Lansing, Liturgical Commission, 1983)
4. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee
  - a. "Catholic Policy for Marriage Preparation Working Well" (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date)
  - b. "Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation" (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date)
  - c. "Enrichment Programs for the Engaged" (Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Catholic Family Ministry, 1983)
  - d. "God's Plan for Marriage: Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation from the Catholic Bishops State of Wisconsin" (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date)
  - e. Prasad and Weber (1982)
  - f. Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date)
  - g. Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland (letter to pastoral ministers in marriage preparation, March 1, 1983)
  - h. "Summary of Findings from the Survey of Clergy and Couples on the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation and Recommendations of the Wisconsin Diocesan Family Life Directors" (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date)
  - i. Trokan (1982)
  - j. Trokan (1981)
5. The Diocese of Providence
  - a. Protano (no date)
6. The Diocese of Toledo
  - a. "Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook" (Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date)
  - b. "Engaged Couple Conference" (Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date)
  - c. "Preparation for Marriage" (Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date)
  - d. Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1977-1982 (Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, 1983)

There were two programs with "local" color. They were:

1. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota
  - a. John G. Quesnell (personal communication, June 29, 1983)
  - b. Quesnell (1976)
  - c. Quesnell and Kolar (1982)
  
2. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota
  - a. Mark Daniewicz (personal communication, July 6, 1983)
  - b. "Preparing for Marriage" (University of Minnesota, the Catholic Newman Center, no date)

Finally, there was the Engaged Encounter Manual (1976) prepared by the National Marriage Encounter. A comparison of these sixteen programs will be the subject matter of Chapter Four.

#### Criticisms About Premarital Counseling

Although many of the authors in this review of literature appraised the value of premarital counseling, there were five articles that stood out: "Education and Preparation for Marriage: New Approaches" by David Mace (1975), "How Effective Are Our Marriage Ministries?: A Critical Survey" by Charles Stewart (1977), "Trends in Premarital Counseling" by Schumm and Denton (1979), "Premarital Counseling: Appraisal and Status" by Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) and Preparation for Marriage: A Study of Marriage Preparation in American Catholic Dioceses by O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983).

Fourteen years ago Dr. Henry Bowman, a distinguished marriage educator, made this comment about marriage and family life education:

Much good work is being done. But it is spotty; here and there a good course or a good program. It is like an uncompleted jigsaw puzzle with little islands of parts assembled here and there but with the completed picture still to be filled in...Marriage and family life education courses are a reality; but education for marriage and family living is still a dream. (Bowman, 1970, pp. 122-123)



Mace (1975) went on to say that premarital counseling programs fell short in the fact that they were content-oriented; they simply transmitted knowledge. The problem was how to put this knowledge to work. All this knowledge possessed was like gasoline in the tank of a car that was unable for some reason to find its way into the motor. Dr. Aaron Rutledge (1966) expressed this overkill on knowledge:

Every therapist knows how difficult it is to "tell" people the solution to problems or secrets of growth. It doesn't permeate their personalities, doesn't become integrated; it is only superimposed on old conditioning....Facts are only the beginning point of learning. The failure or success of a marriage seems to be more dependent upon attitudes, feelings, and habituated behavior patterns than upon the knowledge of facts. Various specialists have estimated that 75 to 90 percent of the factors involved in the meaningfulness of marriage are due to these less conscious, learned processes of relating and responding in close personal relationships. (pp. 7, 19)

Mace (1977) listed three insufficient remedies in the area of marriage preparation: marriage counseling, education for marriage and premarital counseling. What was inadequate about marriage counseling was that it attacked the problem at the least strategic point of impact. The best available treatment plan would be to help the couple out of this marriage in the hope that they might do better the next time around. Mace suggested that perhaps the "blame" lied within our cultural attitudes. Mace suggested that education for marriage at both the high school and college levels has been ineffective because providing information was not of itself a significant means of bringing about behavioral or relational change. Changing and adapting our behavior requires two further processes: insight and action! Mace also labelled premarital counseling "insufficient" because of its past track record; it has been consistent in giving out merely information.

Schumm and Denton (1979) reviewed the old and new approaches to premarital counseling and came up with four: generalized education preparation, therapeutic counseling, instructional counseling and the new enrichment approach. Although most of these programs focused on the process component of human interaction rather than the content aspect, the authors still criticized the programs because they did not give sufficient weight to the components of commitment and conflict resolution. In fact, as the authors surveyed the programs, they noticed a surprising inadequacy in all the surveys (but one)---the failure to investigate the needs of the premarital couples, as perceived by the couples themselves. Schumm and Denton (1979) also criticized the premarital programs for not incorporating the routine use of post-wedding sessions into the overall sequence of premarital counseling. Premarital programs may be less effective than post-wedding intervention. The old question still remains: "When does the most teachable moment occur in marriage preparation?" They stated that the research regarding effectiveness of premarital counseling and post-wedding counseling is still sparse. They also cited two current problems in the area of marriage preparation: (1) the lack of training for premarital counselors and (2) the lack of program evaluations. Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) presented three common methodological inadequacies which typified the non-experimental evaluations of premarital counseling programs:

1. The use of nonstandardized dependent measures;
2. The acceptance of participants' self-reports, paper and pencil tests and questionnaires as valid indicators of behavioral changes;

3. The inappropriate use of standardized measures. (p. 25)

In the conclusion of their paper Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) wrote:

Although premarital counseling programs are on the rise in the United States, no empirical data exist to support the notion that these programs reduce the incidence of divorce or separation for those couples who participate, because the follow-up evaluations which have been conducted thus far have not allowed sufficient time to elapse after treatment to obtain a valid measure of their effectiveness. Similarly, no data exist which indicate that couples who participate in premarital counseling programs are more satisfied or successful in their marriages than those who do not. Finally, we do not know whether premarital counseling practices serve any prophylactic functions; for example, do they prevent bad marriages from taking place? (p, 27)

Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) also made the same point. They discovered a lack of well designed research into the effectiveness of marriage preparation programs; there was little use of objective measures and control groups. In their study they reported that most marriage preparation programs had been sponsored by Church groups in Canada. They came up with six criticisms of the existing marriage preparation programs in Canada:

1. Not geared to the needs of the couples;
2. Inadequate in preparing couples for the realities of marriage;
3. Lack of coordination and creativity in the area of marriage preparation;
4. The information-giving focus;
5. Minimal use of audio-visual materials;
6. Discontinuity of leadership (Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway, 1980, pp. 171-172).

Stewart (1977) gave five reasons for the rationale behind his study on the effectiveness of our marriage ministries. First, he believed that marriage ministries were carried out best pastorally. The liturgical

function was not in itself the adequate preparation in the area of marriage ministry. In fact, the Church's message about marriage can get lost in the midst of the throwing of the bride's bouquet and the champagne toasts. Stewart also cited that by and large the training of education for marriage and family living at the high school and college levels would be secular unless somehow the theological meaning of marriage was imparted within the pastoral context. He stated that the pastoral care of the couple (before, during and after) needed to be added to the liturgical and educational ministries, and counseling skills brought this added dimension to the pastoral role. In particular, these counseling skills enabled the minister to offer the couple not simply a blessing but also a deeper understanding of their intimate relationship. Second, he pointed out that many ministers in the past several decades have found out that their seminary training did not equip them to minister in this important and needed area of the Church. Third, Stewart said that marriage as an institution has changed, especially within the last twenty-five years, and many Churches have not taken this into account in their marriage ministries. Fourth, he mentioned that ministers were still the first counselors whom most married persons saw at a time of crisis. Fifth, he wrote that the average parish minister was not comfortable in his role as a marriage counselor. Because he was not adequately trained, he makes mistakes in both premarital counseling and post-marital counseling. He proposed the question: "Is the average minister in the parish doing a very good and effective job as a marriage counselor?"

### Suggestions for Pre- and Post-Marital Counseling Programs

Schumm and Denton (1979) observed several trends that emerged from their review of literature. They noticed that premarital counseling was being taken more seriously, at least in terms of religious organizations requiring more counseling sessions. The enrichment model was being applied to the premarital situation more frequently with the secular organizations adopting the model more rapidly than the religious groups. And post-wedding counseling was becoming a larger part of the overall premarital counseling program with some counselors predicting that it would eclipse the pre-wedding counseling in both duration and importance. Also, systematic evaluation of premarital counseling programs was becoming more normative, although Church counselors were doing little more than obtaining self-reports from their couples!

Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) continued to stress that a concerted effort should be undertaken by those individuals who conduct premarital counseling programs to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. In regards to program analysis they cited the following seven categories: the investigator and program orientation, the family development or family process theory, the goals of the program, the procedures employed to attain these goals, the number of issues or topics dealt with, the specific skills taught to the couples and the program's duration. The authors referred to a number of developmental tasks outlined by Duvall (1971) which newly married couples must resolve in order to build a solid foundation for the future development of their relationship: (a) preparing for the physical maintenance of the couple, (b) securing,

allocating and planning the use of financial resources, (c) devising patterns of authority and control, (d) arranging for the assignment of familial roles and tasks, (e) developing a mutually satisfying sexual relationship, (f) establishing a system of intellectual and emotional communication, (g) establishing a workable relationship with relatives and friends, (h) planning for a family, if desired, and (i) evolving patterns of decision-making, problem-solving and conflict-negotiation. In regards to methodological analysis Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) cited nine categories: the study, the therapist's or leader's training, the years of experience, the participants, the assignment procedures used and the number of participants, the use of a control group, the dependent measures used, the results and the follow-up. In their closer look at premarital counseling the authors centered in on two main issues-- the relevance of program goals and the evaluation of program effectiveness.

Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) pointed to the potential value of well-designed marriage preparation programs and the importance of further innovation, effort and research in the area. In their study they offered what they considered an innovative marriage preparation program. Combining the themes of communication patterns and conflict resolution and attending to the specific sources of conflict in marriage, the authors designed an eight-session preparation program: (1) communication in marriage, (2) family influences, (3) finances, (4) sexuality, (5) the law and the ceremony, (6) conflict in marriage, (7) changing roles in marriage, (8) building a better relationship. In addition to the new way for the content listed above, they also made use

of several precious recommendations concerning the format of marriage preparation programs. In contrast to the lecture-oriented format, they used a group-discussion format. No more than six couples were included in each group. This way was more educational and resulted in more effective communication training. Each group of couples was lead by two leaders throughout the eight sessions, thus giving continuity to the program. There was a further innovation by dividing the program into pre- and post-wedding sessions. The first five were held three months before the marriage and the final three about six months after the marriage. Their study had shown the positive effect that marriage preparation programs could have on a couple's ability to confront marital conflict, to resolve their conflicts constructively and to seek appropriate help when necessary.

Mace (1975) stated that there has been a massive and heroic effort in the area of marriage counseling to make life more meaningful for many. But by itself this added up to an expenditure of time and effort that brought a low rate of dividends. Something more effective had to be done to provide a preventive service for married couples. Mace (1975) commented:

I am not suggesting that we callously dump the grievously sick marriages but that we extricate ourselves from the self-defeating sequence of events by beginning to build, alongside our rescue operation, a service of preparation, guidance, and supervised growth for as many enlightened couples as will make use of it.

By this means, over a period of years, we may reasonably hope that our marriage preparation programs will find increasing acceptance as they become increasingly effective. The present waste of human potential that is taking place is miserable, frustrating, and disappointing marriages is for the most part quite unnecessary. It will take a major effort to stop the rot; but the effort is not beyond our powers. The sooner we get going, the better for our future. (p. 16)

Mace quoted Rutledge's book Pre-Marital Counseling (1966). Rutledge emphasized that it was the counselor's task to help the couple preparing for marriage to examine their readiness for marriage, with emphasis in the following three areas: (a) the personality development and attitudes of each partner, (b) the perception each had of himself/herself, of the other partner, and of the marital roles of each, and (c) the past experiences, in terms of success or failure, that they had had in close interpersonal relationships. Mace stated that for marriage preparation programs to be effective they had to move decisively from the impartation of knowledge to the investigation of personal and interpersonal dynamics, and not only to investigation but also to the facilitation of the needed behavioral change over a period of time. He listed the five settings for marriage preparation in their order of increasing effectiveness: (1) the provision of reading material to the couple, (2) a lecture to the class or group, (3) the instructional interview with a couple, (4) the investigative interview with a couple and (5) the supervised group interaction of several couples (with special stress on numbers four and five). In the case of effective procedures Mace listed six: (1) the scheduling of separate interviews with the man and the woman, (2) a follow-up interview with the couple together, (3) the discussion of strengths and weaknesses with as many sessions as needed, both before and after marriage, (4) follow-up interviews at three-months and nine-months after the couple's wedding, (5) group interaction (for best results Mace suggested combining #1-4 with #5) and (6) to team up three ACME (Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment) couples whose marriages are growing healthy with three engaged couples and let them



have a series of evenings for mutual exchange. To this sixth procedure Mace (1975) commented:

The result is that the engaged couples have an inside view of marriages that are really functioning and experienced couples with whom to share their own hopes and anxieties. The evidence suggests that a very important "modeling" process goes on, which is possibly more helpful to couples approaching marriage than any other procedures so far adopted. (p. 15)

Stewart (1977) had concluded that the average parish minister was not doing a very effective job as a marriage counselor, and that the parish minister did more premarital counseling than marriage counseling (even less post-marital counseling). In his survey Stewart asked the ministers to respond to the following questions:

1. How much counseling with couples are you doing?
2. What kinds of problems are you handling in this counseling?
3. How well are you accomplishing what you undertake in counseling?
4. Were you trained adequately in seminary for the marriage counseling which comes to you?
5. If not, are you continuing your education in marriage counseling and by what means?
6. How would you like to prepare to become a more effective marriage counselor? (Stewart, 1977, p. 264)

Stewart indicated that most ministers rely on marriage counseling workshops, summer courses and seminars. He felt that the best way to reach more ministers would be through group consultation or group supervision. Through this approach a trained marriage counselor would meet biweekly or monthly with groups of six to twelve ministers for ongoing consultation about cases and/or supervision about interviews. On the prevention front, he felt that more ministers and their spouses

needed to go through a marriage enrichment experience themselves, and those who had the competency and experience could become trained as marriage enrichers. But he also stated that marriage counseling was too small an effort for the Church's marriage ministry. He cited family clustering that could be an ongoing source of strength and support for married couples at various critical stages of living. As Stewart had opened his study with questions for the ministers on the survey, he closed his article with questions for the readers. He wondered if the Church should get out of the "marriage business", especially if the minister should give up the "justice of the peace" role. He wrote:

In the early church, there were two marriage ceremonies-- one civil and one religious. If we pastors were to provide a religious service to those who were committed to Jesus Christ and His church and let the non-churched go to city hall, would we be making a more honest and reliable witness? And would we then become more effective in our marriage ministry? It's worth contemplating in this era of quickie marriage and quicker divorce. (Stewart, 1977, pp. 270-271)

Olson (1972) suggested redefining a "successful" marriage. The criteria of marriage longevity and how well marriage fulfills the traditional roles described by society are not necessarily associated with a successful marriage. In recent years individuals have been seeking a relationship that would provide growth for them as individuals and as a couple. Ideally, the "successful" marriage is seen as a relationship context in which growth and development of both partners is facilitated to a greater extent than it could be for either of these individuals outside the relationship. Ironically, most couples have been unable to achieve this idealized type of relationship. One of the main reasons is that society has not adequately prepared individuals to

relate in a meaningful way that would facilitate mutual growth within a relationship. It would therefore appear that a "successful" marriage continues to be a difficult and elusive objective to achieve. Olson said that our society needed a new lexicon about marriage-- a need for concern with commitment to a relationship rather than primary attention being given simply whether the couple remains married, i.e., permanence, a need for a typology of relationships rather than simply classifying a couple as happy and a need to know more about the actual interpersonal dynamics in marriage. The theory of family systems could be very helpful! What is meant by the concepts of marriage and family must also be clearly defined. Olson suggested the following proposals as guidelines and recommendations that might help make marriage a more meaningful and vital relationship:

1. Individuals should not be encouraged to marry at an early age but should wait until they have matured emotionally and have established themselves in their chosen profession.
2. All individuals should not be encouraged or pressured into marriage.
3. Individuals and couples should be encouraged to experiment with a variety of life styles in order to choose the style which is most appropriate to them.
4. Couples should be encouraged to openly and honestly relate rather than play the traditional dating-mating game.
5. Couples should not get married until they have established a meaningful relationship and resolved their major difficulties; for marriage will only create, rather than eliminate, problems.
6. The decision of parenthood should be a joint-decision which should follow, rather than precede (as it does in about one-third of the cases), marriage.
7. Couples should not have children until they have established a strong and viable marriage relationship.

8. Couples should be creative and flexible in how they work out their changing roles and mutual responsibilities, not only during their initial phases of marriage, but throughout their marriage relationship (Olson, 1972, pp. 391-392).

Olson also listed a few specific ways in which legal and legislative reform would facilitate these opportunities:

1. Marriage laws should be made more stringent in order to encourage individuals to take this major decision more seriously. Presently it is easier in most states to obtain a marriage license than a license to drive a car.
2. No fault divorce laws should be developed while still providing for adequate support for children. California and Florida have already taken constructive steps in this direction.
3. Premarital, marital, and divorce counseling should be offered to all individuals regardless of their ability to pay.
4. Tax laws should be changed so as not to unduly discriminate against any particular lifestyle.
5. Sex laws which prohibit any form of sexual behavior between consenting individuals should be changed to allow for individual freedom and development (Olson, 1972, p. 392).

Even more than the "stock market" Olson saw the marriage institution as an emotional thermometer of our contemporary society and also as an indicator of future trends. Olson quoted Otto (1970) at this point: "What will destroy us is not change, but our inability to change-- both as individuals and as a social system. It is only by welcoming innovation, experiment, and change that a society based on man's capacity to love man can come into being" (Otto, 1970, p. 9). Olson said that one must not be afraid to challenge ideas and traditions, no matter how "sacred". The concern lies in facilitating the growth and development of individuals in and out of marriage.

Cavanaugh (1983) took off on the idea of a "happy" marriage and

listed six skills that a couple must possess if their marriage relationship is to survive and grow: (1) developing an authentic sense of self-esteem, (2) building a clear, strong, flexible, sense of self, (3) fostering a healthy psychosexual development, (4) attaining psychological autonomy, (5) improving one's ability to communicate effectively and (6) achieving psychological maturity. This marriage preparation begins at birth-- not with a course on marriage, a pre-cana conference, or a heart-to-heart talk before the wedding. Cavanaugh (1983) said:

Unfortunately, we typically begin to prepare people for marriage after they became engaged. The problem with this is that people who are in the throes of romantic love often are not expert eyewitnesses to the reality at work within themselves, their partner or their relationship.

The time to begin learning the skills necessary for marriage is at birth. While it is true in theory that people can develop these skills after they are married, in practice the chances are easily as good that this won't occur. A person who lacks one or two of the above-mentioned skills to a rather insignificant degree could reasonably expect to learn them during the marriage. However, if a person is lacking one skill to a significant degree, the chances of eventually acquiring it in marriage are not particularly good. If more than one of these skills is absent to a significant degree, the prospect for a reasonably healthy marriage is quite poor. It is unrealistic to view marriage as a substitute for 20 years of learning psychotherapy.

Finally, it is important to realize that the skills discussed above are not ideals, but basic requirements for a reasonably satisfying marriage. One need not be a paragon of psychological health in order to marry, any more than one needs to be a medical expert to become a physician. However, in both cases, a very sound foundation is necessary if the venture is to be satisfying for all concerned. (p. 4)

Curran (1983b) elaborated on the theme of a "healthy" marriage in her book Traits of a Healthy Family. She offered the following fifteen traits commonly perceived in the healthy family by those people who worked with families. (The trait listed first was selected the most often by respondents, the trait listed second received the next most

votes, and so on.) The healthy family: (1) communicates and listens, (2) affirms and supports one another, (3) teaches respect for others, (4) develops a sense of trust, (5) has a sense of play and humor, (6) exhibits a sense of shared responsibility, (7) teaches a sense of right and wrong, (8) has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound, (9) has a balance of interaction among members, (10) has a shared religious core, (11) respects the privacy of one another, (12) values service to others, (13) fosters family table time and conversation, (14) shares leisure time and (15) admits to and seeks help with problems. In another article Curran (1983a) described the seven stages of family growth. She discussed the courtship stage (the stage the Church has most emphasized in couple spirituality), the birth of the first child (here life changes profoundly for the young couple), stage three when the last child enters school (this can be a period of closeness or separation in the family), the stage of adolescence ("the time of life we love to hate"), the stage of disengagement (when the young people begin to leave home), the sixth stage of the empty nest (some dread this stage while others welcome it ) and the final stage of grandparentage (the joys and rewards of fulfillment). In this sense, too, premarital counseling and post-marital counseling can be seen as on a life-continuum, something we discussed earlier in this chapter.

Mace (1977) requested a social policy for the institution of marriage. When we pose the question-- "Who in this country is commissioned to watch over the welfare of our marriages?"-- we are often met with a strange silence. Of course, there are people who have a commercial interest in weddings, in selling homes to the young couples,

in providing goods and services to the families, in providing professional services, but who "ministers" to these people? Mace found no convincing answer. There is certainly the attitude of the establishment.

Government agencies seem to be concerned at mainly two entry points to marriage-- enacting and implementing laws relating to marriage and divorce, and keeping the statistical records. But what else could the federal, state and local government agencies do? What could the foundations do? What could the world of commerce do? The mass media? The churches? In the case of Churches Mace noted some evidence of serious concern for couples preparing for marriage, although the evidence was fragmentary and poorly coordinated. Mace (1977) wrote:

There is still lacking in churches, however, any really coordinated effort, on a significant scale, to call public attention, and indeed the attention to the nation, to the need for a social policy on marriage. So it remains true that, having regard for the central importance of increasing the number of loving Christian homes as foundation stones for a healthy community, even the Church has not yet developed an initiative that is remotely appropriate to the need. In other words, marriage is still nobody's business. (p. 245)

However, four years later, Paul John Paul II (1981) maintained that no pastoral activity of the Church and of the parish should be undertaken without first assessing its impact upon families. O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) furthered this initiative through their study of all the Catholic dioceses in the United States. They also presented in their booklet the following questions that are useful in examining the current efforts in the Church, and should be used to develop a family impact assessment of each existing Church ministry:

1. Do the Church services and ministries empower the families and support them in fulfilling their functions, or do they make families further dependent on institutions which perform these

functions?

2. Are the efforts of the Church equally aimed at prevention and remediation?
3. Are the services and ministries family centered or individual centered?
4. Are services and ministries addressed to the diversity of family structures and family backgrounds as well as to intact nuclear families? Are they accessible to all?
5. Does the Church work closely with other services and community programs attempting to network its efforts, or does it work in isolation? (O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman, 1983, pp. 41-42)

The authors of the above study invited their readers to use the above five questions as criteria for evaluating diocesan and parish marriage preparation programs. Just replace the word "family" with "couple" to see the extent to which a program is or is not incorporating a broad perspective on the family today. Today's heightened interest in marriage preparation in the Catholic Church did not come out of a vacuum. It has been the result of many years of efforts to strengthen marriage and family life in the American Catholic Church. It has also been the renewed interest in the Church in marriage and family life as well as of the renewal of the Church as an institution supportive of families. One result of this renewal is the Church's coming to look at issues and concerns from the perspective of the family. This family perspective in the Church does not necessarily mean the initiation of new programs, even new marriage preparation programs, but rather strengthening an empowering, preventive and developmental approach in these programs. The Church is concerned about divorce and seeks to prepare couples for marriage with a view to prevention. The Church



wants to strengthen marriage and family life, and so implements marriage preparation programs in partnership with the couples, utilizing families and other networks to provide a continuing support base for soon-to-be newly married couples. In marriage preparation efforts, instead of using the priest alone, priest-couple teams are now being employed. The team presents a much different model of the Church, provides information as well as personal experience, and approaches the engaged as partners in the preparation process, which is done "with" the couple. And these developments are also consistent with the developments in other churches. (Kahn and Kamerman, 1982, pp. 153-186) Finally, the marriage preparations are being further influenced by a heightening of the sense of community in the American Catholic Church today (the social policy Mace called for?). O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983) stated that parishes have come to place a higher value on their communal life, and to foster participation by parish members in all aspects of parish life. The welfare of couples preparing for marriage and the success of their marriages is commonly seen, at least in part, as the responsibility of the parish and diocesan communities who are consequently seeking to help couples prepare for marriage. Couples preparing for marriage today do not draw their support from the "Lone Ranger". And the church policy is not just one that covers the bare minimum of "marrying and burying"!

## Chapter 3

### SURVEY OF LOCAL CLERGY INVOLVED IN PRE-MARRIAGE MINISTRY

#### Introduction

The review of literature and the various marriage preparation programs employed by the area ministers contributed to the construction of the questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix A for a complete copy of the questionnaire). Of particular help was a national study of preparation for marriage by O'Rourke, Thompson, Preister, Lewis and Feldman (1983). Although this national study restricted itself to the Catholic dioceses in the United States, the task force was able to gather significant information in five areas of marriage preparation: policies, programs, personnel, processes and resources. Many of these concepts were incorporated into the present questionnaire.

The six-page questionnaire consisted of twenty-five items. Two of the questions were "yes" or "no", nine of the questions called for a check-mark and fourteen questions were open-ended. The survey sought to gather information on a local level from ministers who were preparing couples for marriage.

#### Procedure

In May 1983 a letter of explanation about the survey (see Appendix B for a copy of the letter), the questionnaire itself and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to the 53 of the 55 ministers of the 42 churches in the city of Cedar Falls, Iowa. The 1982 list of churches and ministers had provided the names of only 53 ministers, while the 1983 list had increased the number of ministers in the area to 55 (the new list was not available at the time this survey was initiated).

The breakdown of the sample by denominations was Lutheran (nine churches, thirteen ministers), Baptist (seven churches, nine ministers), Presbyterian (four churches, five ministers), United Methodist (three churches, five ministers), Catholic (two churches, four ministers), Wesleyan (two churches, two ministers), Assembly of God (one church, one minister), Brethren (one church, one minister), Christian (one church, one minister), Christian Reformed (one church, one minister), Christian Science (one church, one minister), Church of Christ (one church, one minister), Church of God (one church, one minister), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (one church, one minister), Episcopal (one church, one minister), Mennonite (one church, two ministers), Reformed (one church, two ministers), Unitarian Universalist (one church, one minister), United Church of Christ (one church, one minister), Various Denominations (one church, one minister) and the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (one church, one minister) (see Table 1).

The breakdown of the sample by denomination for the churches and number of ministers who responded was Lutheran (seven churches, eleven ministers), Baptist (three churches, three ministers), Presbyterian (three churches, three ministers), Catholic (two churches, four ministers), United Methodist (two churches, two ministers), Assembly of God (one church, one minister), Christian (one church, one minister), Church of Christ (one church, one minister), Reformed (one church, one minister), Unitarian Universalist (one church, one minister), United Church of Christ (one church, one minister) and Various Denominations (one church, one minister). A total of 24 (57%) churches in the city

Table 1

The Response of the Local Clergy to the Marriage Survey

Religious Denomination	Number of Churches	Number of Ministers	Questionnaires Sent Out	Questionnaires Returned
Lutheran	9	13	15	11
Baptist	7	9	14	3
Presbyterian	4	5	7	3
United Methodist	3	5	6	2
Catholic	2	4	4	4
Wesleyan	2	2	4	0
Assembly of God	1	1	1	1
Brethren	1	1	1	0
Christian	1	1	1	1
Christian Reformed	1	1	2	0
Christian Science	1	1	1	0
Church of Christ	1	1	1	1
Church of God	1	1	0	0
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	1	1	2	0
Episcopal	1	1	2	0
Mennonite	1	2	4	0
Reformed	1	2	3	1
Unitarian Universalist	1	1	1	1

(table continues)

Religious Denominations	Number of Churches	Number of Ministers	Questionnaires Sent Out	Questionnaires Returned
United Church of Christ	1	1	1	1
Various Denominations	1	1	1	1
Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship	1	1	1	0
(21)	(42)	(55)	(72)	(30)

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responded; twelve (57%) denominations from the city had responded.

The questionnaires were filled out and returned by nineteen (36%) of the area ministers. Those who did not respond in writing the first time were telephoned in the first week of July. Some of the ministers requested a personal interview before completing the questionnaire. After these telephone calls and interviews, and in some cases after another questionnaire had been sent to the minister, eleven (21%) more ministers responded to this local clergy survey.

The remaining twenty-two (43%) ministers did not respond to either the May or July invitations (see Appendix C for a copy of the July letter). Thirteen (24%) of this group had been sent a second questionnaire and had agreed to fill it out, but they failed to respond. At this time four (7%) ministers were on vacation, two (4%) ministers were too busy, one (2%) minister claimed that his Church was too small, one (2%) minister had just arrived in the area and felt that he could not respond at this point, one (2%) minister was leaving his parish assignment and did not have time, and one (2%) minister was

was not located.

## Findings

### Title

Nine ministers indicated that they had a name for their marriage preparation program. These names were "Sponsor Couple Process", "Pre-Marriage Workshop", "Pre-Marriage Seminar", "Prepare", "Pre-Marital Counseling" and "Preparation for Christian Marriage".

### Type of Resource

The most frequent type of resource employed in marriage preparation was the person-to-person format (97%). Other types of resources included a program with a manual (27%), a group program (23%), a program that used one or more books (20%), the use of discussion groups (20%) and the use of discussion and group activities (20%). Three (10%) ministers employed the parish as a type of resource for marriage preparation. Other suggested resources included the confirmation and youth group, the Pre-Cana at the University of Northern Iowa's Student Centers, a Pre-Marriage Enrichment Seminar, the input from other helpful people, special resource people, the use of the "Prepare" and "Enrich" Inventories, the Bible, a special series of interview and counseling sessions, the "Mandatory Discussion Guide/Inventory", special cassette tapes and a program that this minister had developed himself over the years.

### Objective

To the question "What is (are) the objective(s) of the marriage preparation?" there were ninety-nine different alternatives identified as objectives (see Table 2). The most often cited objectives were

Table 2

Objectives of Marriage Preparation Programs


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Question: "What is (are) the objective(s) of the marriage preparation?"

Responses:

1. For the minister to get to know the couple better
2. To talk about some of their expectations
3. To talk about conflict and what they intend to do about it
4. To finalize plans for the actual wedding celebration
5. Potential husband understanding his role
6. Potential wife understanding her role
7. Communication
8. Understanding sexuality
9. Christian understanding of marriage
10. Physical, psychological, social and financial aspects of marriage
11. Dealing with conflicts and fighting fair
12. Continuing to grow in love
13. To determine if both parties are ready
14. To inform them of the view of the Church on marriage
15. To better acquaint them with their physical and spiritual responsibilities
16. Establishing of a Christ-centered home through love
17. Communication between the husband and wife
18. Understanding of the biblical basis for the discipline of children
19. Realizing the importance of the ministry of the Church
20. To work on a model of conflict-resolution
21. To develop an understanding of contracting work and to clarify the values about marriage
22. To research each other's childhood and adolescence for role expectations
23. For social interaction and comparison of self-expectations
24. To build the marriage relationship on contract and expectation
25. To be realistic about the vocation of marriage
26. To raise agreement and disagreement in various areas
27. To create dialogue
28. To have the couple be better prepared for marriage
29. To see marriage as an on-going growth process
30. To have the couples better understand each other
31. To clarify expectations and values
32. To get acquainted, set dates, discuss the wedding party and discuss the nature of marriage
33. To discuss the first part of service and to talk about sex, finances and the handling of conflicts

(table continues)

## Responses:

34. Discuss the last part of the service, marital relationships, family life and the role of the Church
35. Discuss the details of the service, consider having holy communion and select assisting ministers
36. To establish a solid foundation for marriage
37. To discover any potential problems that will magnify the marriage
38. To give the couple time to ask pertinent questions
39. To walk through the wedding ceremony so confidence will be achieved
40. To ask questions about themselves, marriage and their relationship
41. To offer couples guidelines to choose the kind of marriage ceremony they want
42. Reflection on their relationship (they create this relationship)
43. Conflict-resolution and skill development
44. Take the power out of failing in a relationship and to talk about divorce (and why they think it won't happen to them)
45. Build the framework to see other helping people if they need such assistance later on in their marriage
46. Preparation for permanency in marriage
47. Preparation for maturity in marriage
48. Preparation for coping with conflict
49. Biblical orientation to marriage
50. A long-lasting marriage
51. Happiness and fulfillment in marriage
52. To discuss the biblical concept of marriage
53. To create a "crisis" through a computerized test
54. To open up a discussion on many subjects related to marriage
55. To participate in marriage preparation through a workshop
56. A clarification of the meaning of Christian marriage
57. Commitment to the commitment of marriage
58. Preparation for problems and resources available
59. The importance of allowing Christ to guide the marriage
60. To help the couple have a Christ-centered marriage
61. To raise their consciousness level in key areas of marriage
62. Relationship
63. Promote communication between the couple
64. Become better acquainted with the couple as the officiant
65. Understanding of God in relationship and covenant
66. Understanding of one another
67. Understanding of one's self
68. The understanding of the couple in the community of faith, family and friends
69. To help couples understand their preparedness by looking at many different aspects of marriage (relationship, communication, sexuality, legality, spirituality)
70. Explore issues that the couple will face
71. Identify certain key concerns and discuss more thoroughly

(table continues)



## Responses:

72. Enable dialogue between the two persons
73. Teach better communication skills
74. To discuss how the couples relate
75. Areas of conflict
76. Expectations (budget, time, being together)
77. Discuss the contract (formal and informal)
78. Deal with potentially troublesome topics (a preventive approach)
79. Explain some basic information about communications and expectations
80. Talk about faith and commitment to Christ
81. Rule out major stumbling blocks like drug dependencies and abusive situations
82. The awareness of God's part in this relationship
83. Consider what marriage truly is
84. Help the couple make decisions concerning marriage
85. Personal awareness
86. Conflict skills
87. Prepare for finances, sexuality and roles
88. The spiritual foundations of marriage
89. Interpersonal relationships
90. Raising self-images
91. Growth in spiritual formations
92. To make the couple aware of the communication between them
93. To give the couple a healthy regard for their bodies
94. To highlight some problem areas
95. To help them tend the fires of their spirit (sacrament)
96. To ascertain the couple's capability of marriage
97. To give them the best possible foundation for a solid and successful marriage
98. To give them insight into the role of spirituality within marriage
99. To prepare the ceremony with them

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communication skills, the ability to handle conflict situations, the building of the marital relationship, the understanding of self and others, expectations, the spiritual aspects of marriage and the planning of the wedding celebration. Other popular objectives included the understanding of one's sexuality, the discovery of potential problems before marriage, the relationship of the couple to their church, the place of Christ in the couple's marriage, the minister's getting to know the couple, roles, finances, the readiness of the couple for marriage,

the realism of the couple about the vocation of marriage and the importance of a preventive approach in marriage preparation. The items mentioned one or two times by the ministers included the psychological aspect of marriage, the physical aspect of marriage, the social aspects of marriage, the ability to grow in love, children, values, the place of work in marriage, one's family background, the importance of preparing couples for marriage, the significance of viewing marriage as an on-going growth process, family life, the establishment of a solid foundation for marriage, allowing the couple to ask questions, the process of divorce, the discussion of resources available to couples after they are married, permanency of marriage, biblical orientation of marriage, a solid and successful marriage, the happiness of marriage, the use of inventories in marriage preparation, taking part in a marriage workshop, commitment, covenant, the relationship of the couple to their community, legal implications, contract, faith and the process of decision-making.

#### Content

Over three-fourths of the ministers surveyed covered this content in their marriage preparation: communication, roles in marriage, decision-making, spirituality, sexuality, economics, relationships, conflicts, intimacy, understanding of others, expectations about marriage and family background (see Table 3). Slightly less popular were topics like family planning, outside influences in marriage, sharing love with each other, values, marriage liturgy, needs, sex, children, scripture reflection, being real and in-laws. Less than

Table 3

## Content of Marriage Preparation Programs

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Question: "What is the content of the program?"

## The Content Area

(the number in parenthesis indicates the number of ministers who use this content in their marriage preparation programs)

Roles in marriage (28)  
 Conflicts (27)  
 Decision-making (27)  
 Expectations about marriage (27)  
 Communication (26)  
 Economics (26)  
 Sexuality (26)  
 Family background (25)  
 Spirituality (25)  
 Relationship (24)  
 Intimacy (23)  
 Understanding of others (23)  
 Children (22)  
 Family planning (22)  
 In-laws (22)  
 Values (22)  
 Sex (21)  
 Sharing love with each other (21)  
 Outside influences in marriage (20)  
 Needs (18)  
 Marriage liturgy (17)  
 Scripture reflection (16)  
 Being real (15)  
 Ecumenical marriage (14)  
 Defense mechanisms (13)  
 "Why marry?" (12)  
 "Celebrating marriage" (11)  
 Music (11)  
 "When we are out of tune" (10)  
 "Putting zest and vitality into marriage" (10)  
 The sacrament of marriage (8)  
 "Getting in touch with myself" (7)  
 Requirements (7)  
 Engagement liturgy (4)

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half of the group of ministers discussed content like ecumenical marriage, defense mechanisms, the question "Why marry?", the act of celebrating marriage, the aspect of putting zest and vitality into marriage, the ability to discuss when the couple is out of tune, music and the sacrament of marriage. Less than one-fourth of the group of ministers talked about such topics as "getting in touch with myself" and the requirements for marriage. The content referred to least in the marriage preparation process was the engagement liturgy; only four ministers mentioned this as part of their program. In addition to the thirty-four content areas listed in question four the ministers offered these suggestions: liturgy planning, life within the Church, fees, homosexuality and heterosexuality, jobs, the husband's love for his wife (like Christ for the Church), a marriage counseling kit, the handling of funds, the discussion of a will, the religious life and the role-expectancy inventory.

#### Audience

Generally the ministers worked with couples who had definite plans about getting married. Eighty percent of the ministers met with couples whose intention was to get married. A smaller percentage (43%) desired to work with engaged couples and not just those who were thinking about getting married. And even a smaller group (30%) worked with couples who were thinking about the possibility of marriage. Half of the group worked with either one or two partners who had been married before and now desired to enter into a new marriage. Nine (30%) ministers said that they would meet with one spouse-to-be when the other person could not be there. However, other ministers refused to meet with only one

partner; they waited until both partners could attend. Seven (23%) ministers said that they would meet with any couple or any person.

#### Method

The ministers employed many methods in their marriage preparation programs (see Table 4). In addition the ministers used methods like tapes, meeting with the parents of the couple, required books, mimeographed scripture, a director of music who would work with the couple as they prepared for their marriage and the use of a consultant who would work with the couple in the planning of their wedding and reception.

#### Time Frame

The length of a session ranged between one-half and ten hours. The most frequent length selected by the ministers was between one-half and two hours; seventy-seven percent of the ministers favored this time frame. Evening time seemed to be the most popular (no one indicated a morning time). Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays were mentioned specifically. Some ministers said that the time and day were to be at the convenience of the minister, while others argued that this was to be at the convenience of the couple. Others stated that this was to be at the convenience of all parties involved. The number of sessions in the marriage preparation ranged from one to twenty-five. Ninety percent of the ministers favored somewhere between one and nine sessions. The time required for these sessions ranged from one day to eighteen months. The ministers gave these responses for the time frame needed (the number in parenthesis indicates the number of ministers): Friday

Table 4

## Methods Used in Marriage Preparation Programs

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Question: "What is the method employed?"

## Methods Used in Marriage Preparation

(the number in parenthesis indicates the number of ministers who use this method in their marriage preparation programs)

Dialogue and discussion (28)  
 Meeting with the pastor (28)  
 Questions/answers (20)  
 Couple sharing (19)  
 Personal reflection (17)  
 Handout materials (14)  
 Homework (13)  
 Certain selected topics (11)  
 Sharing by the spouses-to-be (11)  
 Exercises (10)  
 Presentations (8)  
 Group sharing (7)  
 Personal visits (7)  
 Personal witness (7)  
 Audio-visual materials (6)  
 Meeting with a married couple (6)  
 Mixture of small/large groups  
 Meeting in a large group (5)  
 Meeting in a small group (4)  
 Phone (4)  
 Lecture (3)

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evening and Saturday (1), a weekend (1), three days (1), days (1),  
 several weeks (1), weeks (3), a month (2), one to two months (2), two  
 months (2), two to three months (1), several months (4), months (1),  
 three to six months (1), six months (1), six to twelve months (1),  
 several weeks to one year (1) and twelve to eighteen months (3).

Three ministers did not respond to this question about the duration of time for marriage preparation.

### Personnel

The personnel definitely included the minister. All ministers were in agreement with this question "Who made up the personnel?". However, in addition to the minister, there were other people included in the personnel for marriage preparation. Thirteen (43%) of the ministers indicated that they used married couples in their programs; three (10%) ministers said that they also used engaged couples. Other personnel included a facilitator-type person, a facilitator couple, a church staff person, elders, a nurse or doctor, a resource person and people from the family life office.

### Publicity

The most popular method for public relations about the marriage preparation programs was "word of mouth"; forty-three percent of the ministers relied on this. The telephone contact, the parish bulletin, the brochure, the sign-up time, the visitation and the letter of invitation followed the use of "word of mouth". Three ministers explained that they had no organization for recruitment of couples for marriage preparation. The ministers did not use the local media or parish files for recruitment of young couples into their programs.

### Facilities

The ministers favored the use of their office as a meeting place for all. Other places included the church, the school cafeteria, homes, a large meeting room, a library, the parsonage, a lounge, Sunday school facilities and a total student center.

### Flexibility

In the area of flexibility in marriage preparation fifty percent

of the ministers indicated "much" flexibility in their programs, while forty-seven percent said "moderate" flexibility. Only one minister mentioned that there was no flexibility. Five ministers said the program needed more in the area of discussion and less in the area of topics. Other responses included "we are open to anything", "the program must be tailored to the particular needs of the couples" and "the model is always the same, and the content comes out of the couple's response to that model".

#### Approach

To the question "What is the religious assumption of your program for marriage preparation?" the ministers responded unanimously-- "CHRISTIAN".

#### Number of Participants

Seventeen ministers employed three people in this marriage preparation-- the minister and the couple. Nine ministers said that this number of participants varied at times. Those ministers who used a weekend-format said that they accepted between ten and fifty couples for their seminar. Three ministers indicated that their program for marriage preparation included one team couple, eight married couples and twenty-four engaged couples (when fully functional).

#### Materials

The materials used by the area ministers included books, manuals, inventories, worksheets, articles and tapes. Although six ministers did not respond to question fourteen and two ministers stated that they did not use anything specific, twenty-two did use some materials (see Table 5).



Table 5

Books, Manuals, Inventories, Worksheets, Articles and Tapes

Question: "What Materials Do You Use?"

Books

1. Adams, Jay. Christian Living in the Home. Baker Book. 1974.
2. The Bible.
3. Billnitzer, Harold. Chances for a Happy Marriage. Morse Printing. 1978.
4. Carroll, Anne Kristin. Together Forever: For Healthy Marriages, or for Sustained, or Broken Ones. Zondervan. 1982.
5. Champlin, Joseph. Together for Life: A Preparation for Marriage and for the Ceremony. Ave Maria Press. 1979.
6. Champlin, Joseph. Together for Life: A Preparation for Marriage and for the Ceremony (Special Edition for Marriage Outside Mass). Ave Maria Press. 1979.
7. Dahl, Gerald. Why Christian Marriages Are Breaking Up. Nelson. 1981.
8. Dillow, Joseph C. Solomon on Sex. Nelson. 1982.
9. Dobson, James. Dare to Discipline. Bantam. 1982.
10. Dobson, James. Discipline with Love. Tyndale. 1978.
11. Dobson, James. Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions. Tyndale. 1982.
12. Dobson, James. Emotions: Can You Trust Them? Regal. 1981.
13. Dobson, James. Hide or Seek? Revell. 1974.
14. Dobson, James. Preparing for Adolescence. Bantam. 1980.
15. Dobson, James. Preparing for Adolescence: Growth Guide. Vision House. 1979.
16. Dobson, James. Prescription for a Tired Housewife. Tyndale. 1975.
17. Dobson, James. The Strong-Willed Child. Tyndale. 1978.
18. Elwood, J. Murray. Growing Together in Marriage. Ave Maria Press. 1977.
19. Erdahl, Lowell and Carol. Be Good to Each Other: An Open Letter on Marriage. Har-Row. 1981.
20. Fromm, Erich. The Art of Loving. Har-Row. 1974.
21. Hulme, William. Building a Christian Marriage. Augsburg. 1968.
22. Hulme, William. When Two Become One: Reflections for the Newly Married. Augsburg. 1974.
23. Lasswell, Marcia, and Lobsenz, Norman M. No Fault Marriage. Ballantine. 1977.
24. Lederer, William J., and Jackson, Don D. Mirages of Marriage. Norton. 1968.
25. Lindbergh, Anne M. Gift from the Sea. Vintage Books. 1955.
26. Mace, David. Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution. Abingdon. 1970.

(table continues)

Books

27. Mace, David. Close Companions: The Marriage Enrichment Handbook. Continuum. 1982.
28. Mace, David. Getting Ready for Marriage. Abingdon. 1972.
29. Mace, David. Love and Anger in Marriage. Zondervan. 1982.
30. Mace, David. Success in Marriage. Abingdon. 1980.
31. Mace, David. Whom God Hath Joined. Westminster. 1973.
32. Mace, David R., and Vera C. How to Have a Happy Marriage. Abingdon. 1983.
33. Mace, David R., and Vera C. Marriage Enrichment in the Church. Broadman. 1977.
34. Mace, David R., and Vera C. We Can Have Better Marriages If We Really Want Them. Abingdon. 1974.
35. Mace, David R., and Vera C. What's Happening to Clergy Marriages. Abingdon. 1980.
36. Powell, John. Abortion: The Silent Holocaust. Argus Communications. 1981.
37. Powell, John. Fully Human, Fully Alive. Argus Communications. 1976.
38. Powell, John. He Touched Me: My Pilgrimage of Prayer. Argus Communications. 1974.
39. Powell, John. A Reason to Live, A Reason to Die. Revised Edition. Argus Communications. 1972.
40. Powell, John. The Secret of Staying in Love. Argus Communications. 1974.
41. Powell, John. Unconditional Love. Argus Communications. 1978.
42. Powell, John. Why Am I Afraid to Love? Revised Edition. Argus Communications. 1972.
43. Powell, John. Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am? Argus Communications. 1969.
44. Rogers, Carl. On Becoming a Person. Houghton Mifflin. 1961.
45. Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church: Where People Really Pray. Word Books. 1974.
46. Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church: Where They Give Their Money Away. Word Books. 1975.
47. Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church: Where They Really Use the Bible. New Edition. Word Books. 1975.
48. Shedd, Charlie W. Grandparents: Then God Created Grandparents and It Was Very Good. Doubleday. 1978.
49. Shedd, Charlie W. How to Develop a Praying Church. Abingdon. 1964.
50. Shedd, Charlie W. How to Develop a Tithing Church. Abingdon. 1961.
51. Shedd, Charlie W. Is Your Family Tuned On? Coping with the Drug Culture. Word Books. 1971.
52. Shedd, Charlie W. Letters to Karen. Abingdon. 1977.
53. Shedd, Charlie W. Letters to Karen: On Keeping Love in Marriage. Abingdon. 1966.
54. Shedd, Charlie W. Letters to Philip. Revell. 1969.
55. Shedd, Charlie W. Letters to Philip: On How to Treat a Woman. Doubleday. 1968.

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Books

56. Shedd, Charlie W. Smart Dads I Know. Avon. 1978.
57. Shedd, Charlie W. The Stork Is Dead. Word Books. 1983.
58. Shedd, Charlie W. Talk to Me. Revised and expanded edition. Doubleday. 1983.
59. Shedd, Charlie W. Time for All Things. Abingdon. 1980.
60. Shedd, Charlie W. (editor). You Are Somebody Special. Bantam. 1980.
61. Shedd, Charlie W. You Can Be A Great Parent. Word Books. 1970.
62. Shedd, Charlie and Martha. Celebration in the Bedroom. Bantam. 1981.
63. Shedd, Charlie and Martha. Grandparents Family Book: A Keepsake for Our Grandchild. Doubleday. 1982.
64. Shedd, Charlie and Martha. How to Stay in Love. Ace Books. 1981.
65. Tournier, Paul. To Understand Each Other. John Knox Press. 1972.
66. Wheat, Ed and Gaye. Intended for Pleasure. Revised edition. Revell. 1981.
67. Wright, H. Norman. Communication-- Key to Your Marriage. Revised edition. Regal. 1979.

Manuals

1. Collins, Gary. Christian Counseling Manual. Word Books. 1980.
2. Smith, Antoinette and Leon. Preparing for Christian Marriage: Pastor's Edition. Abingdon. 1982.
3. Wright, H. Norman. Communication-- Key to Your Marriage (Manual). Regal. 1979.

Inventories

1. Burgess, Ernest W. A Marriage Prediction Schedule. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1960, 1969.
2. Burnett, Charles K.; Egolf, Jamie; Solon, T. Tim; and Sullivan, Gerald. The Premarital Inventory. Bess Associates, Inc. 1975.
3. Hine, James R. Marriage Counseling Kit. Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc. 1972.
4. Knox, David. A Love Attitudes Inventory. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1971.
5. Knox, David. Marriage Inventory. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1971.
6. McDonald, Patrick J.; Perro, Ellen B.; and Cleveland, Charles. The Marriage Expectation Inventory. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1972-1979.
7. McHugh, Gelolo. Sex Knowledge Inventory: Vocabulary and Anatomy. Revision. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1977.
8. McHugh, Gelolo. Sex Knowledge Inventory. Revision. Family Life Publications, Inc. 1979.

(table continues)

### Inventories

9. Olson, David H.; Fournier, David G.; and Druckman, Joan M. Enrich. Prepare-Enrich, Inc. 1982.
10. Olson, David H.; Fournier, David G.; and Druckman, Joan M. Prepare. Prepare, Inc. 1979.

### Worksheets

1. "Communication"
2. "Facts About Us"
3. "Financial Budget Planner Worksheet"
4. "Monthly Expense Budget"
5. "My Partner's Loving Behavior"
6. "One-to-One for Couples Getting Married"
7. "Order for Marriage"
8. "The Personal Inventory Questionnaire"
9. "Planning Your Wedding"
10. "Pre-Marital Questionnaire"
11. "Roles"
12. "Service for Marriage"
13. "Similarities and Differences"
14. "Value Sheet on Christian Marriage"

### Articles

1. Fletcher, Cynthia; Jones, Ron; and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Communication". Cooperative Extension Service.
2. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Record Keeping". Cooperative Extension Service.
3. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Home Insurance". Cooperative Extension Service.
4. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Life Insurance". Cooperative Extension Service.
5. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Spending Plans". Cooperative Extension Service.
6. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Health Insurance". Cooperative Extension Service.
7. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Saving and Investing". Cooperative Extension Service.
8. Fletcher, Cynthia and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Owning a Car". Cooperative Extension Service.
9. Fletcher, Cynthia; Yearns, Mary; and Schuchardt, Jane. "Money Mechanics: Buying a House". Cooperative Extension Service.
10. Harl, Neil; Curtiss, Charles; and Fletcher, Cynthia. "Money Mechanics: Estate Planning". Cooperative Extension Service.
11. Smith, Antoinette and Leon. "Re-Evaluating", Christian Home, Winter 1982-1983, pp. 38-41.

(table continues)

### Cassette Tapes

1. Steimetz, Urban and Deneau, Les. "The New Toward Marriage".  
3 cassette tapes. Crystal Falls, MI. 1980.
2. Wheat, Ed. "Sex Technique and Sex Problems in Marriage".  
2 cassette tapes. Springdale, AR. 1975.

### Cost

Fifty-seven percent of the ministers said that there was no charge for their marriage preparation. Seven ministers indicated fees between \$2.00 and \$16.50. One minister said that the main cost was "time". Four ministers did not respond to the question of costs, and three ministers said this topic would be brought up later in their council.

### Evaluation of the Program

Three of the questions on the survey (#17-#19) dealt with an evaluation of the marriage preparation programs as seen through the eyes of the ministers. The ministers evaluated their programs in terms of what the couple should know, be able to do, feel and have the opportunity to do. The ministers then commented upon the strengths and weaknesses of their individual programs. Finally, they suggested what they would like to see maintained, changed, increased and developed.

### The Couple

#### Knowledge.

As a result of the experiences provided by the marriage preparation programs the ministers felt that the couples understood themselves and others better, understood the Christian aspect of marriage and had an understanding of the scriptural background to marriage. They also felt that the couple knew their minister, had a better understanding about

conflict, knew about the principles and challenges of marriage, knew about the high potential of marriage and the seriousness of their commitment. They made comments like "they know if they should marry or not", "they know that marriages do not just happen but are made", "they know that planning for marriage is much more than planning for just a wedding" and "they know that there are resources for a variety of areas relating to a new family".

#### Ability.

The ministers (33%) felt that the couples were able to communicate better as a result of the marriage preparation programs. In addition, they felt that the couples were able to express their feelings, talk about in-laws, discuss their expectations, apply the Bible to their lives, to adapt to circumstances, to identify the ingredients of Christian marriage, to bring Christ into their marriage, to be more real and honest, to foresee and plan responses to marital problems, to make decisions, to work out a budget and to face the challenges. They commented that couples are able "to choose who they will marry" and "to understand more fully the scope of marriage versus a wedding".

#### Feeling.

The ministers believed that the couples felt better about themselves, that they felt more comfortable sharing their needs with each other and they were more secure about their decision-making. The ministers also believed that the couples felt a new sense for God, that marriage could work, that couples were more prepared, that conflict was all right,

that faith was important in the couples' relationships and that the couples felt a greater sense of responsibility and sacredness in marriage. One minister wrote, "I hope that they feel excited about their wedding", while another wrote, "I know that they feel they have a good ability to cope and that they can also get more help."

#### Opportunity.

The ministers felt that the couples had the opportunity to grow and to converse openly. They also felt that the couples had the opportunity to reflect, to ask questions, to discern the views of their future spouse and to observe the differences between them. But, most of all, the couples had the time to evaluate their relationships and reconsider their decisions to marry.

#### Program

##### Strengths.

Seven ministers did not respond to how their programs were doing a good job, and one minister responded with a question mark to the statement: "In responding to the needs of the engaged couples in the area of marriage preparation, your program does a good job of..." Four ministers highlighted their programs' emphasis on expectations, while three ministers cited strengths in the area of marital relationship. Two ministers stressed each of the following points about their programs: dealing with personal dynamics, preparing the couple to deal with the different aspects of marriage, promoting conversation, clarifying roles, getting the wedding service done and preparing the couple for marriage. Establishing guidelines leading

towards successful marriage, thinking about conflict-resolutions, discussing the similarities and differences in values and personalities, dealing with family history and getting to know the couple were cited as strengths of their programs. Some of the comments were: "The program promoted Christian marriages", "The program helped to identify the couples' needs", "The program treated couples as adults" and "The program gave the couples tools for use in building a solid relationship".

#### Weaknesses.

The second part of this statement asked for improvements in the ministers' programs, and fifty-three percent of the group failed to respond. The remaining fourteen ministers supplied individualistic responses, some of which read: "I need to get the couple to be unafraid of what I might make them do to get married", "If we had more couples I could do things on a larger scale", "We need to follow up and see that the work is done" and "The method needs to be improved; we need more married couple involvement in the total program". The ministers also commented that they needed to bring in more spirituality, to allow the couple to do some serious thinking about their relationship and what marriage is all about, to provide a model that would help the couple realize the importance of conflict-resolution, to assign more readings and homework, to reflect on the meaning of commitment, to be more consistent as ministers providing marriage preparation, to take a look at the content provided and to have time to evaluate the program.

#### Proposals



### Maintain.

When asked what they would like to see maintained in their present programs, seven of the ministers indicated that their programs should maintain a scriptural basis, an emphasis on relationships, the "spark in the eyes of the couple" and some uniformity among pastoral counselors.

### Change.

Four ministers called for changes in their marriage preparation programs in the areas of misconceptions in marriage preparation, the couples' dreams and reality and the overall counseling format.

### Increase.

Nine ministers requested to see an increase in the spiritual emphasis, a growth in love and faith, more and better ways of marriage preparation, the freedom of the couple to live and love, an awareness of the importance of faith in peoples' lives, required attendance prior to any wedding, a certain amount of hours of preparation before marriage and homework.

### Develop.

Eight ministers saw a need to develop a framework for continued growth in love of the couple, new suggestions for changing needs, a social program for the newly married, counseling services where couples could be referred, more work in the area of spirituality, peer and lay leadership in small groups for marriage preparation and marriage enrichment seminars for the newly married.

### "Other Comments".

Three ministers responded to the section entitled "other comments".

They indicated the satisfaction with their programs and the size of the parish was significant to the marriage preparation provided. One minister indicated that he celebrated one or two weddings a year, while another parish celebrated 40-60 weddings a year.

#### Reaction to Question

In question twenty the ministers reacted to the statement: "It has been said, 'If you can't handle the marriage preparation, then how can you manage marriage itself?' What is your reaction to this statement?" This question drew many reactions (see Table 6), such as "it makes sense", "I agree", "sounds legitimate", "positive", "there's some partial truth", "probably true", "it's overbearing and lays a trip on the couple", "it's too negative", "pretty good", "excellent" and "strident and pompous statement". Only four ministers did not respond to this question.

#### Meeting Needs of Engaged

##### Schools

The ministers felt that something could be done at the school level to better meet the needs of the engaged couples. The ministers called for a doing away with the myth that two get married and live happily ever after, teaching a realism marriage course, stressing responsibility, endorsing the policy of permanency in marriage, putting morality back, providing contemporary life courses, developing a good sex education program and offering parenthood classes.

##### Parishes

At the parish level the ministers called for more preaching and

Table 6

Is Marriage Preparation Necessary for Marriage?


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Question: "It has been said, 'If you can't handle the marriage preparation, then how can you manage marriage itself?' What is your reaction to this statement?"

## Responses:

1. I suspect that it makes sense. However, the strength of romantic love enables most couples to "honestly" say that they could handle anything that comes along. It is only after the romantic love subsides (about six to twelve months into the marriage) that they really start to deal with handling marriage itself.
2. The better one is prepared the smoother the transition between being single and being married.
3. Sounds legitimate (essentially).
4. Going through a marriage course is somewhat like going through Bible College. They receive their BA from the college and then the world says, "Come on and we will teach you the rest of the alphabet." It is not all done in class.
5. Positive.
6. Since my model provides tools for working on its relationship as issues within the marriage relationship arise, I agree in principal but not in its negative way as stated.
7. Positive. If they are fearful now and don't, they never will.
8. Has some truth in it.
9. Like many statements it is a partial truth, but one must learn from the experiences. We have not had to help some people.
10. This is probably true, because if they are not serious enough to properly prepare, they will not be serious enough to work through problems in a mature way after marriage.
11. It is overbearing and lays a trip on the couple.
12. It's pretty good. Marriage preparation is to get the couple to reflect creatively on their relationship. If one cannot or does not want to do this, then the couple will have more problems than necessary.
13. Certainly surfaces problems at a time when they may more easily be dealt with. Shows a lack of maturity.
14. Excellent statement.
15. I have been surprised so many times by results that I hesitate to respond to this statement. Good preparation does not always guarantee a good marriage.

(table continues)

## Responses:

16. I would caution one against such general statements. Too many dynamics go into the marriage preparation sessions. Perhaps the pastor/priest brings too many expectations himself to the session. Too much counseling could well be treating adults as little children.
17. People give more thought and attention to vacation plans than they do to planning a marriage and a whole life together. Also, if the couple is resistant at the beginning to prepare or give time to the process, it is a pretty good drawn conclusion they won't work around their relationship after marriage. I agree with the statement.
18. If such was indicated it might be well for a couple to look further into their relationship and readiness for marriage.
19. Many drift into marriage. Some survive. Many shipwreck.
20. We should make it difficult for people to marry and easier to get divorced. If the program is good it sells itself. I hear too many negative reactions to the programs.
21. The marriage preparation handled well does not necessarily guarantee a good marriage. The statement sounds strident and pompous.
22. This sounds like a good lead to talk about how they handle their anger.
23. This is probably true if reluctance is the embarrassment.
24. It may mean they are not ready for marriage.
25. Yes.
26. This is so true.

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teaching, specialized classes, good counseling, support, the involvement of all (if just by their example ), time to listen to the needs of the engaged, freedom of choice and helping the couples in the process, creativity and love, the use of the Bible, emphasis on morality, churches working together in the area of marriage preparation, parenthood and values clarification and the development of a total respect for life and living. They also stressed the support and encouragement to couples already married.

### Community

In the community the ministers wanted to see clubs established for the newly married, the availability of seminars, a high standard of

morality, a spiritual renewal, the churches working together in marriage education and the support of marriage preparation. One minister suggested that qualified people from the community come and evaluate the marriage preparation programs of the churches.

### State

At the state level the ministers wanted to see lobbying for a "careful" pre-marriage counseling program, encouragement of state officials in taking a stand and view on marriage preparation, laws that would encourage couples to stay together, the promotion of good morals and values and the experimentation of various marriage programs.

### Nation

At the national scene the ministers suggested tax breaks, "getting right with God", providing jobs and home ownership.

### World

One minister commented that there was no possibility to respond to the needs of the engaged at the world level. One minister recommended that people live a good family life, and another minister requested that people search for peace and provide all people with the basic necessities of life.

### Support for Newly Married

When asked the question-- "Once we have assisted in the marriage preparation process and the actual witnessing of the wedding of the couple, is it necessary to offer support to the newly married couple?"-- the ministers responded favorably to support for the newly married (see Table 7). The key words used by the ministers for this time after the wedding ceremony were "reality", "adjustment", "application",

Table 7

Support for the Newly Married


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Question: "Once we have assisted in the marriage preparation process and the actual witnessing of the wedding of the couple, is it necessary to offer support to the newly married couple?"

## Responses:

1. Because after marriage the reality of conflict and adjustment sets in.
2. Help them apply biblical principals to everyday situations.
3. Everyone needs reminders and encouragement.
4. They will need continual encouragement, understanding and advice from the pastor.
5. As part of the Church, they need constant support in fulfilling the obligations to God.
6. One of the greatest successes is the recognition by couples who have been through the process that it is all right to seek consultation about their relationship any time.
7. Constant adjustment of expectation level to reality experiences must be dealt with.
8. It's a major transition in their lives. Newlyweds can be lonely; they can lose their single friends.
9. They cannot absorb everything in a few hours. They have a chance to try some things out, or at least to discuss. Also, there is a singular personal need that is often not met in our program.
10. So we can spot trouble before it is too late.
11. They should feel the freedom and trust of certain individuals within the family and Church so real communication can take place during the marriage.
12. Unless requested.
13. Hopefully, as they participate in the community of believers, there is the support. They learn by seeing other married people relate.
14. There should be maintenance, the offering of an enrichment conducive to health and the development of the young family.
15. They will need encouragement from significant others in their adjustments. They need to know that they are normal.
16. The pastoral role in preparation and worship service should be extended into the relationship. Couples should be made aware of this.
17. In the church service, in preaching and through interaction in the parish the couple has an opportunity to see how a "family" loves and forgives.
18. Because of the adjustments that have to be made in marriage, support for the newly married is necessary. Home devotions and prayer should also be emphasized.

(table continues)

## Responses

19. If you are invited, then you may be there when the couple is going through their difficulties.
20. The reality sets in. The honeymoon is over. The real selves are more exposed.
21. The support of individuals and the Christian community can be a great asset as couples "develop" in their marriage relationship.
22. Stress occurs when the couple gets married. Newlyweds need to form friendships and have a sense of their new identity stress roles.
23. This support can challenge them to grow in their commitment.
24. Early communication patterns set the tone for their marriage.
25. When problems arise.
26. They need to know that they are important as persons. They may need to come and see you in the future.
27. Although this is a new and joyous relationship for them, it is a very unstable time. The couple can use this friendship and support.
28. They need to know someone they can reach out to when they come across new and difficult experiences of adjustment.
29. Yes.
30. Yes.

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"encouragement", "reminders", "support", "prevention", "development", "friendships" and "communication". The ministers seemed to be pointing to a means of support for this newly married couple in the parish community.

### Marriage Preparation Necessary?

Again there was unanimous agreement among the thirty ministers to the question: "Is marriage preparation for those considering marriage necessary?" (see Table 8). One minister wrote: "Marriage preparation can lay the foundation upon which the marriage can build and without which the marriage would flounder and fail".

### Additional Comments

In the section labelled "Additional Comments" one minister took the time to draw a relationship between the celebration of marriage and the celebration of death. The minister pointed to the Church's role

Table 8

Marriage Preparation Necessary?

Question: "Is marriage preparation for those considering marriage necessary? Is so, why? If not, what would you suggest?"

## Responses:

1. I start them thinking about what their relationship will mean.
2. Knowledge about what God wants will make their marriage smooth.
3. I have already answered this question (Yes).
4. I feel it is so very important because they definitely do not foresee all of the pitfalls that can occur.
5. To assure them a successful marriage.
6. It is a vocation, a blessed and ordained relationship.
7. To improve the communication and to improve their understanding of each other.
8. Because the unmarried do not know the needs, pitfalls and the successes of good married life (as has been discovered by the experiences in so many areas of life).
9. This has been answered by what I have already said so far.
10. So they have a chance to answer the tough questions.
11. So many believe marriage will mean more of the cause, but in reality, when the couple gets married, the legal step has different images and expectations. Thus, the couple needs to adjust to each other and be caring to each other.
12. It is preparation for life. This is the foundation of our society.
13. This is so very important. There are so many misconceptions floating around.
14. I feel preparation is better than no preparation, but I do not have any figures to prove this.
15. The Church has the responsibility of establishing that the couple to be married is ready to make the commitment to a life-long union.
16. I am not sure that all of this pre-marital counseling is effective. I believe the emphasis needs to be placed on the couple's relationship with Christ. If this is strong, the other matters can be worked out. I do less and less of the traditional counseling. I spend more and more time on a personal relationship with Christ and to me that means more than being a faithful member of some Church.
17. This preparation is particularly helpful at the point of roles, expectations and communication. With so many second marriages there are other problems that arise. Perhaps this is not a problem in some traditions.

(table continues)



## Responses:

18. It is important to understand oneself in relation to the other. It is also important to discuss the meaning of sharing and covenant. If the couple is unwilling to have the marriage preparation, I am unwilling to witness their "so-called" marriage. I will not perform "ceremony".
19. The breakdown in families and the divorce situation mandate the way we take a serious look how well people are equipped to deal with marriage.
20. It is for the sake of introducing people to issues that will affect them. However, talking about marriage and actual marriage should not be confused. Post-marital support is also extremely important.
21. This is the opportunity to have the faith-community present and raises the opportunity to keep them growing in their relationship.
22. For the most part marriage preparation is necessary. Couples who are in middle-age are perhaps by then well-established.
23. To make them aware of what marriage is all about.
24. Marriage preparation is necessary so that I can know them. I want to help them know each other better. I want to help them look at the decisions they will need to make.
25. It is helpful but not necessary. It is much better to anticipate and thoughtfully reflect upon a variety of possible choices than to react on the basis of what one thinks of in the heat of necessity. It is better to anticipate than not to know at all.
26. All call (vocation) needs developing.
27. We can never have too much for so important a contract.
28. Marriage preparation can lay the foundation upon which the marriage can build and without which the marriage would flounder and fail.
29. Yes.
30. Yes.

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and concern in these two major areas of life-- loving and dying. He emphasized that the Church should be prepared to lead couples through this process, and that this should take the form of support from the Christian community. And he pointed out that there was no "end" to such a process.

Chapter Four  
AN ANALYSIS OF SIXTEEN MARRIAGE PREPARATION  
PROGRAMS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Introduction

The search for marriage preparation programs in the Catholic Church began with phone calls to the Family Life Office in Dubuque, Iowa, the Archdiocesan Offices for Marriage and Family Life in Chicago, Illinois, the Commission for Family Life in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Family Life Office in Omaha, Nebraska and the Catholic Family Ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All four responded with suggestions and helpful ideas in the area of marriage preparation, and the Archdioceses of St. Paul/Minneapolis and Milwaukee sent the researcher copies of their own materials. In addition the writer had already collected several programs and had been inquiring about other programs through their advertisements in various papers and magazines.

The sixteen marriage preparation programs can be divided into four groups: (1) those prepared by individuals to be used at a parish or diocesan level, (2) those prepared by a diocese to be used within that particular diocese, (3) those prepared by individuals for local use and (4) the one prepared by a national group (see Table 9).

Pastoral Considerations for Pre/Post

Ministry in the Parish

Marriage Preparation in General

Table 9

Four Types of Marriage Preparation Programs

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1. Programs prepared by individuals to be used at a parish or diocesan level:
- a. Aitchison, Gary, and Aitchison, Kay. Your Marriage: The Great Adventure. Edited by Ray and Dorothy Maldoon. Illustrated by Eugene Zawisa. Whiting, Indiana: Christian Family Movement, 1979.
  - b. Coleman, Bill, and Coleman, Patty. Only Love Can Make It Easy (Couple's Workbook). Third printing of revised edition, 1982. Mystic, Ct.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1981, 1976.  
  
Coleman, Bill, and Coleman, Patty. Only Love Can Make It Easy (Leader's Guide). Revised. Mystic, Ct.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1981, 1976.
  - c. Dahl, Jim; Dahl, Paula; and Gallagher, Fr. Chuck, S.J. Evenings for the Engaged (Couple Paks). Chicago, Illinois: William H. Sadlier, Inc., 1977a.  
  
Dahl, Jim; Dahl, Paula; and Gallagher, Fr. Chuck, S.J. Evenings for the Engaged (Leader's Guide). Chicago, Illinois: William H. Sadlier, Inc., 1977b.
  - d. Del Vecchio, Dr. Anthony, and Del Vecchio, Mary. Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1980.
  - e. Friedman, Greg, O.F.M. (editor). Making Ready for Marriage: Planning for a Day, Preparing for a Lifetime. Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1982.
  - f. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1981a.  
  
Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation (Manual). Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1981b.

(table continues)

1. Programs prepared by individuals to be used at a parish or diocesan level:
  - g. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed: Manual for Engaged Couples. St. Paul, Minnesota: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981a.  
  
Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed: Ministers Guidebook. St. Paul, Minnesota: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981b.
2. Programs prepared by a diocese to be used within that particular diocese (or dioceses in that state):
  - a. The Diocese of Kalamazoo
    - 1.) "Marriage Discovery", Diocese of Kalamazoo, Marriage and Family Life Ministry, no date.
    - 2.) Rev. William A. Crenner (personal communication, June 23, 1983).
  - b. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph
    - 1.) Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, Missouri Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Missouri, no date.
    - 2.) Emory Corrigan (personal communication, May 19, 1983).
    - 3.) Markey, Tara M., and Meis, Finian N. "When Families Marry": A Marriage Preparation Program Engaged Couple's Workbook. Kansas City, Kansas: Archdiocese of Kansas City, 1982.
  - c. The Diocese of Lansing
    - 1.) To Love and To Honor: A Pre-Marriage Ministry Resource Manual. Three sections. Lansing, Michigan: Diocese of Lansing, Liturgical Commission, 1983.
  - d. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee
    - 1.) "Catholic Policy for Marriage Preparation Working Well", Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date.
    - 2.) "Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation", Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date.
    - 3.) "Enrichment Programs for the Engaged", Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Catholic Family Ministry, 1983.
    - 4.) "God's Plan for Marriage: Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation from the Catholic Bishops in the State of Wisconsin", Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date.

(table continues)

2. Programs prepared by a diocese to be used within that particular diocese (or dioceses in that state):

d. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee

- 5.) Prasad, V.K., and Weber, C. Edward. Survey of Clergy and Couples on the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation. For private use only. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Consulting Associates, 1982.
- 6.) Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date.
- 7.) Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland (letter to pastoral ministers in marriage preparation, March 1, 1983).
- 8.) "Summary of Findings from the Survey of Clergy and Couples on the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation and Recommendations of the Wisconsin Diocesan Family Life Directors", Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date.
- 9.) Trokan, John. Enrichment Program for the Engaged: Sharing a Beginning... Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Catholic Family Ministry, 1982.
- 10.) Trokan, John (editor). Enrichment Program for the Engaged: Sharing a Beginning...Staff Manual. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Catholic Family Life Program, 1981.

e. The Diocese of Providence

- 1.) Protano, Reverend Joseph. Preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony: Manual for Priests, Deacons, Coordinating Couple. Providence, Rhode Island: Diocese of Providence, Office for the Preparation of Marriage, no date.

f. The Diocese of Toledo

- 1.) "Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date.
- 2.) "Engaged Couple Conference", Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date.
- 3.) "Preparation for Marriage", Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, no date.
- 4.) Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1977-1982. Toledo, Ohio: Diocese of Toledo, Family Life Department, 1983.

(table continues)

3. Programs prepared by individuals for local use:
  - a. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota
    - 1.) John G. Quesnell (personal communication, June 29, 1983).
    - 2.) The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (letter to those people involved in marriage preparation, 1981).
    - 3.) The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (letter to those people involved in marriage preparation, 1982).
    - 4.) Quesnell, John G. Three to Get Ready: A Guide for the Engaged. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1976.
    - 5.) Quesnell, John, and Kolar, Rev. Michael. Welcome to the Conferences for the Engaged Offered by the Saint Paul Catholic Youth Center. Fourth Printing. St. Paul, Minnesota: The Staff of the Catholic Youth Center, 1982.
  - b. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota
    - 1.) Mark Daniewicz (personal communication, July 6, 1983).
    - 2.) "Preparing for Marriage", University of Minnesota, the Catholic Neuman Center, no date.
4. A program prepared by a national group:
  - a. Engaged Encounter Manual. St. Paul, Minnesota: National Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1976.

## History

Only two programs presented articles on marriage preparation (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, pp. 12-14; To Love and To Honor, The Liturgical Commission, section 1, 1983, pp. 1-4). The Liturgical Commission from the Diocese of Lansing stated that the pre-marriage ministry was just a beginning. It was their hope that an engaged couple would benefit from not only the parish's pre-marriage ministry but also from a continued program of support for marriage and family life within the parish community. Coleman and Coleman (1981) also stressed this element of support for couples preparing for marriage today.

Six of the programs discussed the formulation phase of their development (Coleman and Coleman, 1981; Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center, 1982; To Love and To Honor, The Liturgical Commission, 1983; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983). The Toledo Diocese (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) pointed out that the preparation for marriage has been a concern of the Catholic Church for centuries. Traditionally, the priests have been the ones responsible for preparing engaged couples for marriage. In the 1950's the Toledo Diocese expanded their resources by developing a diocesan Pre-Cana which were large groups of engaged couples listening to talks from experts such as doctors, bankers, insurance agents and priests. In the 1960's and 1970's there emerged a number of area Pre-Canas coordinated by a group of parishes or an individual parish rather than the diocese. These Pre-Canas began to use a combination of experts plus married couple witness talks. The next stage of growth happened in 1975, when a Teenage Marriage Preparation Policy was proposed and met with many negative reactions that turned into positive action toward a policy or program for all the couples in the Toledo Diocese. Following a widespread consultation with priests, deacons, counselors, married couples and others as well as research with policies and programs from other dioceses, the Toledo Diocese began its own marriage preparation program under the leadership of the Family Life Department of Catholic Social Services on 1 January 1977. In 1977 there were fifteen units of some type of premarital counseling available in the whole diocese. Today Toledo has sixty

units of Engaged Couple Conferences with over 600 married team couples involved. Fifty-five out of the sixty Engaged Couple Conferences are of a one day experience with large, small or a cluster of parishes.

The Most Rev. Kenneth J. Povish, the bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, reported his thanks to a commission and staff that devoted more than a year to the work of research and preparation for their marriage program manual, To Love and To Honor (Liturgical Commission, 1983, inside cover). During that one year period some twenty experts and the staff of more than twenty dioceses and two Catholic universities were consulted and offered valuable suggestions to the diocese's program for marriage preparation.

Coleman and Coleman (1981) stated that their program, used both in Canada and the United States, has evolved from years of counseling couples for marriage, from their talking with friends and from the insights of theologians, educational process leaders and good married couples.

Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980) said that their program had been used by the Diocese of Gary for thirty-seven weekend courses during the period of September 1977 through April 1980, serving 1300 engaged couples.

The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) indicated that their program had begun in Detroit in 1969, and has been growing ever since.

Rev. Michael Kolar and John Quesnell (1982) mentioned that their staff for their program has grown to 150 dedicated husbands, wives,



priests, single people and sisters. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (John Quesnell, letter to pastors, 1981) served 2,896 engaged persons with their weekend program and 780 engaged persons through their Thursday evening series in 1981, and the same group (John Quesnell, letter to pastors, 1982) touched the lives of 3,026 engaged persons through their weekend conference and 640 engaged persons in the evening sessions in 1982.

### Definition of Marriage

Although all sixteen programs stressed the aspect of "Christian" marriage, nine of the programs gave special emphasis to this area of marriage preparation, especially through the use of presentations, articles and exercises for the engaged couples (Coleman and Coleman, 1981; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a; Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Friedman, 1982; Markey and Meis, 1982; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a; To Love and To Honor, 1983; and Trokan, 1981).

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, Couple Pak 5, pp. 6-7) presented the couples with an article entitled "Marriage or Matrimony". The authors indicated that a couple who discover that they do not really know each other or are not responsive to each other should cancel their wedding plans (or at least postpone them). Along these lines the authors posed the question, "What about the couple who have no relationship with the community of believers in the Church?" Should this couple merely pretend to be responding to the Catholic community's call to vocation by entering into the sacrament of matrimony? Should the couple not at least postpone their Catholic wedding until there is a sharp improvement in their relationship with the Catholic community?

The authors went on to say that there is a difference between getting married at a Catholic Church and in the Catholic Church. The authors wrote that couples decide to live their couple relationship in a Catholic way, a way that makes their marriage a vital part of the life of their faith community. The authors viewed the sacrament of marriage as a vocation and as a relationship among couples in the church. All vocations in the church are gentle invitations; they are not commands. Thus, the basic question is not whether or not the two people want to love each other, but do they want to love each other totally, to make their relationship their whole way of life, to belong fully to this Christian community, to let their tenderness toward each other and their unity become the very source of these qualities in the community of believers. The authors concluded this article with an exercise for the engaged couples. The authors also made other references to the Christian marriage in their article "Split-Level Marriages" (1977a, Couple Pak 6, pp. 4-5) and their exercises (1977a, Couple Pak 1, pp. 1-3; 1977a, Couple Pak 5, p. 1; and 1977a, Couple Pak 6, pp. 4-5). The authors also presented an article and exercise on "Divorce" (1977a, Couple Pak 6, pp. 2-3). The authors stated that a cancelled wedding is much less devastating than a cancelled marriage.

Markey and Meis (1982) proposed the definitions and enemies of Christian marriage. Markey and Meis (1982, pp. 2-3) defined marriage as a sacrament, covenant, vocation and an "intimate community sharing life and love". In an exercise the authors listed the "enemies" of Christian marriage as materialism and consumerism, exaggerated individualism, racism, sexism and militarism and violence (Markey and

Meis, 1982, pp. 56-57).

Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980) gave five reasons for the breakdown in marriages today: (1) lack of self-understanding, (2) lack of understanding the spouse, (3) inappropriate motivation for marriage, (4) poor models of marriage and (5) poor communication techniques (pp. 19-23).

The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) listed these barriers to good marriages: (1) a situation where each is doing his/her own thing, (2) poor communication, (3) the substitution of other things for a close relationship and (4) the danger of few "friends as a couple", leaving the engaged couple with no community of other married couples (pp. 9-10). This group saw dissatisfaction, escape, weakness in the relationship and conflict as possible symptoms of a "spiritual divorce". The National Marriage Encounter group wrote in their presentation "Marriage Spirituality" (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 13) that there need not be a gap between the couples' faith and their married life. There is the need to have couples become conscious of their own sacrament (mystery or covenant) of marriage and give witness to that sacrament in their parish community at all times. Marriage spirituality is not just religious practices, but a balance between couple communication and couple prayer. In their article "Sacrament of Marriage and Its Graces" (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 13) the group pointed out the means God uses to make himself present to married couples in a personal way in their marriage. The group said that God's plan for marriage is that they could image God and that they strive toward unity as the ideal for marriage. In the

group's presentation "Open and Apostolic" (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 14) the group alluded to the mission and responsibility of Christian marriage. The group cited each Christian's commitment to live his/her baptism and belief in Christ. There is also the commitment that results from participating in the sacrament of marriage. There is the commitment of two people to each other to live their love, to become one and to become a new entity by trusting in the bond of love. It is also a commitment to the couple's family to teach their children as persons, as Christians and as servants to others. It is a commitment to unity, so that friends who see them may be able to believe in marriage. The group later presented an exercise on the values of Christian marriage (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 37).

Coleman and Coleman (1981, pp. 25-26) described nine types of marriages, "Christian" being one of them. In the article "Theologies of Marriage" Coleman and Coleman (1981, pp. 27-28) described Christian marriage as sacrament, covenant and the mystical reflection of Christ and his church.

Tate-O'Brien (1981a, pp. 23-28) offered a more complete list of definitions for a sacramental marriage. She included words like "permanent", "fully human", "healing", "life-giving", "sign", "vocation", "covenant", "religious" and "God's Plan". She concluded this section of her work with an exercise for the engaged couples to fill out.

In Karen Hurley's article "Marriage Today: New Questions, Christian Answers" (Friedman, 1982) Karen referred to marriage as commitment,

permanence and shared values. She stated that Christians in marriage commit themselves to a shared future that will challenge them to grow in ways they cannot imagine as they begin their covenant together. In the article "What Catholics Promise in Marriage" Mary and James Kenny (Friedman, 1982) wrote that Catholics are challenged to promise five things in marriage: (1) the unconditional promise, (2) the promise to be faithful, (3) the promise to allow the freedom to grow, (4) the promise to be fruitful and (5) the promise to reach out to a world in need. In the article "Marriage: A Lived Sacrament" Leonard Foley (Friedman, 1982) talked about this ideal. Leonard stressed marriage as a call to be consciously Christian and as a concern of the entire Christian community.

Trokan (1981, pp. 38-39) described marriage as a sacrament ("a present/future action"), a commitment to unity, a commitment to sacrament each other through faithful and faith-fulled love ("being Christ for the other and a shared love which leads to community") and a rootedness in the Gospel message and values of Jesus Christ. In the pamphlet "God's Plan for Marriage" (Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the Dioceses of Wisconsin, no date) one page is devoted to defining the sacrament of marriage. Trokan (1981, 1982) and his Archdiocese-- the Archdiocese of Milwaukee-- carried the theme of invitation as did Friedman (1982). Trokan wrote two exercises about the sacramentality of marriage (1981, pp. 39-40 and 1982, p. 27).

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, section 2, 1983) provided the reader with a background for an understanding of sacrament

and marriage. The four main points of this discussion were:

1. The Christian vision of marriage is unique because, in the wider context of religious experience, Christianity itself is unique.
2. Marriage, as it is understood by the Church, in a number of significant ways stands apart from the idea of marriage that seems to prevail in practice in many sectors of our culture today.
3. As a sacrament, Christian marriage has its own spirituality: a special way of living for each other and for God.
4. In sum, a helpful image for understanding and living Christian marriage is that of a journey-- with all the instability, the uncertainties, the stresses, the fatigue, the transitions and changes that a journey implies. Indeed, marriage participates in the pilgrim journey of the Church itself, and Christian spouses are in solidarity with the entire people of God on exodus and exile. We march by today's version of "the column of cloud by day (and) the column of fire by night" (Exodus 13:22), and together we seek the homeland promised us by the Father. (pp. 79-84)

#### The Goals and Purposes of Marriage Preparation Programs

All sixteen programs referred to goals and purposes, either directly or indirectly. The programs differed in number and specificity (see Table 10).

Coleman and Coleman (1981) were the only authors that mentioned specifically the concept of "realistic goals" for marriage preparation. The authors pointed out that the whole pre-marriage program takes place amid an atmosphere of excitement and expectation centered not on marriage itself but on an already scheduled wedding date. But even with such a limitation the authors felt that counselors can and do achieve necessary goals. In fact, if the goals would be realistic, then the counselors would find this ministry most rewarding. The authors cited these realistic goals for marriage preparation:

Table 10

## Goals/Purposes of Marriage Preparation Programs

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 1. Programs prepared by individuals to be used at a parish or diocesan level:

- a. "Your Marriage: The Great Adventure" (Aitchison and Aitchison, 1979)

Goals:

- 1.) To invite married couples to take an in-depth look at their marriages;
- 2.) To allow married couples to grow as Christians in their marital relationship;
- 3.) The program ends when the married couples reach out to others through social action.

Purposes:

- 1.) To enrich and strengthen couples already married;
- 2.) To help couples live a Christian marriage in a secular society;
- 3.) To provide husbands and wives with the opportunity to take an intimate look at themselves and their relationship in the light of Christ's teachings;
- 4.) To examine why couples marry and why they live marriage the way they do.

- b. "Only Love Can Make It Easy" (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, 1982)

Goals:

- 1.) That more and more couples will discover the wonder of each;
- 2.) That couples will experience the joy of discovering the goodness of the Church.

Purpose:

- 1.) To avoid the stress and strain that come to the newly married couples.

- c. "Evenings for the Engaged" (Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a, 1977b)

(table continues)

- c. "Evenings for the Engaged" (Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a, 1977b)

Goals:

- 1.) For the engaged couples to experience their relationship as number one;
- 2.) For the engaged couples to realize that the real issue to be faced is their love for each other, how to live out that love now as an engaged couple and later as husband and wife;
- 3.) To provide not only the message of the call, but an experience of what it means to live out the vocation of marriage on a day-to-day basis.

Purposes:

- 1.) Not to replace personal guidance and counseling;
  - 2.) To combat the free love, promiscuity and indifference towards permanence in marriage and towards the Church;
  - 3.) To teach engaged couples what marriage is all about, tell them to communicate, to give facts about sex, birth control and money management;
  - 4.) To add to what other programs provide (not replace them);
  - 5.) To give an atmosphere of how engaged couples can achieve the intimate life-long union they desire;
  - 6.) To provide incentive for the engaged couples to share with each other their deepest thoughts, feelings, dreams, attitudes and expectations of each other, God and the Church.
- d. "Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage: A Marriage Preparation Program" (Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980)

Goals:

- 1.) To enable couples to prepare themselves conscientiously for life together as husband and wife;
- 2.) The multiplication of loving, prosperous families which will enhance and strengthen the nation;
- 3.) For married couples to spread the Good News as they reflect the comforting joy and radiant light of the Lord;
- 4.) To stress the permanence of marriage;
- 5.) To make fidelity the cornerstone of marriage;
- 6.) To make a relationship that is the source of mutual love and procreation;
- 7.) For the person to learn about him/herself, his/her partner, to share him/herself and to build their relationship.

(table continues)



- d. "Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage: A Marriage Preparation Program" (Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980)

Purposes:

- 1.) To give direction needed to fulfill the couple's dreams of a permanent relationship;
- 2.) To understand that the couple's values and needs give direction to their behavior;
- 3.) To teach values that are important to a successful marriage;
- 4.) To show how being real, understanding and caring are processes that create the best conditions for being married.

- e. "Making Ready for Marriage: Planning for a Day, Preparing for a Lifetime" (Friedman, 1982)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To contribute to unity in love which begins on the wedding day, but lasts a lifetime;
- 2.) To deepen the partner's love for each other;
- 3.) To explore how membership in the Body of Christ enriches the love of the couple;
- 4.) To probe new areas of growth in the couple's relationship.

- f. "For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation" (Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b)

Goal:

- 1.) To meet the basic pastoral needs of the engaged couple.

Purposes: Indirect references only.

- g. "Love in Deed" (Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To help engaged couples put their religious and secular preparation in order;
- 2.) To provide a professional theological understanding of the sacrament of marriage;
- 3.) To teach simple and effective skills in communication;
- 4.) To enrich the family life of married couples;

(table continues)

g. "Love in Deed" (Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b)

Purposes:

- 5.) To assist Church leaders who are pastorally concerned to provide engaged couples with encouragement and support so important in their laying of a foundation for a successful marriage.

2. Programs prepared by a diocese to be used within that particular diocese (or dioceses in that state):

a. The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date)

Goals:

- 1.) To develop and/or increase open and honest communication between engaged couples;
- 2.) To provide an extended period of time together for each engaged couple in a rather serious and intense atmosphere;
- 3.) To give an opportunity for the engaged couple to probe deeply into their own relationship and discover significant values, questions, issues or problems that they have to confront if their marriage is to be successful.

Purposes:

- 1.) To help those working with engaged couples either prior to or following attendance at a Marriage Discovery weekend;
- 2.) The more the engaged couples know how the weekend is done, the more positive they will feel about coming;
- 3.) The better you as marriage counselor understand this program, the easier it is for you to effectively follow up the engaged couples after they have experienced this Marriage Discovery.

b. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date; Markey and Meis, 1982)

Goals:

- 1.) To provide a framework within which the engaged couple has the best possible opportunities to assess their individual readiness to marry each other at this time in the development of their love relationship;
- 2.) To give the church community an opportunity itself to fulfill its responsibility by joining in this assessment;

(table continues)

- b. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date; Markey and Meis, 1982)

Goals:

- 3.) To provide a common policy for the diocese(s);
- 4.) To avoid the common obstacles to readiness for marriage;
- 5.) To bring the engaged couple to a new and deeper awareness of communications, sexuality, family life, sacrament;
- 6.) To promote discussion between engaged parties in areas they may not have considered fully as they prepare for marriage.

Purposes:

- 1.) To review the decision that the engaged couple made about their life together;
- 2.) To understand the origin of many attitudes and values that each of them bring into their relationship in shaping their own marriage and family;
- 3.) To go past their own respective families in creating a new family through the use of open and honest communication;
- 4.) To realize that this is only an introduction, only a beginning (we urge the newly married couples to seek out marriage and family growth opportunities).

- c. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983)

Goals:

- 1.) To deepen the couple's personal relationship with the Father in Christ;
- 2.) To embrace the purposes listed below;
- 3.) To see pre-marriage ministry in the Church as only the beginning;
- 4.) To begin ministries to the married;
- 5.) To recognize the contribution of the diocese to the Family Life Ministry.

Purposes:

- 1.) To enhance the involvement of the engaged couple with the parish community and the pastor, and to deepen that relationship;
- 2.) To provide sacramental preparation;
- 3.) To promote, on the part of each of the engaged partners, a deeper understanding of him/herself and of his/her partner, and a better communication between the two;
- 4.) To teach skills needed for marriage and parenting;

(table continues)

c. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983)

Purposes:

- 5.) To fulfill the Church's canonical requirements;
- 6.) To seek to prevent "problem" marriages.

d. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee ("Catholic Policy for Marriage Preparation Working Well", no date; "Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation", no date; "Enrichment Programs for the Engaged", 1983; "God's Plan for Marriage: Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation from the Catholic Bishops in the State of Wisconsin, no date; Prasad and Weber, 1982; Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date; Trokan, 1981, 1982)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To see that the Common Policy for pastoral marriage preparation of the Church of Wisconsin was written to help engaged couples live a more enriching married life;
- 2.) To see how the Church is a caring community;
- 3.) To help couples realize the seriousness and the sacred nature of the sacrament of marriage;
- 4.) To see the need for a comprehensive and in-depth look at the self and the future spouse in a structured setting before making a life-time commitment;
- 5.) To take a look at why marriages break up;
- 6.) To give engaged couples a serious look at the joys and sorrows of married life;
- 7.) To provide an interpersonal approach;
- 8.) To begin where the couple is in their relationship and to then go deeper;
- 9.) To realize that there is always room for growth in a love relationship;
- 10.) To recognize that their love is a lifelong adventure.

e. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To understand that the Church wants marriages to succeed;
- 2.) To recognize the serious obligations that bishops, priests and deacons have in the preparation of the faithful for all the sacraments;

(table continues)

- e. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date)

Purposes:

- 3.) To allow the Church to instruct engaged couples to the fullest meaning of matrimony (to the best of their abilities).

- f. The Diocese of Toledo ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook, no date; "Engaged Couple Conference", no date; "Preparation for Marriage", no date; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To promote formation of the engaged couples through dialogue and integration (with some presentation of information);  
 2.) To show respect to both the engaged couples and the team couples and to treat them as persons;  
 3.) To welcome all into the Christian community with an evident Christian/Catholic celebration of spirituality and sacramentality of marriage.

3. Programs prepared by individuals for local use:

- a. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)

Goals: Indirect references only.

Purposes:

- 1.) To explore not only the obvious issues of marriage, but also the core issues which give real meaning to life;  
 2.) To provide engaged couples with the opportunity to hear, see and experience the beauty of another Christian marriage and to decide what they desire to build;  
 3.) To provide engaged couples with the opportunity to seriously examine the meaning and nature of Christian marriage.

- b. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date)

Goals: Indirect references only.

(table continues)

- b. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date)

Purpose:

- 1.) To share as much as possible the experience of married couples and those who work closely with engaged couples.

4. A Program prepared by a national group:

- a. Engaged Encounter Manual (National Marriage Encounter, 1976)

Goal:

- 1.) To respond to the engaged couple's need to prepare for marriage.

Purpose:

- 1.) For the engaged couples to share from their own lives with other couples (story-telling).

1. To help the couple see themselves through each other's eyes and begin or advance in the ability to communicate with each other.
2. To develop a friendly relationship with the couple so they will be more open to hear strong words, if these words need to be said.
3. To develop a friendly relationship with the couple so that in times of need later in their married lives they will have a listener available to them.
4. To create a feeling that the pastoral personnel and the Church community are interested in helping those who choose marriage and so to provide an atmosphere in which they can more easily grow in faith.
5. To help the couple plan a marriage ceremony consistent with their beliefs and with those of the diocese and parish.
6. To detect serious problems, especially personality or growth problems, which might destroy the marriage, and to take the necessary steps to assist in their solution. Failing this, the pastoral counselor may have to refuse the Church's blessing for a marriage that seems doomed to certain failure.

7. To learn from the couple more about the intricacies of human nature and from the relationship with them, to grow in a more understanding and complete human being. (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, p. 15)

### Ministry to the Newly Married

Eleven of the sixteen programs cited a need for a follow-up to the couple's wedding (Aitchison and Aitchison, 1979; Coleman and Coleman, 1981, 1982; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a, 1977b; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Friedman, 1982; Quesnell and Kolar, 1982; Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983; Trokan, 1982).

Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) developed their entire program for newly married couples. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) and Friedman (1982) felt that their materials could be used later as a stimulus for discussion in the marriage situation.

Several of the programs referred to the special relationships that had formed in the small groups, and the authors gave these groups various "titles"-- Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b) said there was a sense of family in the small groups that would continue after the couples' weddings; Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) called these new relationships as very unique and supportive during this delicate transition into the first year of marriage; Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) saw this friendship as an on-going ministry, especially during the first critical months of marriage. The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) indicated the importance of good friends and an on-going stimulus for growth after marriage, but they also admitted that at the present

time the group did no follow-up to their couples who participated in the Engaged Encounters. And the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) highlighted the pre-marriage ministry in the parish as only the beginning; the diocese also stressed the ministry to the married.

For a list of specific ministries to the newly married see Table 11 for the listing of the program and its suggestions.

### Common Policies in Marriage Preparation

#### Why A Common Policy

Only five of the programs reviewed made mention to a common policy in the area of marriage preparation, and all five were programs prepared by the diocese (the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph, the Diocese of Lansing, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Diocese of Providence and the Diocese of Toledo). The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date) together with the other dioceses of the state of Wisconsin cited several reasons for the creation of a common policy: the Church is a caring community with a deep respect and concern for all her members, both educational and formational experiences have been built into the policy, the Church is concerned for the good of society and the future of marriage and the family. The policy included the three important sections of assessment, instruction and liturgy. Like the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph referred to a common policy for the entire state of Missouri (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date). The Diocese of



Table 11

Ministries to the Engaged and Newly Married

<u>Program</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>
1. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979)	a. The entire program is directed toward the married couple.
2. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982)	a. The authors' materials can be used as a stimulus for discussion in the marriage situation.
3. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b)	a. Pray for the newly married couples. b. Within a week write each couple a letter.
4. Friedman (1982)	a. The author's materials can be used as a stimulus for discussion in the marriage situation.
5. Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b)	a. Share a meal with the bride and groom-to-be. b. Attend a Sunday liturgy with the couple. c. Be an Engaged Encounter prayer couple. d. Be with the couple at their wedding. e. Share in the wedding pictures of the newly married couple. f. Send an anniversary card to the newly married couple.
6. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b)	a. Help the engaged couple with their wedding. b. Attend their wedding. c. Write a note of thanksgiving to them. d. Invite the newly married couple over for dinner. e. Help them adjust to marriage and to enter into the parish community. f. Recommend that they join a support group for newly married couples in the parish.

(table continues)

Program

6. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b)

7. The Diocese of Lansing  
(To Love and To Honor, 1983)

Suggestions

- g. Encourage the couple to take time for themselves to be alone and intimate.
  - h. Encourage the newly married to make a retreat.
  - i. Encourage them to make a Marriage Encounter weekend.
  - j. Have the couple share with each other what they learned from their jobs, schools, etc.
  - k. Recommend that they have an annual physical exam.
  - l. Encourage them to remain healthy and attractive.
- 
- a. Take time in some follow-up instruction six months after the marriage.
  - b. Write a follow-up letter of congratulations and support from the pastor and/or the sponsor couple to reach the newly married couples a month or so after their wedding.
  - c. Give a gift of a magazine subscription such as "Marriage and Family Living".
  - d. Send them periodic mailings of literature or pamphlets or suggested readings.
  - e. Send anniversary greetings from the parish.
  - f. Send them literature of the parish happenings.
  - g. There can be occasional brief visits to their home from the parish priest.
  - h. Invite the newly married couples to take part in the marriage preparation process after one year of marriage.
  - i. Encourage the parish to give programs of peer support and counseling in troubled situations (this is not intended to replace the professional counseling),

(table continues)

ProgramSuggestions

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>7. The Diocese of Lansing<br/>(<u>To Love and To Honor</u>, 1983)</p>   | <p>i. Enrichment for good marriages, parenting support systems, day care opportunities, training for natural family planning, pre-engagement education at the grade, junior and high school levels.</p>   |
| <p>8. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1982; also some information can be found in <u>Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation</u>, no date)</p> | <p>a. List the resource centers available in the area for married people.</p>   |
| <p>9. The Diocese of Toledo (<u>Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project</u>, 1983)</p>   | <p>a. Send a parish anniversary card on the couple's first anniversary.<br/> b. Assist in the couple's first baptismal preparation.<br/> c. Help in the early years of parenting.<br/> d. Celebrate the couple's wedding anniversaries.<br/> e. Provide a social group in the parish for the newly married.<br/> f. Provide enrichment groups for the newly married.<br/> g. Create a welcoming committee for the newly married.<br/> h. Send a notice to the couple's new parish about their arrival into that parish community and about their recent marriage.</p> |
| <p>10. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)</p>  | <p>a. Have a reunion in one year.<br/> b. Have a couple type retreat each year or have a retreat for the couple themselves.<br/> c. List the retreat houses available for marriage enrichment in the area.<br/> d. Provide pre-natal classes for the birth of their first child.<br/> e. Have them become involved in the parish.</p>   |

(table continues)

<u>Program</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>
10. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. List the counseling available in the area through the various community services.</li> <li>g. Have them subscribe to a diocesan newspaper, a magazine like "Our Family" or "Guideposts".</li> <li>h. Have them watch certain television shows or listen to certain radio programs.</li> </ul>
11. <u>Engaged Encounter Manual</u> (1976)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Stress the need for a support group for the newly married.</li> <li>b. Provide a monthly support group meeting for the newly married couples.</li> </ul>

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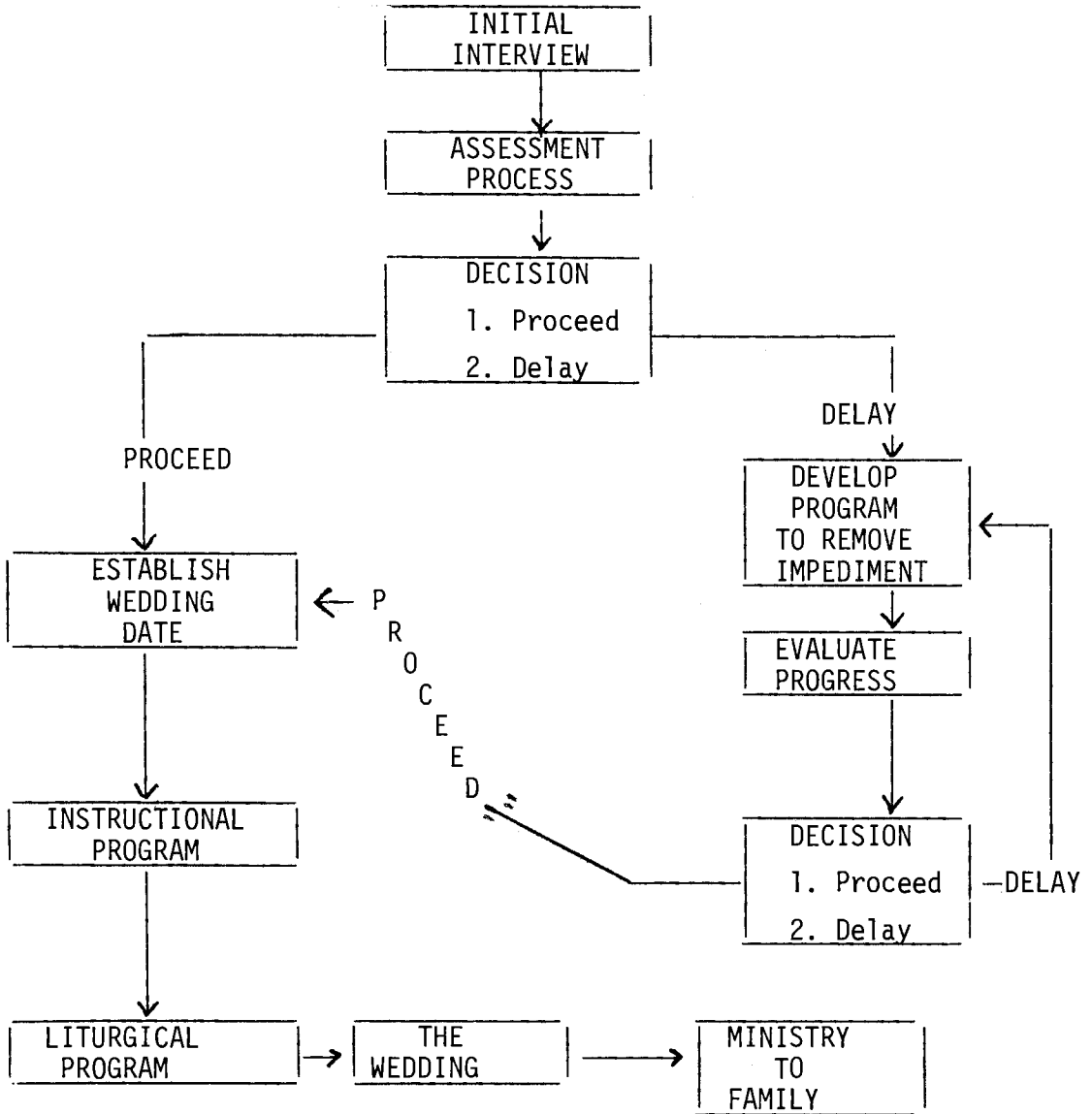
Lansing offered the idea about a parish marriage policy handbook (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 171-174), the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph recommended an on-going policy (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, pp. 10-12) and the Diocese of Providence suggested the writing of a resolution (Protano, no date, p. 4). Two of the dioceses-- the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Diocese of Lansing-- provided "flow-charts" in the proposed common policy for pastoral marriage preparation (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 3; To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 27). The only difference in their respective charts was that the Diocese of Lansing included "ministry to the family" after the wedding (see Figure 1).

#### Who Is the Program For?

All but two of the programs specifically mentioned who the program was geared to (The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota

Figure Caption

Figure 1. A Flow Chart (the Diocese of Lansing)



in Minneapolis, Minnesota, "Preparing for Marriage", no date; Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980). In all fourteen programs the term "engaged couple" appeared, but several made qualifications.

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b) asked for couples who were engaged and not just thinking about marriage. These authors desired their couples to be serious about their approaching marriage and to be open to being ambitious for their love.

Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) were particularly concerned about young married couples. These authors felt that their process worked best after the married couples experienced either a Marriage Encounter or some Marriage Enrichment Program. The authors also saw their program as valuable preparation for those who worked in premarital programs.

Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) desired to help couples entering marriage to discover more about themselves and to express what they discovered in the liturgy of their wedding day. The authors wrote that these couples did not have to be highly educated, they did not have to articulate their ideas and feelings with ease and they did not have to participate in the Middle Class American Lifestyle.

Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) stated that his program fit in well with the social-economic and cultural background of couples in any given parish. He indicated that his program could be used to overcome language barriers and even reading and writing handicaps.

Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) addressed her program with both the needs of the engaged couple and the concerns of pastors/religious leaders in mind.

While this program was available to any engaged couple, the Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date) said that their process was particularly suited for those couples who needed to improve their communication skills, who seemed to have overlooked some aspects of married life, and who seemed to be approaching marriage lightly or naively. The diocese asked that these couples have an open and positive disposition toward the weekend, and that they come three to six months before their scheduled wedding.

The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date) recommended that engaged couples desiring to be married in a parish community call the pastor as soon as they intended to marry.

For "normal situations" the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and to Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 47-132) asked that engaged couples be practicing Catholics, mature and not pregnant.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee ("Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation", no date; "Enrichment Programs for the Engaged", 1983; "God's Plan for Marriage: Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation for the Catholic Bishops in the State of Wisconsin", no date; Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date) said that the couples must contact the priest as soon as they made their formal decision to marry (that is, their formal engagement), and this was to be done at least four months before their anticipated wedding date.

The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date) wrote that all couples

planning to marry in the diocese were required to enroll in the twelve-step program.

The Diocese of Toledo ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date; "Engaged Couple Conference", no date; "Preparation for Marriage", no date; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) called for those couples who had decided to marry to come and enroll in their program at least six months prior to the wedding date. The diocese indicated that their program was designed for Christians, but open to all couples.

The National Marriage Encounter group (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) suggested that the team for this weekend experience keep the composition of the group making the encounter in mind by answering the following questions:

Who is coming to the program?...Have they been forced, perhaps with the threat that otherwise they could not be married? Have they been formally engaged and do they have the date set? Or are they testing out whether they should continue thinking and working toward marriage with this person?... (p. 5)

### Special Situations

Besides the "normal situations" as described by the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 47-132), there were eighteen other situations. These special situations are listed below along with the source and page number(s). Helpful articles and ideas are also provided.

#### 1. The Previously Married

- a. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982, p. 6)
- b. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 165-166)



Article: "Ministering to a Couple Entering a Second Marriage"  
(To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 166-169)

## 2. Interfaith Marriages (Ecumenical Marriages)

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 5)
- b. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 18-20)
- c. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, pp. 7-8)
- d. The Diocese of Toledo ("Preparation for Marriage, no date)

Articles: "Catholic Ecumenical Practices in Regard to Matrimony" (Tate-O'Brien, 1981b, pp. 14-15)

"The Ecumenical Marriage" (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, pp. 20-22)

"Interdenominational and Interfaith Marriages"  
(To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 133-147)

Exercise: "Interfaith Marriage Reflections" (Trokan, 1982, p. 28)

## 3. A Marriage Involving Non-Practicing Catholics

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 163)
- b. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 29)

## 4. The Marriage of Minors

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 6, 22-23)
- b. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, p. 8)
- c. The Diocese of Toledo ("Preparation for Marriage", no date)
- d. Friedman (1982, inside cover of packet of materials)
- e. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 29)

Ideas: Questions for parents and teenagers who intend to marry (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 31-33)

Successful forecast for marriage ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date, p. 7)

Interviewing the parents (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 155-156)

5. Couples Living Together Before Marriage

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 163-164)

6. Unchurched Catholics

- a. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 21)

7. Pregnancy

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 6, 161-162)
- b. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 24-27)
- c. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, p. 9)
- d. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3)
- e. The Diocese of Toledo ("Preparation for Marriage, no date)

Idea: Parent evaluation session for parents of engaged couple when a pregnancy is involved (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 30)

8. Validations

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 6)
- b. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 28)
- c. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, pp. 9-10)
- d. The Diocese of Toledo ("Preparation for Marriage", no date; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983, p. 5)

9. When Couples Cannot Participate Together in Pre-Marriage Programs

- a. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 164)

- b. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3)
- c. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b, p. 15)
- d. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 30)

10. Ministering to Immature Couples

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 30)

Article: "Ministering to Immature Couples" (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 149-159)

Idea: Gathering information with immature couples (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 151-155)

11. Military Service

- a. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3)

12. Relocation

- a. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3)

13. Conflicting Employment Schedules

- a. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3)

14. The Handicapped Personality

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 30)

15. The Couple Who Wants No Children

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 30)

16. The Attitude of Impermanence

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, pp. 30-31)

17. Birth Control

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 31)

18. American Consumerism

- a. Coleman and Coleman (1981, p. 31)

Reasons for Delay

Three of the programs gave reasons for delay in the process of marriage preparation. The Diocese of Lansing cited six examples in the

Church where marriage should be postponed:

1. Nonpractice of the Catholic party (parties) with no intention of returning to the practice of the Catholic faith;
2. Substantial lack of appreciation for the spiritual and sacramental aspects of marriage;
3. Lack of readiness for marriage assessed by the pastor through personal interview, consultation with the parents and pre-marriage evaluation and counseling;
4. Refusal of the parties to take part in the customary local marriage preparation program or to participate in pre-marriage assessment, evaluation or counseling as deemed necessary for proper preparation for the reception of the sacrament;
5. Denial by one or both parties of any of the essential components of Christian marriage (permanence of union, creative fidelity to each other, openness to children); and
6. In case of a mixed marriage, where there is serious disagreement concerning the practice of the faith by the Catholic party or of the faith education of the children. (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 7)

In the section "Ministering to Immature Couples" the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 157-158) gave five reasons for deferring a marriage in such a situation.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee listed five reasons for the delay of a marriage:

1. Nonpractice of the Catholic faith by both parties with no intention of returning to the practice of the faith;
2. Substantial lack of appreciation for the spiritual and sacramental aspects of marriage;
3. Lack of readiness for marriage, such as immaturity, undue social pressure, etc.;
4. Where separation of the couple for an extended period of time will occur shortly after the marriage (i.e., military service, continued education, etc.); and
5. Refusal of the parties to participate in any of the steps of the marriage preparation that apply to them. (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 12-13)

The Diocese of Toledo provided this list of reasons for delay of marriage:

1. A lack of minimum faith, which would require that the Catholic partner(s) profess the Catholic faith;
2. Lack of readiness for marriage as determined by the priest/ deacon, in consultation with parents or guardians, and through pre-marriage counseling and evaluation; and
3. Refusal of the parties to participate in any of the steps of the marriage preparation program that apply to them. (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983, p. 5)

### Referrals

Only the Dioceses of Lansing and Milwaukee mentioned the subject of referrals. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 156-157) indicated that the sponsor couple or the priest would make the referral. In the section "Remedial Programs" the Archdiocese of Milwaukee gave five options: (1) counseling by a priest, (2) referral to a marriage counselor, (3) referral to an educational program, (4) referral to an experiential program and (5) time (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 14-15). The Archdiocese of Milwaukee also provided a list of resource centers (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 40-41) and a list of local referrals (Trakan, 1982, p. 34).

### Appeal

Five of the sixteen programs made references to the process of appeal. These included the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 7), the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook

for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 29), the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, p. 10), the Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 3) and the Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983, p. 5). The Archdiocese of Milwaukee presented an article entitled "Model Marriage Appeal Board" (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 37-39).

The Roles of the Church, Priest, Sponsor Couple and Engaged Couple  
The Church and Marriage

Eleven of the sixteen programs brought out the significant relationship between the Church and marriage (Coleman and Coleman, 1982; Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977b; Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, 1980; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Friedman, 1982; Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date; Protano, no date; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983).

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, pp. 1-180) devoted its entire first section to ministry in the parish. The commission who prepared this manual for marriage preparation pointed out that the Church is not out to prevent marriages but to promote good ones. Kenneth J. Povish, the bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, wrote:

....It is imperative to recognize that the strength of a parish lies in the strength of its families. Ministering to families--

including 'families in the making'-- is thus an essential phase of the overall mission of the parish to proclaim the Good News. It should also be emphasized that pre-marriage ministry belongs not to clergy alone but to the parish community as a whole, especially to those already living the sacrament of marriage.... (To Love and To Honor, 1983, inside page)

James S. Sullivan, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, wrote:

....Every diocese, every parish, and every priest in some way has always helped an engaged couple by way of spiritual guidance and counseling as they advanced toward their wedding date. We believe that a more concerned effort should be made to mobilize each parish community in the ministry of providing sacramental preparation for marriage. We feel that, with God's help and with the support of the parish, the present picture of marriage, in which failed commitments and divorce appear so prominently and tragically, can give way to a far more hopeful picture of marriage and family rooted in the gospel.... (To Love and To Honor, 1983, inside page)

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b) picked up on this theme of ministry to the engaged. The authors saw this as a responsibility of the Church to prepare engaged couples for marriage. In fact, the authors indicated that the engaged couples and their future marriages are important to all the people in the Church. The authors felt that a real sense of family could be achieved through this marriage preparation. Humberto Cardinal Medeiros, the former Archbishop of Boston, commented: "It is of utmost importance for us as Church to share with the engaged couple the beautiful concept and reality of the sanctity of Christian marriage and the family" (Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977b, p. 5). Dahl, Dahl, and Gallagher (1977b, p. 8) wrote an article "Marriage and the Church" describing the responsibility of the Church in its ministry to the engaged.

Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) stressed the on-going ministry of the

Church, especially after the wedding. There is the need to help the engaged couples enter into the Church community. With the involvement of the parish priest, the married couples and the engaged couples this shared ministry should eventually bring the larger Church community to a livelier experience of Christian loving and sharing.

Friedman (1982) reported that the parish would begin to share in the joy and excitement which the engaged couples were feeling as they prepared for their marriages. One of the articles included in Friedman's packet of materials was written by Leonard Foley-- "Marriage: A Lived Sacrament". In this article Foley referred to marriage as a call to be consciously Christian and as a concern of the Christian community.

Two of the programs-- Coleman and Coleman (1982, p. 7) and Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980, pp.13-15)-- offered words of congratulations to the engaged couples from the Church community.

The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) stated that the working relationship between married couples and engaged couples would strengthen the parish community. The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, no date) went as far as to say that the Church is responsible for the living out of the sacrament of marriage, especially the married couples and the priests. In his 3 June 1983 letter the Bishop of Toledo, James R. Hoffman, reminded all those who ministered to engaged couples of the importance of this preparation (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983, inside cover).

In his letter to the priests, deacons and coordinating couples of



the Diocese of Providence, Bishop Louis E. Gelineau discussed the comprehensive plan for marriage preparation. He saw this ministry to the engaged as a ministry for all, and he hoped that this plan would enhance the continuous and gradual preparation of each person in the Church, whether or not that person ultimately chooses the married vocation (Protano, no date, inside page).

The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, pp. 1-3) and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, pp. 1-3; Trokan, 1981, pp. 13-15) also commented on this concern on the part of the Church for the totality of married life. In his 1 March 1983 letter to the pastoral ministers of marriage the Archbishop of Milwaukee-- Rembert G. Weakland-- wrote:

As I vision 'Beyond Renew', I dream of each parish Faith-community becoming the place where all married couples are prayed with, healed, and nurtured at all stages of the marriage and family life cycle. As we try to respond as Church in 'The Decade of the Family', our role is to enable couples to live their covenant by continually, unconditionally, recommitting themselves and believing their love can survive the many changes and challenges that await them. Our duty is to help couples live in discipleship and be a sign to the world that the mystery of Jesus is present and active in their lives. (Rembert Weakland, personal communication)

### The Role of the Married Couple

Ten of the sixteen programs discussed the responsibilities and personal characteristics of the married couple (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, 1982; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a, 1977b; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Friedman, 1982; "Marriage Discovery", no date; Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983;

Trokan, 1981).

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b, pp. 19-24) suggested that the married couple believe, grow, care, share and belong.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1981) presented this criteria for a married couple who functioned as a sponsor couple for the engaged:

1. Couple's own relationship must be of a solid nature-- a relationship where communication with one another is of an on-going nature and at a deep level.
2. Couple should have a good understanding of what it means to be Church and have a profound appreciation of the Christian dimension of marriage.
3. Couple has shown a desire of growth in their relationship by attendance at Marriage Encounter or other marriage enrichment sessions.
4. Couple must have the ability to communicate adequately and feel somewhat comfortable at public speaking.
5. Couple must be able to share themselves and their relationship on a very personal level in the four areas covered in the sessions: self-awareness; communication in marriage; sexuality and the sacramentality of marriage.
6. Couple must be persons of obvious personal integrity, open-minded and possessors of a good sense of humor.
7. Couple must have the ability to work well with members of presenting teams.
8. Couple must have observed an Enrichment Program for the Engaged. (p. 2)

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 17-24) stated that the married couples were to help the engaged couples to be involved actively in the preparation process, to assess the engaged couples' needs and to teach various concepts and skills necessary for a successful marriage.

Friedman (1982) saw the roles of the married couples as ones of

sharing themselves with the engaged couples, giving concrete examples from their own lives, actively involving themselves in the process and being living witnesses to the value and importance of Christian marriage.

Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) saw the married couple's main role in their sharing of experiences in Christian marriage. Ruhnke stated that the married couple establishes a bond of trust with the engaged couple, that the married couple is a sponsor for the engaged couple (similar to sponsors for baptism and confirmation) and that the married couple needs to prepare for each session.

Coleman and Coleman (1981) offered this list of personal qualities of the pre-marriage counselor (or married couple):

1. The counselor is a person of conviction and has his or her own world view. One's life is consistent with that world view. Given the fact that the counselor is acting in the name of the Church, that world view must (in essentials at least) conform to the world view of the Church.
2. The counselor neither fears to own or express his or her world view, nor imposes it on the couple preparing for marriage.
3. The counselor respects the couple's freedom to discuss their understanding of marriage and their relationship with one another even when the counselor neither understands nor agrees with them.
4. The counselor does not fear self-revelation and a truly human interaction with the couple.
5. The counselor neither encourages a dependent relationship nor enters into a dependent relationship with the couple.
6. The counselor is not threatened by the couple and takes steps to keep from threatening the couple. The counselor does not stand on his or her dignity nor rely on office for protection for self.

7. The counselor is neither elated when successful nor unduly discouraged by failure but always willing to look for ways to improve the work. (p. 44)

Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) indicated that married couples are to help the engaged couples to prepare for marriage and adjust to marriage in the first crucial months, to help the couples prepare for their wedding ceremony and to see their ministry as open-ended. The married couples are to be concerned about their own marriage growth, they are to make a Marriage Encounter weekend themselves, they are to practice dialogue and they are to have some understanding of the sacrament and skills in communication.

The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date) stressed the aspect of confidentiality to be practiced by the married couples in their ministry to the engaged.

The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) stressed the power of personal sharing which the married couples possess. The National Marriage Encounter also included several quotes from Pope Paul VI in his address to the Teams of Our Lady in May 1970 at Rome about the roles of married couples in marriage preparation (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 39).

Coleman and Coleman (1977b, pp. 29-31) provided ideas on "Getting to Know Your Engaged Couples", and Ruhnke (1981b) offered suggestions like "How Do You Contact an Engaged Couple" (p. 13) and "What Steps Do You Take to Prepare for Your First Session with an Engaged Couple" (pp. 14-15). While Ruhnke (1981b, p. 28) provided an example of a

letter to be written to a prospective married couple to act as a sponsor couple in the marriage preparation program, Tate-O'Brien (1981b, p. 11) gave an example of a letter to be written to the newly married couple by the sponsor couple.

Finally, the Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) raised the question: "Who ministers to the sponsor couple?"

#### The Role of the Team Couple (Coordinating Couple)

Four of the programs commented on the team (coordinating) couple. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, p. 8) offered a job description for this team couple in the parish. He listed the necessary qualities, the commitment called for, the guarantees, the duties, education, salary and reimbursement. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) stated that the team couple had the overall responsibility for the program, that they did little of the direct work and that they used their time to recruit and guide other married couples in the program. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b) indicated that the sponsor couple and the priest were the team, and they determined who did what. The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) wrote that the team couple was to share their own lives, keep their presentations brief and allow more time for personal reflection with the engaged couples. The National Marriage Encounter said that the team was to come from a core group of three to five married couples who had experienced some type of marriage enrichment.

#### The Priest's Role

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common

Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 4) listed the responsibilities of the parish priest in the common policy. The parish priest has the primary responsibility to assess and prepare engaged couples for marriage, and the priest is to protect the rights and obligations of the couples and the faith community.

The Liturgical Commission for the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) wrote this message to its clergy:

A basic premise of this handbook is that pre-marriage ministry is a responsibility shared with you in a very substantial way by married couples in your parish. Their contribution is no mere supplement to yours. It is-- as indeed yours is-- irreplaceable.

At the same time, the program we envision is ambitious. It presumes a high ranking in the parish priorities and requires no small investment of time and energy. It will require some adaptation to local conditions.

Once this ministry is organized and under way, the major and crucial thrust of your investment will be to support and assist the married couples who are your co-ministers. Obviously you will be asked to meet and work with the engaged, but it is the married leader couples who will be spending the greater amount of time working directly with them.

We cannot emphasize this too strongly: The married couples will need your support and backup. (p. xi)

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) treated the topic of qualifications for a priest in marriage preparation. The authors listed these qualities:

1. He is to believe in the power of married love as being a true sacramental sign of Christ's presence in the Church (this sign does more for engaged couples than teaching, advice, warnings, psychological testing, survival lessons);
2. He is to spend time within himself and with others about his vocation;
3. He is to be dedicated to growing in relationship with the people of God (he should believe in the sacrament of marriage for his own understanding of the Church and his celibacy as a priest);

4. He is to care deeply about the engaged couples;
5. He is to become real and believable in sharing himself;
6. He is to convey how important married love-- in all its dimensions-- is to the world;
7. He is to be prayerfully aware of engaged couples;
8. He is to be willing to open himself up to a personal relationship with engaged couples beyond the time frame of the program;
9. He is to participate and grow (as the married and engaged couples do);
10. He is to grow in his commitment to priesthood as much as engaged couples grow in their commitment to each other. (pp. 25-27)

These authors went on to say that the priest is very essential for their program, especially sessions three, four and five. The priest witnesses the glad tidings of God's love for couples, enhances the engaged and married couples' awareness of being part of the parish family and helps couples realize how the Church cares about how they love. The authors said that the priest makes the difference between marriage preparation and vocation preparation, the second being more preferred.

Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) talked about the special role for priests in marriage preparation, and Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) called for the assistance of the priest in steps one, three, four, five, seven, eight and nine in her nine-step program. She pointed out that the priest is often the first to minister to the engaged couple from the local parish.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date) stressed

the importance of confidentiality. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date) also brought out the fact that the pastor begins the first session with the engaged couple; he establishes the rapport. He explains the policy and the steps of the program. The diocese pointed out the serious and ministerial responsibilities of all ministers in the parish (not just the priest). The priest has a special responsibility to inform and assist the engaged couples in meeting the requirements of the universal Church and of that particular diocese.

And the Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) again raised the question, "Who ministers to the minister?"

#### The Role of the Engaged Couple

Nine of the programs made some comments about the responsibilities of the engaged couples (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977b; "Engaged Couple Conference", no date; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Protano, no date; Quesnell and Kolar, 1982; Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983).

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) were most specific. The authors suggested that the engaged couples attend all the meetings, that both parties come, that the couples should make an engaged encounter before they partake in the program, that they pray for the other engaged couples and that they bring their own supplies.

Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) asked that the couple go to an Engaged Encounter either before or after they had partaken in the sponsor



couple program. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) asked that the engaged couples complete steps three, four and eight on their own. The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) proposed that the couple learn more about themselves and their own relationship.

In their own program "Christian Marriage: A Gift of the Spirit" the St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) acquainted their people with the "nitty-gritty" rules-- such things like parking, dress, personal belongings, smoking, restrooms, etc. The staff asked the engaged couples to read the book Three to Get Ready: A Guide for the Engaged (Quesnell, 1976).

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) stressed homework, and they even provided a sample format for the engaged file cover (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, p. 53). This sample format allows the engaged couple to easier keep track of the dates and times of meetings; it also assists the married couples in keeping track on the engaged couples' progress.

The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date) encouraged a good rapport with the pastor and to allow sufficient time for the assessment of the couple's readiness to marry. The engaged couples must be willing to take an active part in all the steps of the policy which applied to them.

The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date) required all those in preparation for the sacrament of marriage to enroll in the twelve-step program. The Diocese of Toledo ("Engaged Couple Conference", no date) requested the newly married couples who had already experienced

the Engaged Couple Conference to become part of the team.

### Getting a Parish Centered Pre-Marriage Process Started

The most detailed of the marriage preparation programs in how to get a marriage program started at the parish level was the one created by the Diocese of Lansing, To Love and To Honor (1983). In the chapter "Getting a Parish-Centered Pre-Marriage Program Started" (section 1, pp. 13-16) the Liturgical Commission discussed topics like initial steps, attraction of team couples, the training of leader couples, the topics for the training program, the discussion of manageable tasks for all and the other forms of support for the marriage ministry.

### The Initial Steps

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 13-14) talked about the following pattern of steps to be taken in getting the parish ministry to the engaged started: planning, education, the building of the team, the training of the team, the organization of the pilot program, the commissioning of the ministry team and the actual beginning. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) referred to the initial steps, too, but in the sense of greeting, refreshments, chairs, tables and closing. In one of her appendices Tate-O'Brien (1981b, p. 16) provided a one-page report on the implementation of her program, Love in Deed. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) talked about the ordering of necessary materials, the distribution of materials to the proper people and the organization of the program into block times.

### Attracting Team Couples

Ruhnke (1981b), Coleman and Coleman (1981) and the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) offered concrete suggestions as to how to get married couples to assist in the marriage preparation program for the engaged. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) recommended that a parish begin gradually-- that is, to build a small team of married couples at first and prepare them thoroughly before they actually began working with engaged couples. Once a base of trained couples has been founded in a parish, efforts can be made to expand upon it. Rather than an open-ended commitment on the part of the married couple (sponsor couple) this diocese suggested that the married couple make their commitment for one or two years, or for a specific number of series, but to be let free to decide whether or not to renew their commitment.

### The Training of Leader Couples

Seven of the programs stressed the importance of training for the married couples conducting the program (Aitchison and Aitchison, 1979; Coleman, 1981; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977b; Ruhnke, 1981b; Tate-O'Brien, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983; Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983).

Only two of the above programs offered both suggestions for the training of leader couples and the topics for the leader training program: (a) The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 14-15) and (b) Ruhnke (1981b, pp. 10-11).

The program by Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) could be used

entirely as a preparation for those who work in pre-marriage programs.

Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) requested that married couples inquire about on-going training sessions in the diocese under the auspices of Family Life. The authors recommended that these couples attend an initial training series produced by the Family Life Office and then attend continuing sessions. The authors also encouraged their married couples to participate in programs with engaged couples, to make a Marriage Encounter or Retorno, to attend some type of Marriage Enrichment Program in the diocese or to teach some course relevant to marriage at the junior high/ high school level.

Tate-O'Brien made similar suggestions, but added the idea of several churches getting together and sponsoring training days for married couples interested in ministering to the engaged of the community.

Coleman and Coleman (1981) and Ruhnke (1981b) both encouraged the leader couples to go through the actual program itself with the engaged, to discuss their own growth as married couples and to be familiar with the program's material.

The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) stressed the importance of training and continued formation for the leader couples. All people in ministry need to be continually trained and updated, and that includes those who minister as a vocation.

### Publicity

Four of the programs offered suggestions in the area of public relations. Coleman and Coleman (1982) mentioned the parish bulletin,

the announcement from the pulpit, the diocesan and local newspapers, the radio and television. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) placed part of this responsibility upon the minister, since he usually met with the engaged couple for the first time. The authors recommended that the minister give the couple a brochure about the program, share his enthusiasm, give the couple the names and addresses of sponsor and team couples, urge the couple (not force), have the couple fill out a registration and then send the registration to the team couple.

The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) supplied a list of ideas for publicity. In addition to the earlier list from Coleman and Coleman (1982), the diocese included the ideas of workshops, the discussions at high schools and religious education programs in the parish, talking with relatives and friends about the process, the writing up of a marriage policy in a brochure form and the discussion of the program at both the deanery and diocesan levels. The Family Life Department of the diocese would be a splendid vehicle.

The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, did a novel thing in their approach to publicity (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982). The authors provided a book with pictures, names and a short description of the staff involved in their marriage preparation program to engaged couples.

#### The Writing of a Presentation

Only one program went into depth about how a presentation could be written and given. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1981,

pp. 3-8) mentioned how a talk could be written and the guidelines for critiquing such a talk.

### Costs

Once again only one program commented upon the costs of its program. The program "Preparing for Marriage" (no date) by the Newman Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, suggested a \$35.00 fee per couple.

### The Pre-Marriage Ministry Program: Exercises, Articles and Presentations and Services

#### The Use of Exercises

A total of thirty different exercises were found in the sixteen programs (see Table 12). The top six exercises were "sexuality" (19 times), "communication" (15 times), "religion" (12 times), "conflict" (10 times), "money" (9 times) and the "sacrament of marriage" (9 times). The programs that made use of this technique of exercises most often were the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (each used 22 exercises), the program by Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (20 exercises) and the program by Ruhnke (18 exercises).

#### The Use of Presentations

A total of eleven different presentations were discovered (see Table 13). The top three presentations were "sexuality" (6 times), "the sacrament of marriage" (4 times) and "communication" (2 times). Basically, the National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) employed the technique of presentations.

#### The Use of Articles

The articles had two purposes-- (a) they could be used as

background material for the leader couples or (b) they could be used as a source of learning for the engaged couples. Thirty-five different articles were presented by the sixteen programs (see Table 14). The rank order of these articles was:

<u>Number of Times the Article Appeared</u>	<u>Title of Article</u>
15	Sexuality
12	Sacrament of Marriage
10	Communication
6	Conflict
5	Religion
4	In-Laws, Intimacy, Money
3	Children, Counseling, Feelings, Interfaith Marriages, Love, The Other, Personality, Roles, Values
2	Church and Marriage, Concerns and Problems, Divorce, Marriage Preparation, Relationship
1	Appeal, Being Real, Being Warm, Defense Mechanisms, Expectations, Freedom, Goals for Program, Marriage and Law, Ministry to Immature, Needs, Reconciliation, Second Marriage, Welcome

The programs that used this technique of articles the most were Friedman (23 times), Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (19 times), Coleman and Coleman (16 times), the Diocese of Lansing (15 times) and Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (11 times).

#### The Use of Religious Services

There were a total of seven different religious services found in the sixteen programs (see Table 15). The most popular were the ideas presented for the wedding liturgy (13 times), while the second most cited service was the celebration of the couple's engagement (6 times). The Diocese of Lansing and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee presented the

most ideas for different kinds of religious services to be employed during the marriage preparation period (seven and three times respectively). Four of the programs failed to mention any type of service (Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio, the Diocese of Kalamazoo, the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph and the Diocese of Toledo).

### Meetings with the Engaged Couples: An Overview

#### Prayer

Although all the programs stressed the importance of prayer in their programs, two of the programs went to special lengths on this subject. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) offered a prayer "Our Father's Call to a Couple". Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) indicated that prayer is a very important part of their program, and that prayer could be celebrated in various ways:

1. Married couples can encourage prayer in their families;
2. The names of engaged couples could be read at either the weekday or Sunday liturgies;
3. The married couples and their families could become prayer sponsors for an engaged couple;
4. The group could seek out prayer communities to pray for the engaged couples;
5. The group could ask the previous engaged couples who went through the program to pray for the new engaged couples.  
(p. 10)

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) presented several prayers (section 1, p. xii; section 2, pp. 51-56). The Liturgical Commission stated that prayer must play a prominent role in all the phases of marriage preparation. Prayer is a dimension of everyday living; scripture reading and shared prayer should open and/or



Table 12

The Use of Exercises in Marriage Preparation Programs

Number of Marriage Preparation Program Exercises Appearing in Program

Description of Exercises

- 1. Attitudes
- 2. Being Real
- 3. Children
- 4. Communication
- 5. Conflict
- 6. Defense Mechanisms
- 7. Divorce
- 8. Empathy
- 9. Expectations
- 10. Family
- 11. Feelings (Self)
- 12. Ice Breaker
- 13. In-Laws
- 14. Interfaith Marriage
- 15. Love
- 16. Money
- 17. Needs
- 18. The Other
- 19. Parenthood
- 20. Personality
- 21. Prayer

16. Engaged Encounter																								
15. Newman Center (Mpls.)																								
14. St. Paul Youth Center																								
13. Toledo Diocese																								
12. Providence Diocese																								
11. Milwaukee Archdiocese																								
10. Lansing Diocese																								
9. Kansas City-St. Joseph																								
8. Kalamazoo Diocese																								
7. Tate-O'Brien																								
6. Ruhke																								
5. Friedman																								
4. Del Vecchio & Del Vecchio																								
3. Dahl, Dahl & Gallagher																								
2. Coleman & Coleman																								
1. Aitchison & Aitchison																								

(table continues)





Table 14

The Use of Articles in Marriage Preparation Programs

Number of Marriage Preparation Program Articles Appearing in Program

Description of Articles

- 1. Appeal
- 2. Being Real
- 3. Being Warm
- 4. Children
- 5. Church and Marriage
- 6. Communication
- 7. Concerns and Problems
- 8. Conflict
- 9. Counseling
- 10. Defense Mechanisms
- 11. Divorce
- 12. Expectations
- 13. Feelings (Self)
- 14. Freedom
- 15. Goals for Program
- 16. In-Laws
- 17. Interfaith Marriages
- 18. Intimacy
- 19. Love
- 20. Marriage and Law
- 21. Marriage Preparation

	16. Engaged Encounter	15. Newman Center (Mpls.)	14. St. Paul Youth Center	13. Toledo Diocese	12. Providence Diocese	11. Milwaukee Archdiocese	10. Lansing Diocese	9. Kansas City-St. Joseph	8. Kalamazoo Diocese	7. Tate-O'Brien	6. Ruhnke	5. Friedman	4. Del Vecchio & Del Vecchio	3. Dahl, Dahl & Gallagher	2. Coleman & Coleman	1. Aitchison & Aitchison
1. Appeal																
2. Being Real												1				
3. Being Warm												1				
4. Children							1					2				
5. Church and Marriage												1				
6. Communication												2	2			
7. Concerns and Problems												1				
8. Conflict												2				
9. Counseling																
10. Defense Mechanisms												1				
11. Divorce													1			
12. Expectations													1			
13. Feelings (Self)													1			
14. Freedom																
15. Goals for Program														1		
16. In-Laws													1	2		
17. Interfaith Marriages													1			
18. Intimacy													1			
19. Love														2		
20. Marriage and Law																
21. Marriage Preparation															1	

(table continues)





close every session.

### An Overview of the Marriage Preparation Programs

An overview of the sixteen marriage preparation programs is provided in Table 16.

### The Format of a Meeting

For the formats of the meetings with the sixteen marriage preparation programs see Table 17.

Although thirteen of the programs did provide some information about the format of a meeting, three programs did not (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date; Friedman, 1982; "Marriage Discovery", no date). Four of the programs presented their marriage preparation program with a one-day or one-weekend time-frame ("Engaged Couple Conference", no date; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; "Marriage Discovery", no date; Quesnell and Kolar, 1982).

### The Number of Meetings

Three of the programs were geared for a weekend time-frame. The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) offered the engaged couples three options: (a) the weekend from 8pm Friday through 3pm Sunday; (b) Saturday from 9am through 11pm and Sunday from 9am through 5pm (the two-day program); (c) Saturday from 8:30am through 11pm and Sunday from 8:30am through 3pm (the parish engaged encounter option). The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date) offered the weekend approach only; their program began at 8pm on Friday and concluded at 1:30pm on Sunday. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) offered their program on a weekend, but on

Table 16

An Overview of the Sixteen Marriage Preparation Programs

<u>Name of the Program</u>	<u>Overview</u>
1. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979)	1. Why Marry? 2. Getting in Touch with Myself 3. Roles in Marriage-- Opportunity for Growth 4. Husband-Wife Communication 5. When We're Out of Tune 6. Outside Influences on Marriage 7. Our Place on the Family Tree 8. Putting Zest and Vitality into Our Marriage 9. Two in the Spirit 10. Growing Toward Sexual Oneness 11. Sharing Love with Others 12. Celebrating Marriage
2. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982)	1. Introductory Overview 2. Our Dreams 3. Our Relationships 4. Our Values 5. Our Sexuality 6. Planning the Wedding Ceremony
3. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b)	1. Marriage Today 2. Communication in Love 3. God and Marriage 4. Sex in Marriage 5. The Sacrament of Marriage 6. Let's Be Real
4. Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980)	1. The Sacrament of Marriage 2. Personality 3. Values 4. Needs 5. Being Real 6. Defense Mechanisms 7. Understanding Others 8. Being Warm 9. Sex and Sexuality 10. Money 11. In-Laws
5. Friedman (1982)	1. Contact the parish. 2. Marriage preparation (meet with the priest, attend a Pre-Cana, take a workshop or make an Engaged Encounter, meet with a married couple). 3. Bring baptismal certificate. 4. Policy for teens. 5. Interview with the pastor. 6. Plan the wedding liturgy.
6. Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b)	<u>STAGE I</u> : Individual interview for pastor and engaged couple. This could take several meetings.

(table continues)



<u>Name of the Program</u>	<u>Overview</u>
6. Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b)	<p><u>STAGE II</u>: This is the period of primary marriage preparation. This does not replace the instruction by the parish priest. The engaged couple meets with a married couple and discusses the following topics: (a) expectations about marriage; (b) values and conflicts; (c) marital sexuality and intimacy; (d) a celebration of life and love. The engaged couple is also asked to make an Engaged Encounter. The parish may require additional sessions for the engaged couple.</p> <p><u>STAGE III</u>: This follow-up takes two or three sessions. The date for the wedding is finalized, the engaged couple plans their wedding liturgy and the engaged couple partakes in a solemn engagement service.</p>
7. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b)	<p>STEP 1: Meet with the pastor. STEP 2: Meet three to four times with the pastor and discuss "General Communication, Family Background and Finances", "Sexuality", "Values and Conflict" and "Sacramentality". STEP 3: The engaged couple gathers the necessary documents. STEP 4: The engaged couple partakes in one of these four instructional programs (Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, Parish Marriage Preparation or Pre-Marital Counseling. STEP 5: The engaged couple meets a second time with the pastor. STEP 6: They plan the wedding liturgy. STEP 7: The engaged couple finalizes their plans with the pastor. STEP 8: The engaged couple picks up their marriage license. STEP 9: Final preparations.</p>
8. The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date)	This is a weekend retreat.
9. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date)	<p><u>ASSESSMENT PROCESS.</u>  <u>FORMAL PREPARATION PROGRAM.</u></p>

(table continues)

<u>Name of Program</u>	<u>Overview</u>
10. The Diocese of Lansing <u>(To Love and To Honor, 1983)</u>	For the "normal situation": 1. Introductory Meeting 2. Pre-Marriage Inventory Meeting 3. Topic #1 (3 parts) 4. Topic #2 5. Preparing the Wedding Liturgy (part I) 6. Topic #3 7. Topic #4 8. Topic #5 9. Prepare the Wedding Liturgy (part II) 10. Wedding Rehearsal
11. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee <u>(Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date)</u>	<u>ASSESSMENT PROCESS:</u> Three sessions. <u>INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS:</u> The engaged couple has three options: (a) to attend such a program that covers "self awareness", "communication in marriage", "human sexuality" and "sacrament of marriage"; (b) to meet with a married couple in the parish; (c) to meet with the priest.
12. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date)	STEP 1: First parish visit. STEP 2: Second parish visit. STEP 3: Initiation ceremony. STEP 4: Inventory evaluation. STEP 5: Evaluation analysis. STEP 6: Formal preparation program (Engaged Encounter weekend; evenings for engaged couples; or the basic marriage preparation by a married couple and priest). STEP 7: Sexuality seminar. STEP 8: Third visit to the parish. STEP 9: Solemn engagement. STEP 10: Couple awareness and Christian service projects. STEP 11: Preparation for wedding liturgy. STEP 12: Wedding rehearsal.
13. The Diocese of Toledo ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date)	1. Session One: Introduction 2. Session Two: Faith 3. The Marriage Preparation Course (Engaged Couple Conference) 4. Session Three: This Comes After the Engaged Couple Conference 5. Wedding Practice 6. Wedding Celebration
14. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)	There are two options: (a) the weekend retreat; (b) the six consecutive Thursday evenings.

(table continues)

<u>Name of Program</u>	<u>Overview</u>
15. The Catholic Newman Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date)	<p><u>FIRST</u>: On the second Monday of the month the engaged couples meet, are introduced and are given the inventory "Prepare".</p> <p><u>SECOND</u>: The engaged couple meets with a married couple and discusses the instrument "Prepare".</p> <p><u>THIRD</u>: On the second Monday of the following month the engaged couples meet again. This is an evening of enhancement on communication skills. They conclude with a short worship service.</p>
16. <u>Engaged Encounter Manual (1976)</u>	There are three options: (a) the Engaged Encounter weekend; (b) the two-day program; (c) the parish engaged encounter.

Table 17

## The Format of a Meeting

<u>Name of the Program</u>	<u>Format of the Meeting</u>
1. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979)	a. Prayer b. Reflection c. Inquiry d. Prayer e. Social
2. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982)	a. Opening letter from the authors to the engaged b. Couple responds to the questions individually c. The couple shares their responses d. The couple shares in a reading e. The couple writes down questions that come to mind f. The couple then shares this with their counselor(s)
3. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b)	a. Purpose b. "Dear Team Lovers" c. Team Preparation d. Supplies e. Greeting and Welcome f. Review g. Presentation h. Written Exercise i. Couple Discussion j. Group Discussion k. Wrap Up l. Review of the Evening
4. Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980)	a. The couple reads the chapter from the book first b. The couple forms their own thoughts and feelings c. The couple answers the questions and responds to the statements d. The couple does this individually first e. Then the couple shares their responses with each other
5. Friedman (1982)	NONE GIVEN
6. Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b)	a. Goals for the session b. How to prepare for the session c. How to conduct the session (greeting, scripture and prayer, discussion of homework, write and share, conclusion, evening prayer)
7. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b)	a. The married couple shares their experiences b. Private reflection on the topic by the engaged couple

(table continues)

<u>Name of Program</u>	<u>Format of the Meeting</u>
7. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b)	c. The engaged couple shares their responses d. The married and engaged couples share e. Prayer f. Refreshments
8. The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date)	NONE GIVEN
9. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph ( <u>Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri</u> , no date)	NONE GIVEN
10. The Diocese of Lansing ( <u>To Love and To Honor</u> , 1983)	a. Category b. Aims c. Session Leader d. Special Activity: Sequence e. Materials Needed f. Time for Prayer g. Home Project h. Comments i. Discussion Backgrounder j. Sharing Refreshments
11. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1981)	(For the workshops) a. Purpose b. Procedure c. Short Presentation d. Worksheet e. Group Discussion
12. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date)	a. Purpose b. Setting c. Points to Cover d. Caution
13. The Diocese of Toledo ("Engaged Encounter Conference, no date)	a. Introduction b. Orientation c. Film d. Agree/Disagree (small groups) e. Break f. Talk g. Communication h. Skits i. Talk j. Triad Experience k. Inventory l. Mass m. Supper n. Closing
14. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)	Two options: (1) the weekend (2) six Thursday evenings  OPTION ONE: THE WEEKEND SCHEDULE

(table continues)

Name of the ProgramFormat of the Meeting

14. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982)

Friday: a. "From Engagement to Marriage" b. Dyad Discussion c. "The Meaning of Christian Marriage" d. Small Group Discussion (refreshments available) e. "Dealing with Differences" f. Closing Prayer Service g. Closing of Evening

Saturday: a. Continental Breakfast b. Morning Prayer c. Large Group Discussion: "Adapting and Adjusting to Differences" d. Break e. Continuation of "Adjusting to Differences" f. Lunch g. Workshop (Part I) h. Refreshment Break i. Workshop (Part II) j. Preparation for Dinner k. Social Hour l. Candlelight Dinner m. Penance Service n. Conclusion of Day

Sunday: a. Complete breakfast b. Large Group: "The Conjugal Embrace--The Meaning of Sex in Marriage" c. Introduction to Natural Family Planning d. Small Group Conferences (Refreshments Available) e. Mass f. Closing of Weekend Conference

15. The Catholic Newman Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date)

The couple takes the Prepare Inventory (Druckman, Fournier and Olson, 1979). Afterwards, the couple meets with a married couple and together the two couples discuss the inventory.

16. Engaged Encounter Manual (1976)

Three options: (1) the Engaged Encounter weekend  
(2) the two-day program  
(3) the parish engaged encounter

OPTION ONE: THE ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

Friday: a. Team Preparation b. Introduction, Welcome and History c. Orientation, Rhythm and Purpose d. Personal Reflection and Conjugal Dialogue e. Film, Announcements

(table continues)

Name of the ProgramFormat of the Meeting16. Engaged Encounter  
Manual (1976)

Saturday: a. Prayer Service b. Breakfast c. "Encounter with Self" d. Reflection and Dialogue e. "State of Marriage in the Modern World" f. "Symptoms of Spiritual Divorce" g. Reflection and Dialogue h. Lunch i. "Subjects for Understanding" j. Reflection and Dialogue k. "Confidence and Dialogue" l. Reflection and Dialogue m. Break n. Special Candlelight Dinner o. "Human Sexuality" p. Reflection and Dialogue q. Candlelight Service r. Questions and Additional Discussion

Sunday: a. Breakfast b. "Sacrament of Marriage and Its Graces" c. "Marriage Spirituality" d. Reflection and Dialogue e. "Open and Apostolic" f. Reflection and Dialogue g. "Plan of Life" h. Lunch i. "Options for the Wedding Liturgy" j. Commitment Explanation k. Writing of Commitment l. Final Liturgy m. Critique and Announcements

three separate days (the staff did not have the engaged couples stay overnight). The engaged couples met on Friday from 7:30pm-11pm, in Saturday from 9am-9:30pm and on Sunday from 8:30am-2pm. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) also provided another option: their staff presented the program on six consecutive Thursday evenings from 7:30pm-9pm. The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date) was the third program that offered a weekend format.

Five of the programs stressed the instruction aspect for marriage preparation. Del Vecchio and Del Vecchio (1980) presented eleven articles in their book, which could conceivably be used as individual sessions for the engaged couple themselves or the engaged couple with a married couple (sponsor couple) in a counseling situation. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) presented twelve different ideas in their book, and the authors suggested that the married couples spend 1½ to 2 hours on each idea. Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) suggested six meetings, and the authors recommended that their program be used at an evening time during the week or a Sunday afternoon. The authors presented four different models to choose from in the actual presentation of their program. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977a, 1977b) proposed six home meetings. The authors said that the meeting should last two hours and the authors provided couple paks for the engaged couples to work on during the week in between meetings. Friedman (1982) suggested seven meetings with his program, since he had provided seven articles in his packet of information.



The final eight programs stressed both the assessment and the instructional aspects. Ruhnke (1981a, 1981b) proposed three stages. It would be during the second stage that the engaged couple would benefit from his four suggested meetings in the home of a married couple in the parish. He recommended that each one of these four meetings be two hours in length. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date) suggested three sessions for the engaged couples. The staff at the Newman Center intended to use the inventory Prepare (Druckman, Fournier and Olson, 1979) as the means for their assessment of the engaged couples. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date) was not specific in the terms of number of meetings and lengths of each meeting, but the diocese did emphasize the importance of an assessment process and formal preparation program for marriage. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date) recommended that two to three sessions be used for the assessment. The archdiocese listed three options for the instructional process: (1) a marriage preparation program; (2) the engaged couple meets with a married couple; (3) the engaged couple meets with their pastor. The archdiocese insisted that the engaged couple meet at least four times for this marriage instruction. The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) required five sessions for the assessment process and the marriage preparation course in the form of their own Engaged Couple Conference (ECC). Tate-O'Brien

(1981a, 1981b) proposed a nine-step process, with step six listing four alternatives for a type of instructional program. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) suggested that the engaged couples meet every other week for the period of twenty-four weeks. And the Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date) presented a twelve-step program which consisted of forty-five hours of commitment on the part of the engaged couple. It was during step six that the diocese listed three options for some type of marriage preparation program.

### The Use of Inventories

Several of the programs cited have incorporated a pre-marriage inventory into the initial meetings with the engaged. Some examples of instruments are:

1. The Engaged Couple Inventory (Gillespie, 1976)
2. Enrich (Druckman, Fournier and Olson, 1982)
3. The Inventory of Pre-Marital Conflict (Fournier, Olson and Springer, 1977)
4. A Married Couple Inventory (Bartato and Gillespie, 1979)
5. The Premarital Inventory (Burnett, Egolf, Solon and Sullivan, 1976)
6. Prepare (Druckman, Fournier and Olson, 1979)

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) stated that these inventories are primarily communication tools, secondarily as assessment tools. As a communication tool their values lies in the dialogue sessions with the engaged couple(s). The inventories will bring out the areas where the couple have good communication and where their communication

needs to improve. These inventories will also help point out the strengths and weaknesses of the couple's communication patterns.

However, the diocese did want to list some cautions concerning the use of inventories. The Liturgical Commission (To Love and To Honor, 1983) did not advocate using a pre-marriage (or post-marriage) inventory in any of these ways:

1. as a test of knowledge and/or attitudes, with right or wrong answers, which the couple must either pass or fail;
2. as an instrument for psychological testing or measurement, leading to attempted clinical diagnosis of personality or emotional disorders;
3. as a device for predicting the success or failure of the prospective marriage;
4. as the sole or principal criterion for determining whether or not to proceed with the marriage. (p. 29)

#### Approaches to Active Participation

##### Approaches to Pre-Marriage Ministry

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 11-12) listed four ways in which the formal pre-marriage ministry to a particular engaged couple could be provided, depending on the local resources and circumstances:

1. Group sessions;
2. A couple-to-couple format;
3. A team of married couples;
4. The provision of sponsor couples by the parish.

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) encouraged the use of small groups of three to five engaged couples. These engaged couples were to meet in the home or the parish offices under the leadership of

a married couple and pastor. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) stated that the combination of priest and married couple was essential to their program. The authors suggested small groups of two to six engaged couples meeting in the married couple's home with the presence of a priest. The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1983) promoted the "family approach", whereby the two engaged couples gathered in the home of a married couple in the parish. The diocese stated that small groups of engaged/married couples enable more relationships to be established and more effective learning to occur. However, more than ten engaged couples in one group tended to lose the effectiveness of establishing formation, person and Christian community. Coleman and Coleman (1982) offered four models in their program which covered both individual and group use. The four models were: (1) individual counseling by the parish priest; (2) individual counseling by married couples (the most desirable the authors said); (3) individual counseling in the group setting; and (4) group counseling. The authors recommended that the parish assess their own resources, the amount of time the parish could invest, the history and the tradition of the area and how best the parish could meet the changing needs of engaged couples.

Besides the group approach mentioned above, there were several programs that used the one engaged couple to the one married couple. The parish priest was also significant in this process. The diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of

Missouri, no date) stated that the pastor is essential in the introduction of the diocese's program, but the members of the faith community are much needed in the carrying out of the process of marriage preparation for the engaged. Ruhnke (1981b) stressed the sponsor couple idea referred to earlier. Ruhnke urged a married couple to literally become a "sponsor" for an engaged couple in the parish; a very personal relationship should then develop between the sponsor and engaged couples. Tate-O'Brien (1981b) also supported the idea of the sponsor couple process, and she encouraged single people to share in this ministry along with the married couples in the parish (Ruhnke also had mentioned this). The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date) encouraged the use of married couples in the preparation of the engaged for marriage. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date) called this approach not so much a group experience but rather an "interpersonal" approach. The Catholic Newman Center at the University of Minnesota ("Preparing for Marriage", no date) employed the assistance of married couples in the discussion of their inventory which the staff administered to the engaged couples. In fact, each engaged couple was assigned to a particular married couple for a month.

The weekend encounters employed the "expertise" of married couples and priests. At these gatherings there were 30-60 engaged couples, so there were opportunities for the engaged couples to intermingle with other engaged couples. A team of several married couples (two or three) and a priest conducted the programs; these included the Engaged Encounter

(Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976), "Christian Marriage: A Gift of the Spirit" (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) and "Preparing for Marriage" (no date). The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) made a comment about their third option in the case of the parish engaged encounter. The group recommended that the parish have a core group of three to five married couples who already have had an experience in marriage enrichment and/or marriage encounter programs.

Two of the programs were unique in the sense that they had not "fit" into the classifications of approach so far. Friedman (1982) said that his program could be used with an engaged couple and priest, or an engaged couple and a parish team. However, the engaged couple could also use his program through dyad sharing or private reading. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) specifically molded their program for married couples. The authors asked that five to seven married couples meet in each other's home as they progressed in the program of marriage enrichment.

#### Techniques in Marriage Preparation

The sixteen programs of marriage preparation revealed many creative and ambitious techniques. Some of them have already been alluded to-- namely, the importance of prayer and the celebration of certain "key" moments (i.e., a time for reconciliation, engagement, marriage and recommitment to marriage). There were the references made to articles, presentations and exercises in the programs. Other techniques included dialogue, question and answer periods, exploration and discovery, reading, reflection and response (action). Two of the programs--

Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) and the Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date)-- suggested that the couples not only listen but also make a response, and this took the form of a Christian service project on the part of the engaged. The discussions were done in dyads, groups of four and large groups. Coleman and Coleman (1982) viewed the exercises by involving the couples in both reflection and response as the "heart" of their program.

Some other techniques included the use of communication skills, workshops, inventories, ice breakers (tension breakers), hypothetical problems, conflict situations, brainstorming, role playing, skits, activities, personal witness and modeling. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) wrote that the married couples provided good models for the engaged, and this was the "content" of their program; or, to say this in another way, the "content" of the program equalled the marriage preparation of the engaged couples. The authors saw what they were doing as a vocation program, and not a "marriage preparation course". The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) also emphasized the importance of small groups and modeling done by the married couples by quoting David and Vera Mace:

We now see clearly that the way most of us learn the art of living is not through instruction, but through observation of how others act. Our marital taboos have closed off this whole area of learning to couples, and this is a major explanation of our high rates of marital failure today. The learning that goes on in couple groups is dynamic and powerfully effective.

A further extension of the process is modeling. We now realize that the younger generation today is rejecting marriage mainly because they have never had the experience of seeing a healthy companionship functioning from the inside. As couples with growing marriages open up to each other, the modeling process

enables them to define their own goals as they see them exemplified in the experience of others. The leader couple, in particular, plays a modeling role. That is why individual leadership of a couples' group must be considered inadequate. (pp. 3-4)

There were also techniques like the discussion of family background, the use of worksheets, the employment of audio-visual materials and home projects (homework). Of the sixteen programs only four stressed the technique of homework (Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a, 1977b; Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983; Trokan, 1981).

Many of the programs even used the "technique" of meals.

### The Counseling Style

The main approach used by the programs was a pastoral one. The programs did not take a "textbook" or "workbook" approach, but rather an interpersonal and experiential and relational one. The style was simple, flexible, adaptable and easy. And the authors of the programs saw their work as on-going, only a beginning, a process. And this process involved people, and the authors desired to reach out and assist the engaged in their readiness for marriage. The approach is far from individual; in fact, the aspect of parish community is strongly felt in the ministry to the engaged and newly married. The engaged and newly married need good models of married couples, and the married need the examples of engaged couples interested in a Christian marriage.

### Bibliographies on Marriage Preparation

Seven of the programs provided bibliographies in the area of marriage preparation. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 1, pp. 35-44) provided a very exhaustive list. The



list included marriage preparation in general, instructional materials, background materials and out of print titles. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1982, p. 33) offered a marriage and family life bibliography in the areas of self-awareness, communication, sexuality, sacrament and family. Coleman and Coleman (1982, pp. 139-141) printed a list of books and the Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Markey and Meis, 1982, pp. 62-63) printed a list of books and magazines. Ruhnke (1981b, p. 32) mentioned a reading list for sponsor couples and in her manual to the engaged couples Tate-O'Brien (1981b, p. 71) gave a list of books for the engaged couples' future growth. The National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 39) included a short bibliography.

#### Celebrating the Engagement and Marriage

##### Christian Initiation into Marriage Preparation

Only one program offered an "initiation ceremony" into the marriage preparation. The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, pp. 13-14) suggested that this liturgy be incorporated into the weekend liturgy of the parish. The initiation ceremony would provide the engaged couples with the opportunity to inform the parish of their intentions to marry, to declare their willingness to marry, to declare their willingness to be formally prepared for the sacrament of marriage and to elicit the prayers and support from the entire Christian community.

##### The Blessing of the Engagement

Seven of the programs encouraged the celebration of the couples' engagements. Ruhnke (1981b, p. 31) offered suggestions for the parish

celebration of engagement. The three weekend programs-- "Christian Marriage: A Gift of the Spirit" (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982), Engaged Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 16) and the Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date)-- included this solemnization of the couples' engagements within their scheduled events. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 1-6), the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Trokan, 1981, p. 59) and the Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, pp. 23-25) provided examples of engagement services.

#### The Planning of the Wedding Liturgy

Twelve of the programs stated that they helped the engaged couples in the preparation of their wedding liturgy (Coleman and Coleman, 1981, 1982; "Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date; Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a; Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976; Friedman, 1982; "Marriage Discovery", no date; Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date; Protano, no date; Quesnell and Kolar, 1982; Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b; Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b; To Love and To Honor, 1983).

In the Couple Pak of Evenings for the Engaged (Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher, 1977a) the engaged couples were encouraged to talk about their wedding day and honeymoon.

Friedman (1982) presented his own article "The Wedding Liturgy: Principles for Planning". Friedman pointed out that the planning of the wedding liturgy is more than just picking out songs or deciding how the

wedding party would enter the Church. Friedman suggested that the wedding be prayerful, thoughtful, creative, personal and unified. He also discussed the structure of the wedding and the three sensitive elements (people, priest and participation). He also provided "The Wedding Liturgy: A Planning Sheet" within his article.

Tate-O'Brien (1981a, pp. 38-69; 1981b, pp. 9-11) presented much information about the wedding liturgy preparation. Steps 6-9 were concerned about such things as invitations, vows, music, family and friends, place, booklets and banners, photographs, bridal consultants, flowers and decorations, the structure of a Christian liturgy and the different marriage services (Episcopalian, Lutheran, United Methodist, Presbyterian). She considered such topics as fees, business changes, growth in religious understanding and planning for the future. Tate-O'Brien (1981a) provided ideas like a "Planning Chart for Ceremony Outside of Eucharistic Celebration" (p. 50) and "Planning Chart for Nuptial Mass" (pp. 51-52).

Coleman and Coleman (1981) wrote a section "Planning Our Wedding Ceremony" (pp. 59-88). Like Tate-O'Brien (1981a) Coleman and Coleman (1981) talked about the structure of the liturgy both in and outside the context of the Mass. At the end of their section the authors allowed time for the engaged couple to write down their questions about the liturgy which they could ask later when they visited with their married couple and/or parish priest. In addition, Coleman and Coleman (1982, pp. 109-138) provided a liturgist's guide for this liturgical preparation.

Ruhnke devoted his last section "Marriage: A Celebration of Life and Love" (1981a, pp. 27-34; 1981b, pp. 24-25) for the preparation of the couple's liturgy. In fact, the homework assignment for the last session (1981a, pp. 33-34) is the couple's preparation for their wedding ceremony.

All three of the weekend programs discussed the couples' preparation for their wedding days. The Diocese of Kalamazoo ("Marriage Discovery", no date) had the couples discuss their wedding preparations on the three-day retreat. The St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) talked about the planning of the wedding liturgy, the music and the preparing for an interfaith marriage in the workshops the staff provided during the weekend retreat. On Sunday afternoon the National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976) recommended that ideas for the planning of the wedding liturgy be presented to the engaged couples on their retreat. One of their ideas is appropriately titled "Wedding Liturgy" (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 15).

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 7-26) described the wedding liturgy in depth. The Liturgical Commission discussed the liturgy committee, the spiritual preparation of the couple, the use of planning materials, the simplicity of the liturgy, the use of signs and symbols, the ministerial roles in ministry, the seating of the participants, the elements of the liturgy and the creation of a spirit of prayer. The commission provided a "Wedding Liturgy Planning Worksheet" (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 21-26).

Like the Diocese of Lansing the Archdiocese of Milwaukee provided a special section on the liturgy: "Directions for the Liturgical Celebration of Marriage" (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, section 2, pp. 1-11). The archdiocese (Trokan, 1982) also provided for the engaged couples the article "Guidelines for Planning Your Liturgy" (pp. 29-30).

The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date) covered the topic of liturgy in Step 11: "Preparation for Wedding Liturgy" (p. 28). The Diocese of Toledo ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date, p. 4) included the wedding liturgy in its marriage preparation. The diocese covered the Christian tradition, how the liturgy can be fruitful, the couple's upcoming wedding and an explanation of the liturgy.

#### The Wedding Music

Only four of the programs discussed the wedding music for the couple's celebration. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 27-32) talked about music and marriage, the purpose of music in liturgy, the musical roles in the celebration, the topic of sacred versus secular music, the question of style, the question of quality, the points for evaluation, the selection of music, the congregation's participation, the measuring of the suitability of the song texts, the use of "outside" musicians, the use of soloists, weddings celebrated without a Mass and the making good music familiar. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy

for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, section 2, pp. 5-6), the St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (Quesnell and Kolar, 1982) and Tate-O'Brien (1981a, p. 39) also talked about the wedding music.

#### The Making of a Wedding Booklet

Two of the programs explained the preparation of a wedding booklet. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 33-38) mentioned the contents of the booklet, the topic of single versus multiple aids, commercial publications, the reproductions of copyrighted materials, the production of a booklet and booklet covers. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, p. 40) commented, too, on the booklet.

#### The Liturgical Art and Environment

Three of the programs discussed the use of signs, symbols and the overall environment. Tate-O'Brien (1981a, p. 40) talked about banners, and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, section 2, pp. 7-10) explained the use of the environment and the meanings of actions and gestures. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 39-42) included such aspects as the effectiveness and symbol of art, the celebration of marriage, liturgical banners, audio-visual programs and the overall environment of the celebration.

#### The Use of Bridal Consultants

One program (Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, p. 41) discussed the professional assistance of bridal consultants. She mentioned that some churches even had their own bridal consultants (she called such churches "lucky").

### The Validation Liturgy

The only program to provide a validation liturgy was the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 43-48).

### The Celebration of Those Couples Already Married

Once again only one program provided a liturgy for those couples who had already been married in the Church. Aitchison and Aitchison (1979) did this in the final section "Celebrate Marriage" (pp. 37-39) and in this section they drew up a recommitment service for the husband and wife which could be celebrated in the parish setting.

### A Reading List

One program provided its readers with a bibliography of materials which could be used as background reading to the liturgical celebration of engagement and marriage. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 2, pp. 49-50) listed planning materials, background materials, information on music and banners and readings on the environment and art.

### Additional Notes and Suggestions

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, section 2, p. 11) included a special section of additional notes. The archdiocese included things like the admitting of other Christians to communion, the signing of the civil documents, photography and the reimbursement for musicians.

### Canonical and Civil Requirements

### Proposed New Canons on Marriage

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Priests' Handbook for the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation, no date, p. 36) listed six of the canons that pertained to marriage.

#### Canonical Form, Jurisdiction and Delegation

Although the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983 section 3) had not yet completed this section of their marriage preparation manual, the Liturgical Commission planned to discuss topics like preparation for marriage, the proof of baptism, the sacrament of confirmation, the marriage of migrants or of persons from different dioceses, the situation of danger of death, the recordings of marriages, the preservation of marriage records, the recording of marriages with dispensation from canonical form and a discussion of the marriage forms from the Diocese of Lansing.

Coleman and Coleman (1981, 1982) and Tate-O'Brien (1981a, 1981b) also mentioned the Church's documentation.

#### Banns and Establishing Freedom to Marry

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 3) planned to discuss the topics of freedom to marry and banns. The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Markey and Meis, 1982) provided the exercise "Ready, Willing and Able" (pp. 1-6).

#### Impediments and Dispensations

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 3) planned to talk about the subject of impediments, diriment impediments, the defects of matrimonial consent, the dispensation from impediments, the canonical reasons for dispensations, the dispensing powers of



local ordinaries, the dispensations in danger of death, the dispensations in urgent cases outside the danger of death and some notes on jurisdiction to dispense.

#### Place and Time of Wedding

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 3) planned to discuss the points of the place and time of the wedding celebration.

#### Validations

Again the Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 3) planned to discuss validations (or convalidations).

#### Civil Requirements for Marriages

Only one program discussed the civil requirements for marriage. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983, section 3) planned to talk about the civil requirements for marriages in their state of Michigan.

#### Evaluation

##### Evaluation of the Program by the Engaged Couples

Six of the programs gave time to the participants for evaluating the effectiveness of the marriage preparation program. The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) provided a two-page evaluation of the pre-marriage ministry program (section 1, pp. 124-125). The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Markey and Meis, 1982) provided a sheet "Engaged Couple's Comments" (p. 59). The Diocese of Providence (Protano, no date, pp. 21-22) indicated that their eighth step would be a half-hour time period for the engaged couple to share with the

parish priest their reaction to the program so far. The Diocese of Toledo ("Content Summary of Priest/Deacon Handbook, Pre-Marriage Counselor Handbook, Engaged Couple Conference Handbook", no date) stated that session three would be used to evaluate the marriage preparation course which the engaged couple had just completed. Tate-O'Brien (1981a) provided her own evaluation form for the engaged couple to complete (p. 36) and the National Marriage Encounter (Engaged Encounter Manual, 1976, p. 16) allowed time for the couples to fill out a critique sheet.

#### Evaluation of the Program or Engaged Couples by the Leaders

The Diocese of Lansing (To Love and To Honor, 1983) provided a "Sample Leader Evaluation Form" (section 1, p. 52). The leader couples had the opportunity to evaluate the progress of the engaged couples. Dahl, Dahl and Gallagher (1977b) suggested that the leader couples review each session after the engaged couples had left.

#### A Review of the On-Going Policy

The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph (Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri, no date, pp. 10-11) wrote in its statewide policy that there would be a continuing review of the marriage preparation policy.

#### Evaluation Projects

Two of the dioceses had conducted their own evaluation projects. The Diocese of Toledo (Toledo Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation Project, 1977-1982, 1983) conducted an evaluation project that covered the years 1977-1982. The diocese sampled priests and

and deacons, engaged couple conference team couples, pre-marriage counselors, newly married couples who participated in the marriage preparation program and parents of the newly married. The survey approach was chosen because it was felt that it would best examine the experiences and perceptions of the various populations as they have shared in the program over the course of the first five years of the program.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (Prasad and Weber, 1982) also did a survey of the clergy and couples on the common policy for pastoral marriage preparation. Like the above project, this was the fifth year of the common policy's promulgation. Clergy and recently married couples were surveyed about their attitudes on and experiences with the Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation. Samples were drawn from the clergy and from couples who were married in 1981, and these samples covered the state of Wisconsin. The clergy were asked about the issues and problems in their implementation of the Common Policy, and the couples were asked about their preparation for marriage.

## Chapter Five

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARISH SPONSOR

#### COUPLE PROCESS FOR THE ENGAGED

##### Introduction

The idea for a local parish Sponsor Couple Process for the engaged originated from the author's response to an individual assignment in a course "Individual Difference" at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. During that summer the author interviewed nine different area pastors and asked them questions about their approaches to marriage preparation. The author turned in a course paper "Deliberate Psychological Education", where he discussed a parish plan for marriage preparation, the reasons why, the necessity of a training session for the sponsor couples and the content of the marriage preparation program.

After sharing these findings with the pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick, the author was asked to develop a Sponsor Couple Process for those people preparing for marriage in the parish. The author found four married couples in the parish who were interested in such a ministry, and together this core group (one parish priest and four married couples from the parish) met for the next one and one-half years. During this time the core group constructed a "rough draft" of the Sponsor Couple Process Manual (Lippstock, 1983) which was to be used as a guide for the marriage for the marriage preparation process.

In January 1983 the core group (now three married couples and a parish priest) initiated the pilot program for the Christian Community

of St. Patrick-- "The Sponsor Couple Process for the Engaged". Although fourteen couples originally signed up to go through the process, only ten are still in stage four (this stage will be completed in the summer of 1984).

In September 1983 the team of four sponsor couples and parish priest began the second "Sponsor Couple Process". Although the original list consisted of twenty-three couples, the present group consists of eight couples. At the point of this writing the couples preparing for marriage have just celebrated their solemn engagements in the Christian community, and are beginning stage three of the four-part process (their process will be completed by the summer of 1985).

The present chapter will concentrate on four main areas in the development of the Sponsor Couple Process for the engaged: (a) a tracing of the local parish process; (b) the content of the process; (c) some reactions to the process; and (d) some discussion on the second administration of this marriage preparation process.

#### A Tracing of the Process

##### Summer 1981

The author enrolled in a course "Individual Differences" at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. As part of the course assignment he interviewed nine pastors in the city of Cedar Falls and asked them questions about their approaches in the area of preparing couples for marriage. The author also wrote a paper about a proposed plan for marriage preparation at the parish level.

### Fall 1981

The author enrolled in a course "Group Dynamics" at the university. The small group assignment was to put together a workshop manual (Kerr, Lippstock, Seager and Soukup, 1981). The author's small group of four individuals drew up plans for a premarital workshop which ran five consecutive days for a total of forty hours of marriage preparation. See Table 18 for an outline of the five-day workshop for marriage preparation.

### September 1981

After meeting with the pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick and discussing the situation of marriage preparation, the author sent out a letter (see Appendix D for a copy of this letter to prospective sponsor couples) to several married couples in the parish, inviting them to a general meeting in October.

### October 1981

At the Waterloo Deanery meeting the "Proposed Schedule for Marriage Preparation" (see Appendix E for a copy of this schedule) was shared with the area priests. The proposal consisted of three major sections: (a) the initial preparation; (b) the primary marriage preparation; and (c) the follow-up (both before and after the wedding ceremony).

The married couples and author met two times as an entire group and one time as a small group during the month of October. Four married couples came to the first meeting. Together with the parish priest the group discussed the importance of marriage preparation and reviewed the "Regulations for Marriage Celebration at St. Patrick's" (1978). The core group (four married couples and priest) decided that their

Table 18

The Outline of the Premarital Workshop Manual (Kerr, Lippstock, Seager and Soukup, 1981)

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DAY ONE

- I. Introduction (9:00am-10:00am)
  - A. Housekeeping (9:00am-9:15am)
  - B. Icebreaker (9:15am-9:45am)
  - C. Orientation Presentation (9:45am-10:00am)
- II. Premarriage Counseling Inventory (10:00am-10:30am)
  - A. Option #1: "Questions for Couples Preparing for Marriage to Decide"
  - B. Option #2: "Where Are You in Your Marriage Preparation?"
- III. Break (10:30am-10:40am)
- IV. Exercise: "Our Journey and Our Story" (10:40am-3:45pm)
  - A. "Journeying into the Couple's Past" (10:40am-11:20am)
  - B. "Journeying into the Couple's Future" (11:20am-12Noon)
  - C. Lunch (12Noon-1:00pm)
  - D. "Journeying into the Couple's Present" (1:00pm-1:10pm)
  - E. "Identifying Signposts Along the Couple's Life-Long Journey" (1:10pm-2:00pm)
  - F. "Beginning to Tell the Story of the Couple's Life-Long Journey" (2:00pm-2:50pm)
  - G. Break (2:50pm-3:00pm)
  - H. A Married Couple Share Their Journey and Story (3:00pm-3:45pm)
- V. Wrap Up, Evaluation (3:45pm-4:00pm)

DAY TWO

- I. Welcome, Introduction (9:00am-9:05am)
- II. Communication in Marriage (9:05am-1:30pm)
  - A. An Ice-Breaker in Communication for the Couple (9:05am-9:30am)
    - 1. Option #1: "About General Communication"
    - 2. Option #2: "Communication"
  - B. Training in Communication Skills (9:30am-12Noon)
    - 1. Sending and Receiving Messages: "Head Trip" (9:30am-10:00am)
    - 2. Speaking
      - a. Option #1: "Up, Down and Around" (10:00am-10:45am)
      - b. Option #2: "One-Way, Two-Way: A Communication Experiment" (10:00am-10:45am)
    - 3. Break (10:45am-11:00am)

(table continues)

DAY TWO

- II. Communication in Marriage (9:05am-1:30pm)
  - B. Training in Communication Skills (9:30am-12Noon)
    - 4. Listening (11:00am-11:30am)
      - a. Option #1: "Listening and Inferring: A Getting-Acquainted Activity" (11:00am-11:30am)
      - b. Option #2: "Not Listening: A Dyadic Role-Play" (11:00am-11:30am)
    - 5. Integration of Speaking and Listening Skills-- "Listening Triads: Building Communication Skills" (11:30am-12Noon)
  - C. Lunch (12Noon-1:00pm)
  - D. "Messages"-- a talk given by Fr. John Powell on "Families" (1:00pm-1:30pm)
- III. Values and Conflicts in Marriage (1:30pm-3:30pm)
  - A. An Ice-Breaker in Values and Conflicts for the Couple (1:30pm-2:00pm)
    - 1. "Twenty Questions About Values" (1:30pm-1:45pm)
    - 2. "Conflict and Learning to Grow" (1:45pm-2:00pm)
  - B. Small Group Sharing of the Responses Given Above by the Couples (2:00pm-2:30pm)
  - C. Break (2:30pm-2:45pm)
  - D. An Exercise in Values: "Patterns in Gift Giving" (2:45pm-3:30pm)
- IV. Conclusion (3:30pm-4:00pm)
  - A. Wrap-Up (3:30pm-3:45pm)
    - 1. "Communications: Listening to Others"
    - 2. "Eight Rules for Handling Conflicts"
  - B. Evaluation (3:45pm-4:00pm)

DAY THREE

- I. Welcome, Introduction (9:00am-9:05am)
- II. God in Marriage (9:05am-11:15am)
  - A. An Ice-Breaker in the Discussion of God and Marriage (9:05am-9:45am)
    - 1. "Thought Jogger Questions" (9:05am-9:25am)
    - 2. "Checklist About the Religious Side of Our Life Together" (9:25am-9:45am)
  - B. Small Group Discussion of the Above Exercise (9:45am-10:15am)
    - 1. The Engaged Couple Themselves (Dyads) (9:45am-10:00am)
    - 2. Two Engaged Couples Pair Up (Groups of Four) (10:00am-10:15am)
  - C. Talk-- "What Different Christian Churches Believe About Marriage" (10:15am-11:00am)
  - D. Break (11:00am-11:15am)

(table continues)



DAY THREE

- III. Love in Marriage (11:15am-2:00pm)
  - A. An Ice-Breaker to Love and Marriage (11:15am-11:55am)
    - 1. "My Partner's Loving Behavior" (11:15am-11:35am)
    - 2. "My Loving Behavior" (11:35am-11:55am)
  - B. The Seven Theses of Love (11:55am-12Noon)
  - C. Lunch (12Noon-1:00pm)
  - D. Talk-- "The Love at the Center of Love" (1:00pm-2:00pm)  
(discussion follows talk)
- IV. Sexuality in Marriage (2:00pm-4:00pm)
  - A. Warm-Up (2:00pm-2:30pm)
  - B. Sensuality Exercise (2:30pm-3:00pm)
  - C. Personal Values and Sex (3:00pm-4:00pm)

DAY FOUR

- I. Introduction (9:00am-9:05am)
- II. Finances in Marriage (9:05am-10:00am)
  - A. Lecture (9:05am-9:20am)
  - B. Exercise and Discussion (9:20am-10:00am)
- III. Conflict as Part of Marriage (10:00am-11:15am)
  - A. Exercise (10:00am-10:15am)
  - B. Break (10:15am-10:30am)
  - C. Trust Walk (10:30am-10:50am)
  - D. Discussion (10:50am-11:00am)
  - E. Lecture: "Conflict of Interests" (11:00am-11:15am)
- IV. Power in Marriage (11:15am-2:15pm)
  - A. Activity-- "Who's Going to be the Boss?" (11:15am-11:45am)
  - B. Power-Oriented Survey (11:45am-12:05pm)
  - C. Lunch (12:05pm-1:00pm)
  - D. Unequal Resources Exercise (1:00pm-1:30pm)
  - E. Dominance and Submission Exercises (1:30pm-1:45pm)
  - F. Large Group Discussion (1:45pm-1:50pm)
  - G. Lecture-- "Power and Conflict" (1:50pm-2:00pm)
  - H. Break (2:00pm-2:15pm)
- V. Problem-Solving in Marriage (2:15pm-4:00pm)
  - A. Problem-Solving Exercise (2:15pm-2:30pm)
  - B. Lecture-- "Five Steps in Problem-Solving" (2:30pm-2:45pm)
  - C. Small Group Activity-- "In-Laws" (2:45pm-3:15pm)
  - D. Closure (3:15pm-3:25pm)
  - E. Completion of Exercise (3:25pm-4:00pm)

DAY FIVE

- I. Welcome, Housekeeping (9:00am-9:05am)

(table continues)

DAY FIVE

- II. Children in Marriage (9:05am-10:00am)
  - A. Lecture (9:05am-9:10am)
  - B. Imagine (9:10am-9:30am)
  - C. Share and Process with Partner (9:30am-9:40am)
  - D. Process as Group (9:40am-9:50am)
  - E. Break (9:50am-10:am)
- III. Parenting (10:00am-1:00pm)
  - A. Film-- "Parenting: Growing with Children" (10:00am-10:30am)
  - B. Group Discussion on Film (10:30am-11:15am)
  - C. Panel Presentation (11:15am-12Noon)
  - D. Lunch (12Noon-1:00pm)
- IV. A Medical Point of View (1:00pm-2:00pm)
  - A. A Guest Speaker (1:00pm-1:45pm)
  - B. Discussion and Question Period (1:45pm-2:00pm)
- V. Administration of the Premarital Inventory (PMI) (2:00pm-3:00pm)
- VI. Wrap-Up (3:00pm-4:00pm)
- VII. Conclusion (4:00pm...)

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function as a team was to facilitate the adoption of a parish wide involvement in the crucial task of marriage preparation. The author shared with the group the present preparation that was provided engaged couples who worked with the parish priest. The group "brainstormed" the responsibilities of the sponsor couples and came up with the following list. Sponsor couples need the time, a training period, a knowledge of the parish policy, a knowledge of the parish program, to be open-minded, to be accepting, to be honest, to be able to ask for help and to grow. The group also suggested the following characteristics of sponsor couples: (a) a career; (b) an education; (c) a mature age; (d) a certain amount of time married (either with or without children). The core group also talked about the team couple and their responsibilities (the above information and following information on the tracing of the program come from the notes taken by one of the sponsor persons, Maureen Oates, 1981-1984).

Next the author met with the team couple and together they ordered several books for the core group. They ordered the following materials:

1. Fryling, Robert and Alice. A Handbook for Engaged Couples. Foreword by Walter and Ingrid Trobisch. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1977.
2. Hurley, Rev. John. "Spiritual Direction Before Marriage", Aids in Ministry, Summer 1979, pp. 19-22.
3. "Ministering to Marriage". Chicago Studies, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1979, pp. 3-40.
4. "Rochester Diocesan Guidelines: To Speak of Sacraments and Faith Renewal". Origins: NC Documentary Service, Vol. 10, No. 43, April 9, 1981, pp. 675-688.
5. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, Mo.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
6. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation (Manual). Liguori, Mo.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
7. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for Engaged Couples). St. Paul, Mn.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
8. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Minister's Guidebook). St. Paul, Mn.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
9. Tournier, Paul. To Understand Each Other.
10. Whalen, William J. "What Different Christian Churches Believe About Marriage", U.S. Catholic, July 1980, pp. 31-37.

One of the four married couples had decided not to participate in the process because of the time commitment. From the parish stewardship list and the couple's own contacts in the parish the three married couples drew up a list of forty-eight married couples from the parish who might want to be sponsor couples in the Sponsor Couple Process. The core group wanted the parish staff to review the list and make comments. The core group wanted to contact the fifteen married couples who had already expressed an interest through the sign-up from the Parish Stewardship Campaign. The core group reviewed For Better and For Ever: The Sponsor Couple Program for Christian Marriage Preparation

(Ruhnke, 1981a, 1981b) and made these comments: (a) this was only part of a marriage preparation program; (b) engaged couples will not do the homework; (c) the program was not intensive enough after the wedding ceremony; and (d) there was no inclusion of spirituality and its role in marriage preparation. The group put forth these recommendations:

1. There will be a training session in January 1982 for the sponsor couples.
2. There will be a meeting in January for engaged couples desiring to be married after April 1982.
3. The engaged couples will meet four to five times in the sponsor couples' homes.
4. There will be two large group meetings before the wedding.
5. The sponsor couple will take the responsibility of keeping in touch with the engaged couple both before and after the couple's marriage.
6. There will be some large group meetings after the couples' marriages.

#### November 1981

During the month of November the core group met two times. A new married couple joined the group, so the membership of the core group was back to four married couples and a priest. The author continued to stress the importance of study before the group immersed itself in some type of marriage preparation program. The core group in a brainstorming exercise voiced their concerns (see Table 19). Afterwards the team couple assigned some homework to each of the sponsor couples in the core group. Each couple was to look over the following materials:

1. Burnett, Charles K.; Egolf, Jamie; Solon, T. Tim; and Sullivan, Gerald. Pastor's Guide for the Premarital Inventory. Caspor, Wy.: Bess Associates, Inc., 1975.
2. Burnett, Charles K.; Egolf, Jamie; Solon, T. Tim; and Sullivan, Gerald. The Premarital Inventory (PMI): Clergy Edition. Caspor, Wy.: Bess Associates, 1976.

Table 19

The Concerns of the Core GroupConcerns:

1. We want to go through this process ourselves.
2. Is the Sponsor Couple Process "mandatory" or "an alternative"?
3. Should we stick to one program or devise our own?
4. Should we require six to twelve months of marriage preparation before marriage?
5. Is this marriage preparation realistic?
6. Let's just get going and make the changes as we go.
7. The priests on the Dubuque Metropolitan Tribunal support what we are doing as a core group.
8. The rest of the Dubuque Archdiocese seems to be watching us and waiting to see what happens.
9. Should we create a program that works just on the parish level, or should we open this to the deanery, or be truly "catholic", and share this with the community?
10. Should we combine the best of the programs we review with the Sponsor Couple Process that we are thinking about putting together?
11. Should marriage preparation come before and/or after the couple's wedding?
12. How do we minister to the parents of the engaged couples?
13. How do we minister to those couples who are seeking an ecumenical marriage?
14. Who else can we turn to in this marriage preparation process to help us?
15. There is a need for adequate marriage preparation on the part of ourselves before we minister to those preparing for marriage. We need some background and training.
16. This Sponsor Couple Process is to help the parish priests (not add to their work).
17. We need to update our parish policy.
18. When do we "delay" a marriage?
19. What other resources are available?
20. When should we refer?
21. What is the cost for this program?
22. We need a checklist for the parish priest, the sponsor couple and the engaged couple.
23. We need a team couple to administer and direct the program (and not be sponsoring engaged couples).
24. What is the role of a deacon in this program?
25. We need a job description for the sponsor and team couples.
26. There needs to be a good working relationship between this Sponsor Couple Process and the parish staff.
27. The sponsor and team couples need the support of the parish.

At the second core group meeting the group discussed the Premarital Inventory (Burnett, Egolf, Solon and Sullivan, 1976).

The team couple assigned homework; the group was to look over Love in Deed (Tate-O'Brien, 1981a, 1981b), "Regulations for Marriage Celebrations at St. Patrick's" (1978), A Handbook for Engaged Couples (Fryling and Fryling, 1977) and the forms for marriage preparation in the Catholic Church from the Archdiocese of Dubuque (Forms I-VI, no date).

#### December 1981

The core group met one time in the month of December. There was again the "tension" between training the group for marriage instruction and the wanting to get started immediately with some type of marriage preparation program. The group viewed the movie "The Mountain" and went through an exercise of problem-solving. The group responded to the movie with these comments:

1. There are problems with marriage today.
2. We need to see the Church wedding as an invitation, not a requirement.
3. There is a need for marriage preparation, marriage counseling and marriage enrichment.
4. Education for marriage is an on-going thing.
5. What are the "alternatives" to Christian marriage?
6. There also needs to be a community involvement in marriage preparation.
7. What about the concept of divorce?
8. How does one handle conflict in marriage?
9. How can we work together as a group to solve this problem?
10. We need to study the problem first and then offer solutions.
11. We need to look at the needs of the people involved, and then write some goals and objectives.

The group talked about two approaches to problem-solving: (a) the synectic approach and (b) the analytic approach. The author then shared the pastor's two years of study before the pastor implemented the "Rite

of Christian Initiation of Adults" (The Rites, 1976) within a parish setting. The homework was to review the points of The Art of Problem Solving (Carkhuff, 1973) and apply this to the core group's situation. An outline of the Premarital Workshop (Kerr, Lippstock, Seager and Soukup, 1981) was also provided the group members.

#### January 1982

The core group met one time in the month of January. The group decided to wait until January 1983 to begin the pilot program of the Sponsor Couple Process. The core group requested that the parish priests provide them the names of interested couples whose wedding dates would be the summer of 1983 or later. The core group felt that one sponsor couple could work well with one to three engaged couples. The group indicated that three hours was the time limit for a large group session on a Sunday afternoon. The group made these proposals:

1. The team for the Sponsor Couple Process would consist of one team couple and one to eight sponsor couples.
2. There would be a "retreat-type atmosphere" at each session.
3. There would be opportunities for the sponsor couples to meet individually with the engaged couples.
4. There would be a large group session for the administration of the Premarital Inventory (Burnett, Egolf, Solon and Sullivan, 1976).
5. After the administration and completion of the inventory there would be time provided for small group discussions. Referrals and/or additional meetings with the sponsor couples could be arranged at this point.
6. There would be times to invite special speakers to the process (for example, in the case of the session on the "Sacramentality of Marriage").
7. There would be a large group discussion for the topic of "Ecumenical Marriages".

The homework for the core group was to think about the material that would be used in Stage One of the four-stage Sponsor Couple Process.

February 1982

The four married couples and priest met once during the month of February. It was discussed again that a letter be drawn up to inform interested married couples in the parish about the progress of the core group and when these interested married couples would be used. The group read together the article "Preparing Couples for Matrimony: The Journey into Marriage" (Young, 1981). The group decided that the team couple would meet with the priest later in the month and then provide assignments for the core group for the two scheduled meetings in March.

The team couple and the parish priest decided that the core group would begin to write the first stage to the Sponsor Couple Process. They felt that the core group of four married couples could handle twelve engaged couples comfortably. The team couple and priest divided up stage one of the process and assigned various married couples to the writing of that particular session. The team couple agreed to send the appropriate background materials to each sponsor couple. After completing a "rough draft" of each session, the sponsor couple would make five copies, so each couple (and the priest) could discuss the session together. At future meetings of the core group the members would take time to discuss each session and make suggestions, changes and additions or deletions. When the core group finished the "rough draft" of the first stage, the priest would take this "rough draft" to the parish staff for review.



March 1982

During the month of March the core group met twice and the priest presented the group's proposal to the parish staff. During both of the core group meetings the team couple, sponsor couples and priest presented the sessions they had prepared, and the group members critiqued each session individually. The goal was to have all of stage one reviewed by the end of March.

At the first core group meeting the priest shared with the group the major points of Dr. Patrick Carnes' talk, "Why Are Children Running Away?". This presentation was given at the University of Northern Iowa on 26 February; Dr. Carnes was the director of the Family Renewal Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

At the second core group meeting the "Workshop for Marriage Preparation Leadership Couples" was mentioned. The Family Life Office from the Archdiocese of Dubuque was sponsoring this workshop. The group members were encouraged to attend. The group talked about mailing the letter to interested married couples from the stewardship list. The core group also expressed an interest with beginning the Sponsor Couple Process in September 1982 (as contrasted to January 1983). It was decided that the priest and the team couple would meet in April to divide up stage two among the core group members.

The priest presented an outline of stage one (see Table 20) to the parish staff at the end of the month. The staff approved the outline.

Table 20

The Outline of Stage One of the Sponsor Couple Process

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A. The Initial Preparation for Engaged Couples (Inquiry)

1. Session #1: "Welcome"

- a. Team preparation (30 minutes)
- b. Welcome and prayer (5 minutes)
- c. Introduction of the team (10 minutes)
- d. Purpose of the process (15 minutes)
- e. Ice Breakers (30 minutes)
- f. Orientation (15 minutes)
- g. Fill out registration sheets (15 minutes)
- h. Break (15 minutes)
- i. Introduction of sponsor couples (15 minutes)
- j. Questions and answers (15 minutes)
- k. Wrap-up and prayer (15 minutes)
- l. Review (30 minutes)

2. Session #2: "Our Journey and Story"

- a. Team preparation (30 minutes)
- b. Welcome and prayer (5 minutes)
- c. The exercise: "Our Journey and Our Story of Faith"
  - 1.) Introduction (10 minutes)
  - 2.) "Journeying into the Couple's Past" (30 minutes)
  - 3.) "Journeying into the Couple's Future" (30 minutes)
  - 4.) "Journeying into the Couple's Present" (10 minutes)
  - 5.) "Identifying Signposts Along the Couple's Life-Long Journey" (30 minutes)
  - 6.) Break (15 minutes)
  - 7.) "Beginning to Tell the Story of the Couple's Life-Long Journey" (30 minutes)
  - 8.) Large group sharing (15 minutes)
- d. Wrap-up and prayer (5 minutes)

3. Individual Interviews of Engaged Couples with Their Sponsor Couples

- a. The engaged couple meets with their sponsor couple in the home

(table continues)

- A. The Initial Preparation for Engaged Couples (Inquiry)
3. Individual Interviews of Engaged Couples with Their Sponsor Couples
    - b. They go over the following:
      - 1.) The parish regulations
      - 2.) The registration sheet
      - 3.) The initial interview
      - 4.) The information on Engaged Encounters
  4. Session #3: "Agree...Disagree...Unsure"
    - a. Team preparation (30 minutes)
    - b. Welcome and prayer (5 minutes)
    - c. The Premarital Inventory (PMI)
      - 1.) Introduction and explanation (10 minutes)
      - 2.) Administration of the PMI (45 minutes)
      - 3.) Small group sharing (3 engaged couples plus a sponsor couple) (15 minutes)
      - 4.) Break (15 minutes)
      - 5.) Large group sharing (30 minutes)
    - d. Engaged couples meet with sponsor couple and set up times to meet and discuss the results of the PMI (10 minutes)
    - e. Closing prayer (5 minutes)
  5. Small Groups Meet (Three Engaged Couples with Their Sponsor Couple)
    - a. The engaged couples (three) meet with their sponsor couple in the home
    - b. They go over the results of the PMI
    - c. If need be--
      - 1.) The sponsor couple can meet with the engaged couple individually
      - 2.) The sponsor couple can contact the parish priest
      - 3.) The sponsor couple can make a referral to the Intensive Marriage Preparation Program (IMPP)
    - d. A month at least should be given to this PMI discussion
  6. Session #4: "Why Get Married in the Church?"
    - a. Team preparation (30 minutes)
    - b. Welcome and prayer (15 minutes)
    - c. Presentation on the sacrament of marriage (30 minutes)
    - d. Time alone to answer the questions (15 minutes)
    - e. Time to share the above responses with the spouse-to-be (15 minutes)

(table continues)

A. The Initial Preparation for Engaged Couples (Inquiry)

6. Session #4: "Why Get Married in the Church?"

- f. Break (15 minutes)
- g. Presentation on the differences in religious beliefs (10 minutes)
- h. Personal witness by a couple living in an ecumenical marriage (20 minutes)
- i. Time alone to answer questions (15 minutes)
- j. Time to share the above responses with their partners (15 minutes)
- k. Small group sharing (15 minutes)
- l. Large group commenting and sharing (10 minutes)
- m. Wrap-up and prayer (5 minutes)

7. Session #5: "Lord, Teach Us How to Play?"

- a. Team preparation (30 minutes)
- b. Welcome and prayer (5 minutes)
- c. Introduction (10 minutes)
- d. Presentation on prayer with exercise on "How Do You Spend 168 Hours in a Week?" (45 minutes)
- e. Small group sharing (three engaged couples with their sponsor couple) (15 minutes)
- f. Break (15 minutes)
- g. Presentation on the bible (45 minutes)
- h. Small group sharing (three engaged couples with their sponsor couple) (15 minutes)
- i. Large group discussion (20 minutes)
- j. Closing prayer (10 minutes)

8. Individual Interviews of Engaged Couples with a Priest

- a. The engaged couple meets with one of the parish priests
- b. They go over the following:
  - 1.) Welcome
  - 2.) Any questions about the Sponsor Couple Process so far
  - 3.) "Eligibility"
  - 4.) Set a "tentative date" in both the church calendar and the couple's
  - 5.) Go over the engaged couple's folder

April 1982

During the month of April the priest and team couple met one time.

A copy of the letter which was going to be sent to interested married

couples in the parish was written up and approved (see Appendix F). The sessions for stage two of the Sponsor Couple Process were arranged and divided up. The team couple agreed to get the materials to the core group members. The team couple stated that the group wanted to shoot for September 1982 for the initiation of the pilot program (and perhaps starting another group in January 1983). The homework was to prepare the sessions of stage two for the next two core group meetings.

#### May 1982

The core group met twice in May, and at both meetings they discussed the sessions for stage two of the Sponsor Couple Process. They discussed the possibility of having the results of the Premarital Inventory (Burnett, Egolf, Solon and Sullivan, 1976) computerized. It was suggested that a married couple give a witness talk at the Solemn Engagement Ceremony. The group decided that after the completion of stage two of the process there would be an evaluation-- both by the sponsor couples and the engaged couples. The core group felt that feedback was necessary. They talked about building up a library of materials for the Sponsor Couple Process and placing them in the parish library; these materials would be available then for the couples. They suggested that the sessions be video-taped for those people who missed a particular session; this also would record the presentations by guest speakers. The core group proposed that for public relations the parishes in the deanery be contacted; they also wanted the area Christian Churches to know about this undertaking. At the first core group

meeting several of the group members shared their session's contents. The homework consisted of looking over the present parish policy and making needed changes.

At the second core group meeting in the month of May the group completed their discussion and critique of the sessions in stage two. They stated that guest speakers must be aware of the Sponsor Couple Process (the speakers could not "drift in and out"). It was decided that after the pilot program the team couple would only assume the duties as the director of the process; the team couple would not be working directly with the two to three engaged couples in a small group. The core group felt the need to tap the resources of the larger community (not only the parish community). One of the sponsor couples suggested looking at another premarital inventory.

#### June 1982

The Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Dubuque sent out information about programs available at the diocesan level for couples preparing for marriage and couples already married. The programs included the Pre-Caná, the Engaged Encounter, the Intensive Marriage Preparation Program, the Marriage Encounter and the Marriage Retorno. The priest and team couple met for a brief time during the month of June.

#### July 1982

The core group met once during the month of July. They added some finishing touches to stage two, and went quickly into stages three and four of the Sponsor Couple Process. Suggestions were given as to

possible parish bulletin announcements. The group commented upon revisions in the "Regulations for Marriage Celebrations at St. Patrick" (1978). The group talked about Rev. Joe Hayden's article "After Engaged Encounter" (1982).

#### October 1982

The core group met once in October. During the time from July through September the priest had been writing the "rough draft" of the Sponsor Couple Process Manual (Lippstock, 1983). At the time of this meeting, though, parts of the process were still missing. The parish staff had no names to submit to the group about couples planning a wedding for the summer of 1983 or after. The group wanted to get an announcement in the parish bulletin about the Sponsor Couple Process. The core group wondered if a parish-wide mailing would be the practical thing to do.

The team couple and priest met in the later part of the month. Stage one was all typed and stage two had been started. The team couple and priest agreed to get ten copies of each session run off and distributed to the sponsor couples, the instructors at the University of Northern Iowa and the members of the parish staff. These were to be the "working copies"; the final manual for the Sponsor Couple would be written after the first or second program of the Sponsor Couple Process. The team couple and priest agreed that the Sponsor Couple Process would begin in January 1983. They also were informed that one of the sponsor couples had moved out of state, so the core group again was reduced to three married couples and one priest. The team couple

and priest decided that the parish staff needed to look over the suggestions of the core group and then re-write the parish regulations for marriage preparation. It was decided that this smaller group would meet again in December, and that the announcement would get into the parish bulletin about the Sponsor Couple Process. The team couple and priest said that the core group would speak to the parish about this process on the 26 December at the celebration of the Holy Family.

#### November 1982

During the month of November an announcement appeared in the parish bulletin about the Sponsor Couple Process. The announcement read:

Are you considering marriage after June 1983???? If so, the Christian community of St. Patrick has something valuable to offer you. For the past several years married couples in the parish have been putting together a Sponsor Couple Process. The advantages of such a process are many, especially the relationships that can form between the engaged couples and the married couples who take part, the support and prayer of the community and christian service. If you are considering marriage, or are presently engaged, and are planning a church wedding after June 1983, call one of these families:....We will have our first meeting on Sunday, 9 January 1983, from 2:00pm-5:00pm.

During November the Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Dubuque sent out information on Natural Family Planning, genetic counseling, ministry to the newly married and a possible liturgy for Holy Family Sunday.

#### December 1982

The core group met once during the month of December. They prepared themselves for the Holy Family liturgy. By this meeting each couple had a copy of the Sponsor Couple Process Manual (Lippstock, 1983).



And copies were later going to be distributed to members of the parish staff and some of the professors at the University of Northern Iowa.

By mid-December a list of nine couples interested in the Sponsor Couple Process was sent to each member in the core group. Copies of the liturgy and homily for the Feast of the Holy Family were also distributed to members of the core group.

#### January 1983

By January fourteen couples had responded to the Sponsor Couple Process. All fourteen couples had been referred by the priest. The "background" of the couples (see Table 21) interested in this marriage preparation was divergent. Seven of the couples came from Catholic traditions, while seven of the couples were preparing to enter into an ecumenical marriage. Four of the couples had one or both partners that had been married at least once before, and two of the couples were already married "outside" the Catholic Church. Three of the couples were living together before marriage, and one of the couples was pregnant. One couple already had a child.

During this month a two-page brochure was written to describe the Sponsor Couple Process. The four stages were identified and outlined, there was information about who could participate in the process and there was information about the second Sponsor Couple Process. A special one-page handout was prepared which outlined the Sponsor Couple Process and provided information on the stages, sessions, dates, times and places (see Appendix G for the description of the first Sponsor Couple Process). The pastor had sent some



materials to the homes of all registered parishoners, and in this packet there was a letter addressed to the parishoners with some information about the Sponsor Couple Process. Point two of the pastor's letter read:

2. The second material is an excellent study-discussion article by Witness columnist Dolores Curran on Family Life, the strengthening of which is a high priority among parishoners. If possible, share this material with all the members of your family old enough to appreciate it, not only for each one's own personal growth, but also for family growth and development of parish support for our parish Sponsor Couple for Engaged Couples Process begun here January 9 for the first time and involving fourteen couples preparing for marriage. (Msgr. Daniel J. Tarrant, letter to parishoners, 21 January)

By the end of January there were already some changes in the make-up of the group. Two couples (#9 and #12) had decided not to enter the Sponsor Couple Process. The remaining twelve couples were divided up among the three team and sponsor couples; each married couple had three to five engaged couples in their respective groups.

#### March 1983

By March another couple (#7) had decided not to continue with the process. The couple had decided that they were not ready for marriage.

#### May 1983

The priest represented the core group and presented the information about the Sponsor Couple Process to the area priests at their monthly deanery meeting. He described the evaluation of the program so far by the engaged and sponsor couples, and he encouraged the priests to send their couples interested in marriage to the September 1983 Sponsor Couple Process.

At this point information was gathered about ten of the eleven couples and given to every couple in the Sponsor Couple Process. Information like the couple's names, their old (and new) addresses, phone numbers and wedding dates were included. The number of active engaged couples in the Sponsor Couple Process was ten, for one of the couples (#1) discontinued coming. The problem appeared to be one of conflicting work schedules.

Each of the engaged couples was given a sheet with ideas about what could take place during the fourth stage of the Sponsor Couple Process (see Appendix H for a copy of this handout on Stage Four). The engaged couples were encouraged to give input to the support they desired during their first year of Christian marriage.

The Content of the Sponsor Couple Process  
Processes, Topics and Areas of Responsibility

The Processes

The Sponsor Couple Process was modelled after the "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults" (The Rites, 1976). Refer to Table 22 for an annotated bibliography on the "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults". In his article "An Analogy: Marriage and the RCIA" Robert Driscoll (1981) saw the analogy between marriage and its preceding steps and the RCIA and its four steps. Driscoll saw these three analogies between the RCIA and marriage preparation:

<u>Steps in the RCIA</u>	<u>Steps in Marriage</u>
Pre-evangelization-----	Dating stage
Catechuminate-----	Engagement stage
Mystagogy-----	Honeymoon stage

Table 22

Annotated Bibliography on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

- 
1. Dujarier, Michel. (1979). A History of the Catechumenate. New York, NY: William H. Sadlier, Inc.  
  
A good introduction to the history of the first six centuries of catechumenate experience.
  2. Dunning, James. (1981). New Wine: New Wineskins, Pastoral Implications for the New RCIA. New York, NY: William H. Sadlier, Inc.  
  
Good resource for RCIA members presenting theological assumptions of the RCIA, a walk through the RCIA periods, and implications for parish and sacramental life.
  3. Dunning, James B., and Reedy, William J. (editors). (1981, 1981, 1983). Christian Initiation Resources. Three volumes. New York, NY: William H. Sadlier, Inc.  
  
A quarterly packet of articles helpful in understanding and implementing the RCIA.
  4. Kemp, Raymond B. (1979). A Journey in Faith. New York, NY: William H. Sadlier, Inc.  
  
The story of St. Paul and St. Augustine Parish in Washington, DC, in their use of the RCIA.
  5. Lewinski, Ronald J. (1978, 1980). Welcoming the New Catholic. Chicago, IL.: Liturgy Training Publications.  
  
An overview of the RCIA written for the laity. Very helpful in getting an overall picture of the spirit of the RCIA with a view of involving the entire parish.
  6. RCIA: Foundations of Christian Initiation. (1979). Dubuque, IA.: William C. Brown Publishers.  
  
A general introduction to Christian initiation as well as guidelines and starters for its implementation is the focus of this reference. The book covers the different stages of initiation, its history, and the special issues regarding initiation.
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This paved the way for the core group to come up with this novel analogy for the Sponsor Couple Process (SCP):

<u>Steps in the RCIA</u>	<u>Steps in the SCP</u>
A. Inquiry into the Christian Community of _____ (Pre-catechumenate)	A. Inquiry into Christian Marriage
Entrance into the order of catechumens	Initiation ceremony into the marriage preparation program
B. Catechesis in the Basic Articles of the Christian Creed (catechumenate)	B. Instructions for Marriage Preparation
Rite of election for adult initiation	Celebration of the solemn engagement
C. Period of Enlightenment and Purification	C. Reflections and Liturgical Preparations
<u>Easter vigil celebration</u>	<u>Celebration of marriage</u>
D. Period of Insight and Growth (mystagogy)	D. Support to the Newly Married

In the Sponsor Couple Process there are four main areas of activity for which the team and sponsor couples will be responsible:

1. Helping the engaged couples to be involved in the process, so that they deepen their understanding and love for themselves, for their partners, for others outside their marriage and for God.
2. Assessing the couple's needs in order to plan their preparation in the direction which will be most helpful to them, and assessing their readiness to proceed into and grow within the sacrament of marriage.
3. Teaching various concepts and skills which will be necessary for a successful and healthy marriage.
4. Supporting one another through the friendships that develop during the one and one-half years process.

These four activities, especially the first, second and fourth, will be intertwined throughout the Sponsor Couple Process.

### Alternatives to the Sponsor Couple Process

After the couples have completed the first stage of the Sponsor Couple Process, the couples have several alternatives. They can continue in the process by entering stage two-- the "Instructions for Marriage Preparation". Or they can opt out of the process and meet with a parish priest on an individual basis, seek help from a professional marriage counselor or discontinue marriage preparation entirely. There is the possibility of meeting on an individual basis with one of the sponsor couples in the parish community. Or the couples might even make the decision not to marry, because they are not ready.

### Overview of Session Topics and Leaders

The Sponsor Couple Process Manual (Lippstock, 1983) includes nine general topical areas for the large group, two sessions with the large group to become better acquainted, a large group session to administer a pre-marriage inventory (possibly another session for the administration of a post-marriage inventory, a follow-up to the first inventory), four times for various liturgical celebrations, seven small group gatherings, a group service project, two sessions for large group social events and time for interviews between the engaged couple and the sponsor couple (or the parish priest/minister). Refer to Table 23 for an overview of the third Sponsor Couple Process (1984-1986).

Table 23

The 1984-1986 Sponsor Couple Process: An Overview

<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Primary Leaders</u>	<u>What Is Covered</u>
September 1984	Welcome Meeting (large group)	Team couple (sponsor couple, parish staff person)	Welcome and getting acquainted session in the large group
September 1984	Journey Meeting (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	An exercise to allow the small groups to form and become better acquainted; to establish a rapport between the engaged and sponsor couples
September through October 1984	Interview	Sponsor couple	The engaged couple meets their sponsor couple
October 1984	Pre-Marriage Inventory (large group)	Team couple	Administration of the pre-marriage inventory in the large group
October through December 1984	Small Group Discussions (three to four times during this two month period)	Sponsor couple	The sponsor couple meets with three or four engaged couples and discusses the results of the pre-marriage inventory
December 1984	Why A Church Wedding? (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	The sacrament of marriage and the differences in religious beliefs
December 1984	Lord, Teach Us How to Play! (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	The use of prayer and the Bible in marriage; to encourage the couples to grow in their own faith; to appreciate their religious traditions

(table continues)



<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Primary Leaders</u>	<u>What is Covered</u>
December 1984	Initiation Ceremony (large group)	Team and sponsor couples; parish priest; parish community	Commitment to continue in the <u>SCP</u>
December 1984 through January 1985	Interview	Parish priest/ minister	The engaged couple meets with the parish priest/ minister; tentative date set for wedding; welcome; "eligibility"; discussion of process so far
January 1985	Life and Love (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	Love of self, neighbor and God; being human; the meaning of life; vision of faith
January 1985	Communication (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	Ways to good communication; roadblocks to communication; sending and receiving; speaking; listening; verbals and non-verbals; messages
February 1985	Conflict, Values and Decision-Making (large group)	Team and sponsor couples; guest speaker	Values; handling conflicts; problem-solving; decision-making
February 1985	Finances and Budget	Team and sponsor couples; guest speakers	Philosophy of money management; purchasing a house and buying insurance; legal aspects of marriage
March 1985	Marital Sexuality and Intimacy (large group)	Team and sponsor couples	Relationship between sexuality and spirituality; feelings about sex; natural family planning; love and intimacy

(table continues)

<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Primary Leaders</u>	<u>What Is Covered</u>
March 1985	Parish Retreat and Solemn Engagement (large group)	Team and sponsor couples; parish priest; parish community	Special commitment to one's partner; a deeper commitment to the spouse-to-be and the group; evaluation
???	Engaged Encounter (individually ...or as a small or large group)	Offered by the diocese	Weekend retreat (Friday night through Sunday afternoon)
???	Interview	Sponsor couple	The engaged couple shares the evaluation with their sponsor couple; time for questions
???	Interview	Parish priest/ minister	Confirms the wedding date with the engaged couple; begins liturgical preparation; canonical and civil requirements
???	Interview	Sponsor couple or parish priest/ minister	The engaged couples fills out the necessary forms
???	Interview (if needed)	Sponsor couple or parish priest/ minister	The engaged couple may continue to meet with their sponsor couple if they so desire (or parish priest/minister)
???	Interview	Sponsor couple or parish priest/ minister	Discussion of wedding liturgy
???	Service Project (large group)	Entire Group	The group does some type of Christian service to the community

(table continues)

<u>Month</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Primary Leaders</u>	<u>What Is Covered</u>
???	Wedding Rehearsal and Wedding Ceremony	Parish priest/minister; sponsor couple	Prayer service during the rehearsal; preparation for wedding; the wedding itself
August 1985	Brunch and Sharing of Wedding Pictures (large group)	Team couple	Share in a potluck meal; exchange wedding pictures; open discussion
October 1985	Small Group Gathering	Sponsor couple	The group of two to three newly married couples gather at the home of the sponsor couple; open discussion and agenda
December 1985	Children (large group)	Team and sponsor couples; guest speakers	Children (young, teenagers, young adults, children from divorced families, children lost through death)
February 1986	Small Group Gathering	Sponsor couple	The group of two to three newly married couples gather at the home of the sponsor couple; open discussion and agenda
April 1986	Small Group Gathering	Sponsor couple	The group of two to three newly married couples gather at the home of the sponsor couple; open discussion and agenda
June 1986	Reunion of All Sponsor Couples and Newly Married Couples (large group)	Present team and sponsor couples; newly married couples; parish priest/minister; parish community	Recommitment service at the Church; sharing by older married couples; administration of follow-up inventory to newly married couples; picnic

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### The Need for Feedback

In a large parish with many weddings each year, it simply is not possible for the parish priest/minister to take part in each and every session with the engaged couple.

It is therefore vitally important that the parish priest/minister and his(her) team and sponsor couples use some means of communication, of "feedback", to keep one another informed about the progress and needs of the engaged couple as they proceed through the Sponsor Couple Process. This will help promote continuity, prevent needless duplication and alert the team and sponsor couples to particular problems or sensitivities which the engaged couples may have.

Built in each large group session is a thirty-minute time frame after the engaged couples are dismissed where the team and sponsor couples can take time to share their concerns about the process itself and the engaged couples in their respective small groups.

There are several points where the engaged couples can offer feedback in the process. In December when the engaged couple has their first interview with their parish priest/minister they have the opportunity to offer feedback about the marriage preparation process. During the parish retreat in March the engaged couples will fill out the "mid-way" evaluation and will have the opportunity to share this with their sponsor couple in a later interview. The final evaluation of the Sponsor Couple Process will be done in June at the annual reunion of the present engaged and sponsor couples and all former participants.

The team and sponsor couples will have several times to offer feedback. Besides the times after the large group sessions, the team and sponsor couples will also fill out the "mid-way" and "final" evaluations as the engaged (and the newly married) do. There will be several occasions when just the team and sponsor couples gather with a parish staff member and discuss the Sponsor Couple Process.

### The Engaged Encounter

It will be apparent that the outline in Table 23 presumes that the entire marriage preparation process will be conducted within the parish setting. However, even though marriage preparation should be viewed as primarily a parish ministry and responsibility, regional programs offered by the diocese may play a very effective part in the process.

The Engaged Encounter is a case in point. Since the Engaged Encounter is available (and so close), the parish has incorporated this opportunity into the Sponsor Couple Process. The Engaged Encounter best fits into the process after the parish retreat in March. The dates of the diocesan Engaged Encounters are provided in advance to the engaged couples, and the couples are asked to make this weekend retreat (perhaps as a group). The couples are asked to make a donation to this program, and, if need be, the parish will pick up the remainder of the couple's fee.

### Meetings with the Engaged Couple: An Overview

#### Setting the Scene

The goal of any sacramental preparation is to deepen one's personal relationship with the Father in Christ. "Personal" is the key word. When the engaged couple's meeting with the parish priest/

minister and the Church is a warm and personal experience, the engaged couple's relationship with God will be enhanced. But if the engaged couple encounter the Church as an impersonal, bureaucratic institution seemingly more bent on controlling their lives than caring about them as people, their encounter will be either irrelevant to their relationship with God or will actually serve to weaken it.

In many marriage preparation programs the couple's initial meetings has been with the pastor. In the process, however, this need not be the situation. The couples interested in marriage are invited to the "Welcome" session, and there the couples are greeted by the team and sponsor couples and a parish staff person. The purpose of both this session and the next one-- "Journey"-- is to welcome the couples and allow them time to get acquainted. The growth into a Christian community of caring, support and friendship is the key to the Sponsor Couple Process.

### Prayer

Prayer must play an important part in all phases of marriage preparation. Prayer, in the best sense, is meant to be a dimension of everyday living and not solely a part of formal worship in the Church.

In the Sponsor Couple Process scripture reading and shared prayer will open and conclude every large group session (perhaps even use music appropriate for weddings so the couples could be introduced early to the selections). In fact, when the couples complete the Sponsor Couple Process' stages one and two (September

through March), the engaged couples will have heard proclaimed the eight old testament readings, the seven responsorial psalms, the ten new testament readings, the four verses before the gospel and the ten gospel passages from Champlin's books (1979a, 1979b). The couples will already have a "head-start" on their liturgical preparation for their wedding in the sense that they have heard all the suggested Scripture readings.

One of the large group sessions is entirely devoted to the topics of prayer and the use of the Bible in marriage. The following times are set aside for special moments in the Sponsor Couple Process:

1. The Initiation Ceremony-- This concludes stage one of the process. This will be celebrated in the parish during the 5:15pm Saturday liturgy. The community will be called to pray for and support the couples who are continuing in their marriage preparation journey.
2. The Parish Retreat-- There are actually two key celebrations during this Friday-Saturday weekend. On Friday night the couples will take part in a reconciliation service (followed by wine, cheese and crackers). On Saturday at the 5:15pm liturgy the couples will celebrate their Solemn Engagement in the presence once again of the Christian community.
3. The engaged couples are asked to participate in the diocesan Engaged Encounter during stage three. The couples are asked to do this before their anticipated wedding date.
4. A Wedding Rehearsal Paraliturgy-- Usually couples anticipate a one and one-half hours of wedding practice. However, the wedding rehearsal will be short, and there will be time to celebrate a meaningful rehearsal service.
5. The wedding celebration.
6. Recommitment Service-- After the year of support, there will be the annual reunion of all present and previous sponsor and team couples, and the newly engaged and married. The festivities will begin with a special liturgy, during which time the couples renew their wedding vows.

### General Sequence of the Program

The initial sessions with the engaged couples will be the team and sponsor couples' opportunity both to establish rapport with the engaged couples and to make an initial informal assessment. This assessment will normally determine whether the team and sponsor couples should proceed with the couple into a program of direct preparation for marriage or should develop a special program for this particular couple to deal with the personal or canonical impediment, such as immaturity, pregnancy, previous bond(s) of marriage. In the case of previous marriages, the impediment would need to be overcome before the couple could celebrate their marriage in the Catholic Church.

A flow chart (see Figure 2) will serve to illustrate the usual sequence of dealings with couples preparing for marriage. The flow chart presumes that if serious problems or impediments are present they will be evident to the team and sponsor couples, who in turn will notify the engaged couple's priest/minister. It is possible that problems, such as serious disagreements about children or conflicts over religious differences, which may be serious enough to justify postponing a marriage, may surface later as a result of the couple's communication during the marriage preparation process. In such cases the couple would meet with their sponsor couple (or team couple or parish priest/minister).

### A Suggested Calendar

Table 24 is offered as a model calendar which could be followed in working with a group of twenty-four engaged couples, eight sponsor



Figure Caption

Figure 2. A Flow Chart (the 1984-1986 Sponsor Couple Process)

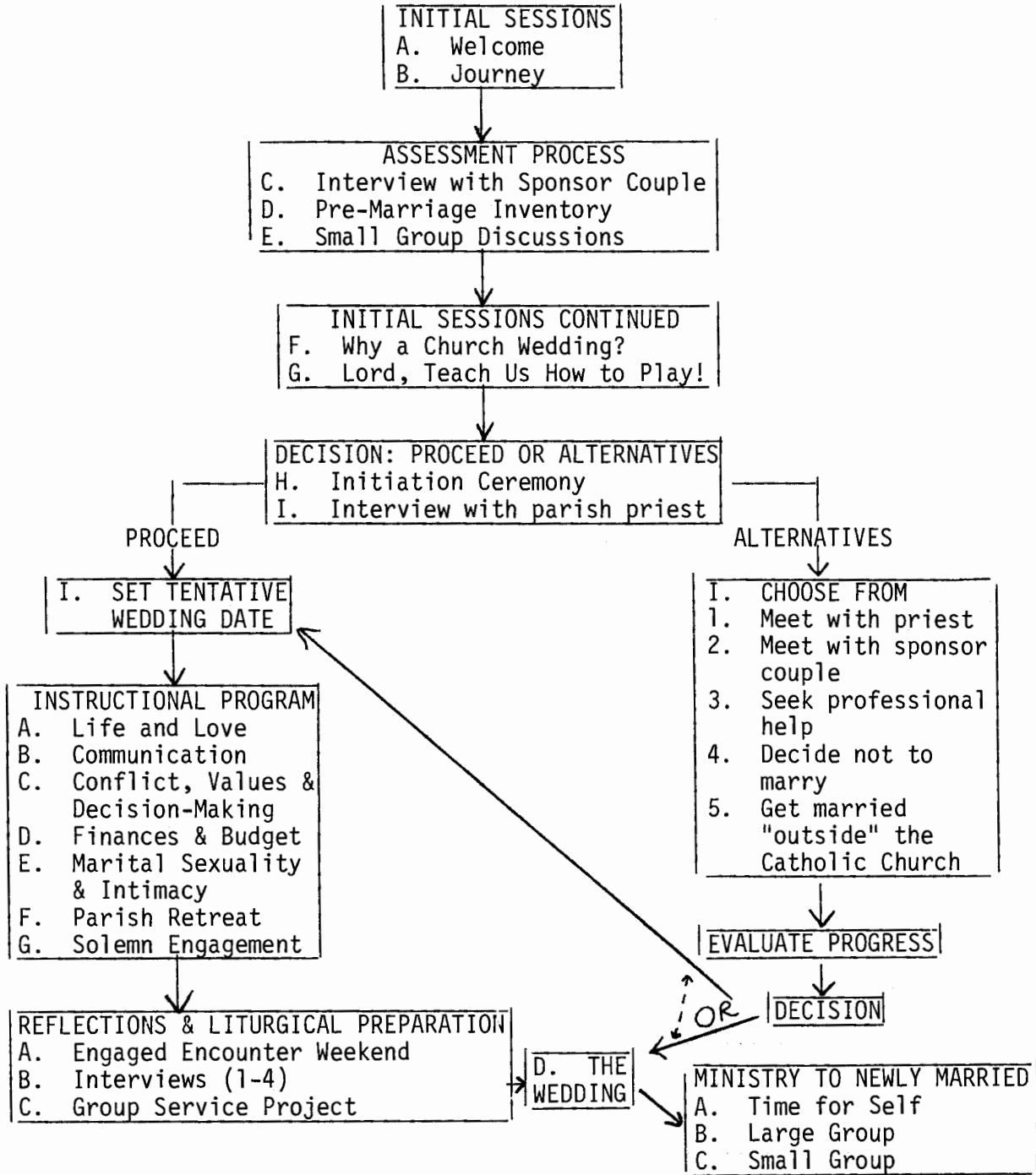


Table 24

A Model Calendar (the 1984-1986 Sponsor Couple Process)

- 
- I. Stage One-- "Inquiry into a Christian Marriage" (9 September 1984-5 January 1985)
- A. Welcome (9 September 1984)
  - B. Journey (16 September 1984)
  - C. Interview with Sponsor Couple (17 September 1984- 6 October 1984)
  - D. Pre-Marriage Inventory (7 October 1984)
  - E. Small Group Discussions of Pre-Marriage Inventory (8 October 1984- 2 December 1984)
  - F. Why a Church Wedding? (2 December 1984)
  - G. Lord, Teach Us How to Play! (9 December 1984)
  - H. Initiation Ceremony (15 December 1984)
  - I. Interview with Parish Priest/Minister (3 December 1984-5 January 1985)
- II. Stage Two-- "Instructions for Marriage Preparation" (6 January 1985-16 March 1985)
- A. Life and Love (6 January 1985)
  - B. Communication (20 January 1985)
  - C. Conflict, Values and Decision-Making (3 February 1985)
  - D. Finances and Budget (17 February 1985)
  - E. Marital Sexuality and Intimacy (3 March 1985)
  - F. Parish Retreat (15-16 March 1985)
  - G. Solemn Engagement (16 March 1985)
- III. Stage Three-- "Reflections and Liturgical Preparations" (17 March 1985- Wedding Date)
- A. Engaged Encounter Weekend
  - B. Interviews
    - 1. With Sponsor Couple
    - 2. With Parish Priest/Minister
    - 3. With Sponsor Couple
    - 4. With Sponsor Couple/Parish Priest/Minister (optional)
  - C. Group Service Project
  - D. Celebration of Christian Marriage
- IV. Stage Four-- "Support to the Newly Married" (18 August 1985-22 June 1986)
- A. Time Alone for the Couple
  - B. Three Large Group Meetings (18 August 1985, 29 December 1985, 22 June 1986)
  - C. Three Small Group Meetings (October 1985, February 1986, April 1986)
-

couples and one team couple. The model has been prepared for the third Sponsor Couple Process within the Christian Community of St. Patrick, and is dated for the 1984-1986 time period.

### Approaches to Active Participation

#### The Sponsor Couple Approach

The Sponsor Couple Process at "full-strength" will include twenty-four engaged couples, eight sponsor couples and one team couple. The team couple will oversee the entire group and act as the facilitators of the group. The sponsor couple will work with a small group of one to three couples (ideally, three engaged couples). In a true sense of the word the married couple will serve as a sponsor to the engaged couples. The sponsor couple will act as a friend and companion, a source of information, a guide, a participant in the liturgical celebrations and a consultant. In addition to the couples mentioned above, the entire Christian community will participate in the process as these engaged couples "journey" to Christian marriage.

#### Group Sessions

In the Sponsor Couple Process there will be opportunities for both small group (three engaged couples and one sponsor couple) and large group (twenty-four engaged couples, eight sponsor couples, one team couple) gatherings. The large group sessions will usually be conducted by the team couple, but with the assistance of the sponsor couples (and sometimes guest speakers). This structure will have the advantage of being a more efficient way of utilizing personal resources and providing engaged couples with a medium for interaction

with other engaged couples. The small group sessions will begin in the home of the sponsor couple, but after the engaged couples are married, the small groups will continue to meet but at different homes of the newly married couples. The sponsor couple will continue to facilitate the small group interactions.

#### The One-To-One Format

There is the option available in the Sponsor Couple Process for the engaged couple to meet with the sponsor couple on a one-to-one basis. This is especially true during the assessment stage (stage one during the discussion of the pre-marriage inventory) and the liturgical preparation (stage three). However, this format is not the thrust of the Sponsor Couple Process.

#### Discussion

Discussion is not an end in itself but a means of enriching the sharing experience for all who take part. It helps everyone feel involved and important. It produces variety and challenge into the meeting. It helps impress upon the couples that many problems and joys are common to the human situation and not theirs alone to bear.

In the Sponsor Couple Process there is ample opportunity for the couple to discuss among themselves (dyads). There is the unique advantage where several engaged couples and their respective sponsor couple can get together and share (small groups). This occurs both in the sponsor couple's home and in the large group sessions. Finally, there are moments where the entire group can discuss a certain topic; there is a question and answer period provided.

These dialogues in dyads, small groups and large groups are not always formal and structured. The major objective is to get the engaged couples to communicate with themselves and each other.

#### Promoting Discussion

Questions are encouraged, but not always the "Yes" or "No" types. The questions are open-ended and concrete, and they deal with action rather than abstractions and theories alone.

Silence also plays a part in this discussion. Time for reflection-- especially in the case of the couple preparing for marriage-- is paramount. But this silence also spills over to the small and large group settings.

#### Techniques

The Sponsor Couple Process uses many techniques. There are the presentations given by the team or sponsor couple or guest speaker. There are the exercises, both those provided within the framework of a session and those given as "home projects". The engaged couple can take advantage of reading the books and articles that are available in the area of marriage preparation and enrichment. There are the attempts to improve the communication skills and problem-solving of the couples. There are the ice-breakers and tension-breakers to break down the nervousness of the group, and there is the use of inventories to assess the couple's readiness for marriage (preferably, the couples themselves come to this decision). The personal witnessing, modeling and support by the sponsor and team couples are a strength of the Sponsor Couple Process. Finally, there is the element of prayer, and

this aspect plays a prominent role in all phases of the process. And there are the special "moments"-- the initiation into the instructional program, the retreat and the solemn engagement, the service of forgiveness, the rehearsal prayer, the wedding liturgy itself and the recommitment service.

### Reactions to the Sponsor Couple Process

In June 1983 the ten couples preparing for marriage and the three sponsor couples were given three different forms to evaluate the program (see Appendices I, J and K for copies of these evaluation forms). Nine of the ten engaged couples and the three sponsor couples returned their evaluations. The results of the three evaluations follow.

#### 1. "Mid-Way Evaluation of the Sponsor Couple Process"

##### What the Couples Know

The couples preparing for marriage felt that they knew better how to deal with conflict. The couples indicated a better knowledge of feelings, general preparations for married life, the other partner and communication. Refer to Table 25 for the responses of the engaged couples to the statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I know...."

Three sponsor couple people made suggestions. One felt that some of the couples were more secure in preparing for marriage and felt that the couples knew each other better. Another sponsor couple person indicated that the community is a very important aspect of being able to stick to any desired objective ("we are not doing this alone"). One sponsor couple person wrote: "For a few really motivated couples this is

Table 25

What I Now Know


---

Statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I know...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this type of response):

- How to deal with conflict (4)
  - Feelings are normal (3)
  - Better prepared for married life (3)
  - To bring God into our family (3)
  - So much more about my future spouse (3)
  - How to communicate better (3)
  - More about myself (2)
  - It's alright to have hard times in marriage (2)
  - That I am not the only one who thinks this way (1)
  - Marriage is very sacred (but not always perfect) to our sponsor couples (1)
  - That other engaged couples share the same married life experiences that she and I have faced (1)
  - The potential trouble-spots in our relationship (1)
  - More about God (1)
  - That praying together is very important (1)
  - More about natural family planning (1)
  - Budgeting (1)
  - More about career choices (1)
  - The unrealism of marriage stereotypes (1)
  - Marriage is a dynamic relationship of two individuals where love, compromise, frustrations, happiness and excitement intermingle to create a relationship (1)
  - I am sure I want to marry (no doubts) (1)
- 

a very positive experience. Unfortunately, most couples will/cannot commit themselves to such a program."

What Couples Are Able to Do

The couples preparing for marriage felt better in the areas of communication, coping with situations of married life and the understanding of the partner. The couples also felt that they could handle the conflicts that would arise in their marriages. Refer to

Table 26 for the responses to the statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I am able to...."

Two of the sponsor couple people who responded to this statement indicated that they themselves were able to be more open to others about the day-to-day experiences of marriage.

#### What the Couples Feel

Twelve of the engaged people felt better about their upcoming marriages and their life together as one. Six of the engaged people indicated that they had learned a lot about others by listening to their stories, and four people felt that they had learned more about themselves. Refer to Table 27 for the responses to the statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I feel...."

One sponsor couple person felt at peace knowing that this need of couples preparing for marriage was being met. Another sponsor couple person felt that much growth was experienced by many in the group. This person felt that the process offered a variety and covered many good topics.

#### The Opportunities the Couples Have

Seven of the engaged people saw the biggest opportunity in the Sponsor Couple Process in the being able to talk more freely with their future spouse. Four of the engaged people felt free to give one of the sponsor couples a call if a problem came out in their future marriage. Three of the engaged people wanted to tell their families and friends about this marriage preparation program, for they highly recommended the process. Refer to Table 28 for the responses to the statement:



Table 26

What I Am Able to Do


---

Statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I am able to...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

To communicate better (7), to understand and cope with situations in married life better (6), to communicate and understand my future spouse better (5), to handle conflicts that may arise (4), to talk with people I don't know well about important matters (2), to make decisions (2), to talk with other couples (2), to accept our differences (2), to be more patient (1), to cope with problems through prayer (1), to understand my duties and responsibilities better (1), to think of "we" instead of "me" (1), to reduce my fears of marriage (1), to be aware of my feelings (1)

---

Table 27

What I Feel


---

Statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I feel...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

Better about our marriage and life together as one (12), I have learned a lot listening to others' experiences (6), better about myself (4), that we can work our problems out (2), the responsibilities of having a spouse and a child (2), we get along better now (2), good (2), our relationship has blossomed (2), good about meeting other couples (1), nice to see these couples later and their families grow (1), a good Christian marriage is on the way, and I wish I could have had this marriage preparation the first time when I married (1), I am able to handle the problems when they arise (1), the need for such a marriage preparation process (1), that we need to apply what we learned to our marriage (1), more realistic (1), hopeful that our differences will be kept to a minimum (1), that God will guide us through marriage if we but follow him (1)

---

Table 28

What I Have the Opportunity to Do


---

Statement: "As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I have the opportunity to...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

- To talk more freely to my spouse (7)
  - Give anyone of the sponsor couples a call if I was having a problem (4)
  - To tell family and friends how this process changed our lives for the better and recommend this process to someone else highly (3)
  - Hear how other engaged couples work their conflicts out (2)
  - To share my feelings about God and the setting up of a good Christian home (2)
  - A positive feelings about marriage and having a family (1)
  - Draw on experiences of others in the atmosphere of Christian fellowship (1)
  - Grow more in my understanding of Christian marriage (1)
  - To put what I learned into my everyday life (1)
  - To see the different marital lifestyles and understand why people have chosen this lifestyle (1)
  - To meet later some very dear and understanding people that I have grown close to (1)
  - To start marriage on the right foot (1)
- 

"As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I have the opportunity to...."

One of the sponsor couple people wrote: "We grew in our own marriage. We felt that we truly helped ease the concerns of some of the couples preparing for marriage." Several sponsor couple people felt that they had deepened their own commitment in their marriages and had expanded their friendships to include these engaged couples. In fact, the sponsor couples felt strengthened by the examples of the couples preparing for marriage.

### The Strength of the Sponsor Couple Process

The engaged couples felt that the Sponsor Couple Process was especially strong in the areas of possible problems in marriage, the sharing of married and engaged couples, the getting of people to share their own stories and the expressing of how important God (Christ) is in one's marriage (see Table 29).

All three sponsor couple people who responded to the question saw the community aspect, and they viewed support as the biggest strength.

### The Weaknesses of the Sponsor Couple Program

Seven of the engaged couples stated that they could not think of anything to improve in the program; the seven did not see any "weaknesses". However, the engaged people listed fourteen different areas which could be improved in the program (see Table 30).

The three sponsor couple people who responded to this statement commented upon the consistency of attendance for the engaged couples. One sponsor couple person suggested more of a one-to-one approach and less of the large group meetings.

### What the Process Should Maintain

Six engaged people insisted that the Sponsor Couple Process should maintain the small group format (see Table 31).

One sponsor couple person responded to this question and requested that the process remain casual and open.

Table 29

The Sponsor Couple Process Does a Good Job

---

Statement: "In responding to the needs in the area of marriage preparation, this Sponsor Couple Process of the Christian Community of St. Patrick does a good job of...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

Letting you know what problems might arise (5), expressing how important God (Christ) is in marriage (4), getting married couples together with engaged couples and sharing about marriage (4), getting people to talk (4), covering many areas of marriage (2), telling couples of the responsibilities, joys, problems, disappointments and pleasures of married life (2), basic preparation (2), offering of practical advice (2), telling us about the good things of marriage (2), letting you know what is all involved in marriage (1), helping the shy to open up (1), making you feel welcome (1), excellent seminar and scheduling (1), warm, human and understandable (1), helped us ask questions we had not asked before (1), building a strong community (1), you have broken down the generation gap (1), preventive medicine (1)

---

Table 30

The Sponsor Couple Process Needs to Improve

---

Statement: "In responding to the needs in the area of marriage preparation, this Sponsor Couple Process of the Christian Community of St. Patrick needs to improve...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

I can't think of anything (7), give more time for filling out the exercise sheets (2), spend more time in large group discussions (2), to touch the difficulties young people might face and how to get through to them (1), to tell the problems couples might face when the infatuation and romantic love starts to wear off (1), too much time demanded (1), we didn't have time for all the meetings (1), less paper work (1), wearing of name tags at all times (1), a more positive attitude on marriage and maybe not dwell so much on problems they are going to encounter (1), on the advantages/disadvantages of single life (1), more on birth control and the raising of kids (1), more time for individual discussion (1), method of handling a person who has strong emotions (1), allow time for couple preparation before class (1)

---

Table 31

The Sponsor Couple Process Should Maintain

Statement: "The Sponsor Couple Process should maintain...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

Small groups (6)  
 Openness in the group (2)  
 Sponsor couples dedicated to God (2)  
 Contact with the couples in the small group (2)  
 Prayer before and after the class (2)  
 Making Christ a part of the marriage (2)  
 Guest speakers on certain areas (2)  
 Large group (2)  
 A listing of couples who have gone through the Sponsor Couple Process (1)  
 Time for couples themselves to share (1)  
 Home visits (1)  
 Open communication channels regardless of religious preferences (1)

What the Process Should Change

Twelve engaged people saw no need for change in the process. Four people requested a time change from the Sunday time of 2:00pm-5:00pm, and one person asked if there was a need for a three-hour period of time. Three people requested the need for more time-- more time in general, more time for the couples themselves to reflect and share, and more time to complete the exercises. One person suggested a talk on "Married Versus the Single Life", and one person proposed that the group include the newly married in the future Sponsor Couple Process.

One of the sponsor couple people suggested that the time be changed (to improve the attendance of the engaged couples); this person recommended that several of the meetings be consolidated into one long session. Another sponsor couple person proposed that the sponsor

couple take only one or two engaged couples (not three, four or five).

#### What the Process Should Increase

Six engaged people saw no need to increase anything in the present process. Three people felt that discussion in small groups should be increased, and two people thought the number of guest speakers should be enlarged (see Table 32).

One of the sponsor couple people felt that the process should be increased in the number of engaged persons and one person felt that the attendance of the engaged couples should be stressed more.

#### What the Process Should Develop

Eight engaged people did not respond to how the Sponsor Couple Process should develop in the future; they left this response blank (see Table 33).

One of the sponsor couple people called for more input from the engaged couples themselves, and one sponsor couple person suggested that some of the large group meetings be condensed so that there would be fewer of them.

#### Additional Comments

Although eight engaged people did not make any additional comments, ten engaged people did. Seven engaged people thanked the sponsor couples and parish priest; they considered the group "great". The engaged couples commented that the process was well organized, a sign of much work put into the program, helpful and valuable (see Table 34).

Table 32

The Sponsor Couple Process Should Increase


---

Statement: "The Sponsor Couple Process should increase...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

Nothing (6)  
 Discussion in smaller groups (3)  
 Guest speakers (2)  
 Unsure (1)  
 The seriousness of marriage (1)  
 Show and tell problems that arise in marriage (1)  
 The meetings with the sponsor couples (1)  
 Time for make-up (1)  
 More contact with the couples in the large group (1)  
 Time to complete the exercises during the session (1)  
 Time to talk about all the methods of birth control (1)  
 Time for individual couples (1)

---

Table 33

The Sponsor Couple Process Should Develop


---

Statement: "The Sponsor Couple Process should develop...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

No response (8)  
 Unsure (2)  
 To warn couples about the potential problems (2)  
 It is a perfect atmosphere (1)  
 Couples should become closer (1)  
 To have the couples better bond themselves to each other through prayer (1)  
 An auxiliary process to coincide with the annulment process (1)  
 Not everybody is made or ready for marriage (1)  
 A list of the advantages/disadvantages to the single life (1)  
 More small groups in the home (1)  
 To get to know the engaged couple who is getting married (1)  
 Skits of situations (1)  
 More problem-solving situations (1)

---

Table 34

Suggestions for the Sponsor Couple Process


---

Statement: "Additional comments/suggestions...." (the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

No comments (8)  
 Thanks to the sponsor couples and parish priest (7)  
 Well organized (6)  
 You have put a lot of work into this for us (4)  
 We value what we have learned (3)  
 Helpful to us (3)  
 We have formed a friendship with our sponsor couple (2)  
 A wonderful process (2)  
 Your intentions are good (1)  
 Maybe we should have put more into it as an engaged couple (1)  
 Perhaps there should be two sponsor couples to each small group of engaged couples (1)  
 There should be a small group composed of those couples trying marriage for a second time (1)  
 This process has brought us closer (1)  
 There should be more emphasis on Christ (1)  
 Keep up the good work (1)  
 Have fewer meetings (1)

---

The two responses by the sponsor couple people were:

1. We feel that we really did reach others with the fact that marriage, like any other vocation, is a growth process, taking and accepting one day at a time, working at it and, most of all, putting God first and with a lot of prayer.
2. The final weekend was a wonderful retreat experience. My only complaint is how little we were able to involve all of the couples.

## 2. "Group Evaluation"

### Would the Couples Like to be in Another Group

When the couples preparing for marriage were asked if they would like to be in another group like the Sponsor Couple Process, twelve people indicated "Yes", while six people indicated "Unsure". Those



who indicated "Unsure" qualified their responses with comments like "depends on future plans" and "we would like to help out in a small group for a short time". All three sponsor couples marked "Yes" indicating that they would like to be in another group like the Sponsor Couple Process.

#### Would the Couples Like to Help in the Process?

Eleven of the engaged people said that they would like to help the people in the Sponsor Couple Process later in their married life, while seven engaged people said they were "Unsure". Those who responded "Unsure" qualified their responses with comments like "I will not be around to do it" and "we will like to help in a smaller matter-- something involving less time". Again, the six sponsor couple people said that they would like to help in the Sponsor Couple Process.

#### What the Couples Would Like to See Different

Four engaged people said that the process was alright as it stood. Two people said that the process was well-organized and done well, two people opted for more discussion and two people were unsure (see Table 35). Three of the engaged people failed to respond to this statement.

One of the sponsor couple people asked for less meetings but longer meeting times, while another person called for fewer groups and more one-to-one times between the sponsor and engaged couples. Two of the sponsor couple people wanted to see a better attendance at the sessions by the engaged.

Table 35

What the Couples Would Like to See Different


---

Statement: "How would you like this group to be different?"  
(the number in parenthesis indicates how many people preparing for marriage made this response):

Alright as it stood (4)  
 Well organized and well done (2)  
 More discussion (2)  
 Unsure (2)  
 Split into smaller groups (1)  
 Fewer meetings (1)  
 Add more sponsor couples (1)  
 A separate group for the previously married (1)  
 More time to get to know and share with the large group (1)  
 A little slower pace (1)  
 A discussion period at the start of the session (1)  
 We learned a lot (1)  
 Enjoyable (1)  
 More small group meetings (1)  
 Match the sponsor couple with the engaged couple (1)

---

Growth in Understanding

The question asked the engaged and sponsor people if they felt that this program helped them better understand themselves, their spouses, others and God. Overall, both the engaged and the sponsor couple people felt that the process helped them better understand themselves (16 engaged and 5 sponsor couple people), their spouses (18 engaged and 4 sponsor couple people), others (14 engaged and 5 sponsor couple people) and God (17 engaged and 3 sponsor couple people). There were a total of six "No" responses and eight "Unsure" responses by the engaged and sponsor couple people (see Table 36).

Table 36

What I Now Understand

<u>Question</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Did this group...				
help you understand yourself better?				
	Engaged people	16	1	1
	Sponsor people	5	0	1
help you understand your partner better?				
	Engaged people	18	0	0
	Sponsor people	4	0	2
help you understand others better?				
	Engaged people	14	2	2
	Sponsor people	5	0	1
help you understand God better?				
	Engaged people	17	1	0
	Sponsor people	3	2	1

Active Participation in Small Groups

When asked if the people felt they participated actively in their small groups, fifteen of the engaged people felt they did participate actively, while two engaged people said "No" and one said "Yes-No". The three sponsor couples checked off "Yes" for they saw themselves as active participants.

The Helpfulness of the Small Group

When asked about the helpfulness of the small groups in the Sponsor Couple Process, all the engaged and sponsor couple people indicated a helpfulness that ranged from "very helpful" to "moderately helpful" (see Table 37).

Table 37

The Helpfulness of the Small Group


---

Question: "Was it helpful for you to be in a small group?"

<u>Type of People</u>	<u>Scale</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Very helpful		Moderately helpful		Not at all helpful
Engaged People	7	8	3	0	0
Sponsor People	2	3	1	0	0

---

The Helpfulness of the Large Group

When asked about the helpfulness of the large group in the marriage preparation process, the replies were different from the ones given to the helpfulness of the small group. This time the range for helpfulness was larger-- from "very helpful" to less than "moderately" helpful, although no one indicated that the large group was "not at all helpful" (see Table 38).

To Continue Meeting in Small Groups

When asked if the engaged and sponsor couple people would like to continue meeting in their small groups, twelve engaged people said that they would like to continue meeting, while one person said "No" and five engaged people indicated they were "Unsure". The three sponsor couples said that they would like to continue meeting in their small groups.

Table 38

The Helpfulness of the Large Group

Question: "Was it helpful for you to be in a large group?"

<u>Type of People</u>	<u>Scale</u>				
	1 Very helpful	2	3 Moderately helpful	4	5 Not at all helpful
Engaged People	5	4	5	4	0
Sponsor People	1	1	4	0	0

To Continue Meeting in a Large Group

Six engaged people wanted to continue meeting in the large group setting, while three people said "No" and nine people (50% of the group of engaged couples) were "Unsure". The three sponsor couples wanted to continue meeting as a large group during the fourth stage of the Sponsor Couple Process.

The Number of Small Group Meetings

When asked about the number of the small group meetings, fifteen engaged people felt that the small group meetings were about right in number, while three engaged people didn't feel there were enough small group meetings. Three of the sponsor people felt that the number was right, while one said there were too many, and two sponsor people felt that there were not enough small group meetings.

The Number of Large Group Meetings

Nine engaged people and one sponsor person felt that there were enough large group sessions. Five engaged people and five sponsor

people thought the number of large group sessions were too many, and four engaged people stated that there were not enough of the large group sessions.

### The Organization of the Process

For the most part both the engaged and the sponsor couples felt that the Sponsor Couple Process was well organized (see Table 39).

### How the Process Could Be Improved

Five of the engaged people felt that the Sponsor Couple Process was "really great". Three engaged people were "unsure", while two of the engaged did not respond to the statement and two engaged people felt that more time could be allotted for talking with others in the group. The engaged people also offered these ideas for improvement: (a) not three hours and not so many sessions; (b) the session could have gone faster; (c) there should be two engaged couples to every sponsor couple; (d) there should be more emphasis on the Sponsor Couple Process to help the people decide if they are ready to marry; (e) less paper work; (f) there should be more large group discussion; (g) there should be more engaged couples; (h) there should be more guest speakers.

The sponsor couple people suggested improvements like stricter attendance, the possibility of night sessions or longer sessions on Sundays, the review of material, more small group meetings, an assessment of the engaged couples' needs and the meeting of the engaged couples' needs overall.

### The Importance of the Topics

The question centered around the importance of the topics in relationship to the needs of the engaged couples (see Table 40).

Table 39

The Organization of the Process

Question: "Were the sessions well organized?"

<u>Type of People</u>	<u>Scale</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Very well organized		Moderately Organized		Not at all organized
Engaged People	9	8	1	0	0
Sponsor People	0	2	3	1	0

Table 40

The Importance of the Topics Discussed

Question: "Were the topics discussed important needs for you?"

<u>Type of People</u>	<u>Scale</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Very important		Moderately important		Not at all important
Engaged People	7	7	4	0	0
Sponsor People	0	3	2	0	1

Most of the engaged and sponsor people found the topics to range from "moderately important" to "very important". However, there was one sponsor person who indicated that the topics discussed in the Sponsor Couple Process were "not at all important".

### What Was Left Out

The engaged people felt that several things were left out of the marriage preparation; things like the use of tapes, the topic of workload around the house, the topic of money management, the situation of ecumenical marriages, the problems of finances, the issue of home responsibilities, the planning of the wedding (attire, flowers, reception) and the topic of divorce. One engaged person desired to know more about keeping Christ "first" and how to learn what God expects from married couples. The sponsor couples felt a need to discuss more in the area of financial management, the legal implications of marriage and how children affect a marriage.

### Freedom of Expression

The engaged and sponsor people were asked if they felt free to express their opinions in the group setting, and the responses of the engaged people indicated a lesser freedom of expression when compared to the responses of the sponsor couples. However, sixteen of the engaged people felt between "moderately" and "very free" to express themselves in the group situations (see Table 41).

### Overall Make-Up of the Group

From the perspective of the engaged people they saw the Sponsor Couple Process as a process of sharing, a prayerful process and a process of service. From the perspective of the sponsor people they viewed the Sponsor Couple Process as a prayerful process, a reflective process and a process of sharing (see Table 42).



Table 41

Freedom to Express Opinions


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Question: "Did you feel free to express your opinions in the group?"

<u>Type of People</u>	<u>Scale</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Very free		Moderately free		Not at all free
Engaged People	7	6	3	2	0
Sponsor People	3	2	1	0	0

---

Table 42

Overall Make-Up of Group


---

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Engaged People</u>	<u>Sponsor People</u>
Was our group...prayerful?	17	6
liturgical?	4	1
celebrative?	7	3
reflective?	11	5
sharing?	18	5
of service?	13	4
community-oriented?	5	3
mission-oriented?	3	2

---

A Christian Approach

When asked if the approach of the Sponsor Couple Process was "Christian", the engaged and sponsor people indicated "Yes" unanimously.

Table 43

An Evaluation of the Written Exercises

Exercise	Response by Sponsor People	Scale					Did not do the exercise	Can not remember exercise	Did not circle a response
		1 Very helpful	2	3 Moderately helpful	4	5 Not at all helpful			
"Initial Interview"	x	2	6	8	0	0	2	0	0
	x	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
"Family Adaptability"	x	4	4	5	2	0	2	1	0
	x	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0
"Family Cohesion Profile"	x	4	4	5	2	0	2	1	0
	x	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0
"Our Journey & Our Story of Faith"	x	1	9	3	2	1	2	0	0
	x	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
"Reflections #1"	x	9	3	4	0	0	2	0	0
	x	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
"Reflections #2"	x	9	4	4	0	0	1	0	0
	x	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
"How Do You Spend 168 Hours in a Week?"	x	4	5	3	2	0	4	0	0
	x	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
"Our Vision of Self, Other People, Life, World and God"	x	4	5	3	0	0	6	0	0
	x	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
"Pizza Parlor"	x	2	6	5	3	0	2	0	0
	x	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
"Back Rubs"	x	2	6	5	2	0	3	0	0
	x	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
"One-Way, Two-Way: A Communications Experiment"	x	8	5	4	1	0	0	0	0
	x	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0

(table continues)

Exercise	Response by Sponsor People	Scale					Did not circle a response	Can not remember exercise	Did not do the exercise
		1 Very helpful	2	3 Moderately helpful	4	5 Not at all helpful			
"Experiencing Non-attending in a 1-to-1 Conversation"	x	5	7	0	2	0	4	0	0
"1-to-1 for Couples Getting Married"	x	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
"Communication"	x	7	4	4	1	0	2	0	0
"About General Communication"	x	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
"The Tate Family"	x	9	4	2	2	0	1	0	0
"Conflict Fantasy: A Self-Examination"	x	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
"An Exercise About Values"	x	7	4	4	2	0	1	0	0
"Twenty Questions About Values"	x	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
"About Conflict"	x	5	3	2	3	0	5	0	0
"Conflict & Learning to Grow"	x	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1
"Monthly Expense Budget"	x	3	3	5	1	0	6	0	0
"Money & Career"	x	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	1
"About Financial Priorities"	x	5	4	5	0	0	4	0	0
"You & Your Feelings"	x	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	1
	x	4	4	4	0	0	6	0	0
	x	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1
	x	7	3	4	0	0	4	0	0
	x	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	1
	x	5	5	4	0	0	4	0	0
	x	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1
	x	5	6	4	0	0	3	0	0
	x	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	x	4	4	7	0	0	3	0	0
	x	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
	x	4	7	3	1	0	3	0	0
	x	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	x	3	6	3	3	0	3	0	0
	x	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
	x	3	8	4	1	0	2	0	0
	x	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1

(table continues)

Exercise	Response by Sponsor	Response by Engaged People	Scale					Did not do exercise	Can not remember exercise	Did not circle a response
			1 Very helpful	2	3 Moderately helpful	4	5 Not at all helpful			
"Statements on Attitudes Toward Sex in Marriage"	x		5	4	3	2	0	4	0	0
"Two Checklists About Marital Sex"	x		2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
"Sexual Values Worksheet"	x		4	3	2	1	0	8	0	0
"Points and Questions About Sex and Intimacy"	x		2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
"Sex and Intimacy"	x		4	2	4	0	0	8	0	0
"The Religious Side of Our Life Together"	x		0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1
"Mid-Way Evaluation of the SCP"	x		5	2	3	2	0	6	0	0
"Group Evaluation"	x		2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
"Evaluation of Written Exercises"	x		5	5	3	1	0	4	0	0
	x		2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
	x		7	3	1	1	0	6	0	0
	x		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
	x		6	3	1	0	2	6	0	0
	x		0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
	x		6	3	1	0	0	6	0	2
	x		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
	x		6	2	2	0	2	6	0	0
	x		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3

### 3. "Evaluation of Written Exercises"

The third and final evaluation form was an attempt to determine the helpfulness of the written exercises in the Sponsor Couple Process. The results of this evaluation are tabulated in Table 43.

#### A Second Time Through the Sponsor Couple Process

##### May 1983

In the month of May there were several opportunities to promote the Sponsor Couple Process. A new outline for the second Sponsor Couple Process (1983-1985) was proposed, and shared with the members of the parish staff of the Christian Community of St. Patrick (see Appendix L). These outlines were made available to engaged couples when they called the parish offices and inquired about the marriage preparation program.

Toward the end of the month the pastor sent out a news release which described the ten years of sacramental preparation at the Christian Community of St. Patrick. The pastor wrote:

The new Sponsor Couple Process for engaged couples was first done experimentally from January to May of this year. It will now be expanded to run from September, 1983, to March 1984, and opened to twenty-four couples. Modeled on the adult initiation process, the Sponsor Couple Process consists of four stages. The first is an inquiry into the unique nature of Christian marriage in five, three-hour Sunday afternoon sessions, from September through December. The second stage consists of five Sunday afternoon meetings for instructions in various aspects of marriage. This is followed by a parish weekend retreat, March 2-3, 1984, and the celebration of solemn engagement at a parish weekend liturgy. During the first three stages, couples are encouraged to make a weekend Engaged Encounter on any of the four weekends from November, 1983, to June, 1984, at the American Martyrs Retreat House here. The final stage follows the celebration of the wedding. It consists of a year-long follow-up with large and small group reunions and other options for support of the newly married couple and their integration into the parish community. In the entire process, married parishioners serve to support, encourage and lead the engaged couples into the responsibilities of Christian married life. (Msgr. Daniel J. Tarrant, letter to parishioners, 27 May)

The Dubuque Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Newsletter (1983) ran a short explanation about the Sponsor Couple Process in the section "Region IV". Archbishop James J. Byrne, the former Archbishop of Dubuque, wrote a letter requesting a deeper awareness on the part of all in the ministry to married couples, especially the separated, divorced and widowed.

#### July 1983

In June the Family Life Office from the Archdiocese of Dubuque sent out information and schedules for the Pre-Cana Conferences, Engaged Encounter, Sons and Daughters Encounter and Retorno. The office provided a sheet on the Intensive Marriage Preparation Program and a sheet on Natural Family Planning.

Letters were sent to prospective sponsor couples (see Appendix M for a copy of the letter) and to the parish priests and deacons (see Appendix N for a copy of the letter) telling them about the second Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled to begin in September 1983.

Two married couples from the parish had indicated an interest to join the team, and another married couple was thinking about the Sponsor Couple Process. One of the previous sponsor couples decided not to return, for they already had too many commitments. One of the engaged couples responded "No" to an invitation to be on the team, for this engaged couple was not yet ready.

#### August 1983

In August 1983 there was some correspondence from Dave and Mary Fish about the Couple to Couple League. Dave and Mary offered their

services to the Sponsor Couple Process in the area of natural family planning.

By the end of August there was a list of fifteen couples for the Sponsor Couple Process. Fourteen of those couples were referred by the parish priest on the core group.

#### September 1983

By the middle of September there was a "revised list" of engaged couples interested in the Sponsor Couple Process. The number was nineteen. The number eventually "peaked" at twenty-three couples (see Table 44).

#### October-December 1983

By December 1983 the twenty-three engaged couples had "reduced" themselves to eight active couples. Couples #4, #15, #19 and #20 had decided not to get married. Although couples #3, #5, #21 and #23 said they would come, they never showed up. Couples #1, #10, #13 and #18 decided to meet with a priest for their marriage preparation. Couples #6, #7 and #22 decided to get married "outside" of the Church, and afterwards they dropped out of the Sponsor Couple Process (although they were called and encouraged to remain a part of the group). Thus, the eight couples that remained in the group were #2, #8, #9, #11, #12, #14, #16 and #17.

In December 1983 a budget was finally proposed for the Sponsor Couple Process (see Appendix 0) and this was later approved by the Parish Council.

During December the first Sponsor Couple Process had their large

Table 44

The Couples Interested in the Second Sponsor Couple Process

The Situations of the "Engaged Couples"

1. Where one or both were previously married
2. Where one is Catholic
3. Where both are Catholic
4. Where one or both are under 20 years of age
5. The couple is living together before marriage
6. Unchurched Catholic(s)
7. Where one or both are non-practicing Catholics
8. Pregnancy before marriage
9. The couple had been married "outside" the Catholic Church
10. The couple had already been married
11. The couple was living apart before marriage

	Couple # 1	Couple # 2	Couple # 3	Couple # 4	Couple # 5	Couple # 6	Couple # 7	Couple # 8	Couple # 9	Couple # 10	Couple # 11	Couple # 12	Couple # 13	Couple # 14	Couple # 15	Couple # 16	Couple # 17	Couple # 18	Couple # 19	Couple # 20	Couple # 21	Couple # 22	Couple # 23
1. Where one or both were previously married				X						X							X				X		
2. Where one is Catholic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Where both are Catholic									X	X						X	X						
4. Where one or both are under 20 years of age		X				X	X	X					X					X	X	X			X
5. The couple is living together before marriage											X				X						X	X	
6. Unchurched Catholic(s)																						X	
7. Where one or both are non-practicing Catholics																			X			X	
8. Pregnancy before marriage						X															X	X	
9. The couple had been married "outside" the Catholic Church										X				X							X	X	
10. The couple had already been married			X		X																		
11. The couple was living apart before marriage	X	X														X							X



group meeting and they discussed the topic of children. The guest speakers included a set of parents who had six pre- and grade-school children, a sponsor couple with seven children high school age and above, a newly married couple from the first Sponsor Couple Process who had experienced the death of two children through a miscarriage and another engaged couple from the first Sponsor Couple Process who had several children through previous marriages.

#### March 1984

At the time of this writing the second Sponsor Couple Process completed stage two with the celebration of their Solemn Engagement. The couples have already begun their reflection period and liturgical preparation; the first couple is scheduled to be married 19 May 1984.

There are eight couples interested in the third Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled for the Fall of 1984.

## Chapter Six

### CONCLUSION

#### A Short and Long Term Goal

The author's short term goal of writing a research paper on the topic of marriage preparation has led to the beginnings of a Sponsor Couple Process for those contemplating marriage in the Christian Community of St. Patrick and the surrounding metropolitan areas. The parish is gearing up for its third Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled to begin in September 1984 and function through the summer of 1986. There are already eight couples that have expressed an interest in the Fall 1984 Sponsor Couple Process. The long term goal-- a manual which will describe the policy of the parish, the content of the program in detail, the state and Church requirements and evaluations-- is still to be realized. Hopefully, this manual will be available at the close of 1984. This manual has been the outgrowth of the research gathered in this paper and the experience gained by six years of working with couples preparing for marriage in the parish setting.

The encouragement for such an undertaking has been tremendous, especially from the staff at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the staff and the people at the Christian Community of St. Patrick, the support from other area clergy and the letters from people in the field of marriage preparation.

In particular, the author would like to cite three such letters from people in the field of marriage preparation:

1. I was pleased to learn of your interest in putting together a paper describing various approaches to marriage preparation. I understand you have already surveyed a variety of programs and would like to know more about Prepare and Enrich....

...I would, also, appreciate a copy of your materials and your paper when your program is finished....(David H. Olson, personal communication, 26 May 1983)

2. I was very happy to hear from you and find that you are doing some special work in the area of marriage preparation. Your pilot project sounds very good. I am also very impressed by the breadth of your research. You must be accumulating a tremendous amount of material. When your research project is put into final printed form, I will appreciate it if you will number me among those who would like to receive a copy....

...I expect the other material you have received has provided you with a great deal of information regarding the why of marriage preparation programs. In terms of the effort of the Church, I generally emphasize that this is an extremely pivotal time to be involved in the lives of the engaged couples. Because of a social-psychological-developmental phenomenon, many of the engaged have put the Church on the back burner. Now, in order to have a "proper" wedding, they need the cooperation of the Church. Although the motivation of some may not be all that meritorious or enthusiastic, it is a tremendous time for the Church to make a significant effort to show the engaged what she has and to help them see the positive way in which the Church can effect their life. Since many of the engaged are catechetically uniformed, the specifics of marriage preparation provide an excellent catechetical opportunity.

Since the larger society does not provide positive support for marriage, and since its value system is contrary to the kind of values needed for a successful marriage, a formal marriage preparation is significantly more important than it was a couple of generations ago when a Christian value system was somewhat ingrained in the fabric of society..... (John G. Quesnell, personal communication, 29 June 1983)

3. ...The general purpose of preparation for marriage is to help the couple get the best out of the later relationship. But for Catholics, a very important additional reason is to weed out those unlikely to have a good marriage, so that they will not be confronted with more divorces among their members. The latter may still be a good reason for whatever you do before marriage, but the evidence is increasing that couples before marriage cannot be greatly helped in terms of their adjustment to each other. The real answer lies in guiding couples through their first year of marriage, enabling them to develop healthy interaction patterns so that in the later years their marriages

are healthy and growing.

Sooner or later we must face this, provide the necessary guidance for young couples, and insist for religious reasons that they accept this guidance as the best guarantee that they will have an enduring relationship.

I hope that Catholics for whom this issue is so important will give serious consideration to this plan. I don't believe that any other will work on a significant scale. (David Macê, dictated letter, 18 July 1983)

The author found these words from an instructor at the University of Minnesota, a previous teacher at the St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and an individual who has been involved in the area of marriage preparation for the past twenty-five years to be very supportive in the author's reaching out to the two goals listed above.

#### The Review of Literature

##### History of Marriage Preparation

From the review of literature on the national level and the comparison of the sixteen programs in the Catholic Church there seems to be evidence that these programs have been proliferating throughout the United States since the first premarital program at the Merrill-Palmer Institute in 1932. The approach dictates a preventive rather than a remedial or "bandaid" one, and there is a hope to increase the family stability, marital happiness and the quality of family relationships. Relationship seems to be the key word. Hopefully, the cause of marital failure can best be dealt with before marriage and during the early years of marriage.

##### Marriage Preparation Programs

In the review of literature the author presented the following thirteen groups in which marriage preparation programs had been

developed for: the engaged, the handicapped, the disadvantaged, the college and university students, the couples living with parents, a couple where one or both are minors, teenage couples, military couples, rural couples, remarrying couples, the general public, members of particular religious denominations and programs for those couples preparing for marriage in the Catholic Church. Later in Chapters Four and Five the author further divided the group of the Catholic Church into these special groups: the couple where one or both were previously married, the couple where one was Catholic, the couple where both were Catholic, the couple where one or both were under the age of twenty, the couple that was living together before marriage, the couple where one or both were unchurched, the couple where one or both were non-practicing church people, the case of pregnancy before marriage, the case where the couple was married "outside" the Catholic Church, the case where the couple had already been married, the situation where the couples lived apart from each other, the situation where one person was unable to attend the program because of work-conflict and the situation where one or both were immature. Is there such an "ideal couple" for marriage preparation? Can there be an "umbrella program" that meets the needs of those couples described-- be it secular or religious based?

#### Criticisms

Do marriage preparation programs prevent bad marriages from happening? Or are they effective? Good work has already been done, and those who work in this ministry are encouraged to dream-- to be innovative, creative and imaginative. But marriage preparation is

not simply marriage counseling, nor is it education for marriage, nor is it simply premarital counseling. The sights of marriage preparation seem to be targeted to the couple's relationship, preferably both before and after the wedding ceremony. In fact, marriage preparation is part of the life continuum, not just one isolated moment in the journey of these two people. But the question-- "When is the most teachable moment?"-- is a good one and needs some research. There are serious problems in marriage preparation, notably: (a) the use of nonstandardized dependent measures; (b) the acceptance of participants' self-reports, paper and pencil tests and questionnaires as valid indicators of behavioral changes; (c) the inappropriate use of standardized measures; (d) not gearing the program to the needs of the couples; (e) the inadequacy of preparing the couples for the realities of marriage; (f) the lack of coordination and creativity in the domain of marriages; (g) the overemphasis on information (lecture) giving; (h) the minimal use of audio-visual materials; (i) the discontinuity of leadership; (j) the lack of follow-up after the couple's marriage; (k) the lack of scientific study; (l) the lack of cooperation among Churches in this ministry to those preparing for marriage and those already married; (m) the inability to deal with the theological and pastoral implications for a Christian marriage; (n) not caring for the couples before, during and after marriage; (o) not using the talent and resources already out there in those couples living the call to Christian marriage; (p) the lack of training on the part of those preparing couples for marriage; (q) the feeling of

uncomfortableness on the part of the people preparing those for marriage.

### Suggestions

Like those who work with nuts at the Fischer Plant, we, too, need to take marriage preparation seriously (this is not a pun). And as Pope John Paul II has already shared with us in the Church we need to make an assessment of the situation and truly answer the question, "Does the Church support families?". Is the Church taking a preventive approach? Are the services family or individual-oriented? Are these services directed to just the "nuclear" family or to all groups? And, perhaps the most important, is the Catholic Church working closely together with other Churches in this marriage preparation field? The Church's task is very Christ-like: to help couples prepare for Christian marriage, or, said in another way, to help them prayerfully discern their readiness to marry in the context of a caring and loving community. The effectiveness of such a program lies in a well-designed program, and one based in innovation, effort and research. The development of the Sponsor Couple Process is unique. In addition to the areas of assessment, instruction and liturgical preparation, there are two "extra" ingredients-- evaluation and support. Perhaps more important than what the couple will learn will be the relationships they form with themselves and one another. Support and friendship based in a Christian community are "benefits" which this author cannot adequately describe in the context of this research paper.

Marriage is much more than a "stock market" report. It is a

spiritual thermometer of our society and it is very indicative of future trends. If the Churches fail to respond, then who can we count on to watch over the welfare of our married couples? The research seems to strongly indicate that the welfare of couples preparing for marriage and the success of their marriages are seen at least in part as the responsibility of the parish (and the larger Christian community?) who are consequently seeking to help the couples prepare for marriage.

#### Discussion of Local Clergy Survey

Out of the fifty-three ministers in the Cedar Falls area thirty ministers responded to the mailed questionnaire. Some of their findings about marriage preparation are:

1. Not many formal programs were used by the area ministers.
2. The most common approach was the one-to-one (the minister to the engaged couple).
3. The most cited objectives were communication skills, the ability to handle conflict situations, the building of the marital relationship, the understanding of self and others, expectations, the spiritual aspects of marriage and the planning of the wedding celebration.
4. The content of the marriage preparation included communication, roles in marriage, decision-making, spirituality, sexuality, economics, relationships, conflicts, intimacy, understanding of others, expectations about marriage and family background.
5. Generally the ministers worked with couples who had definite plans about getting married.
6. The top seven methods used in the marriage preparation process were dialogue and discussion, meeting with the pastor, questions/answers, couple sharing, personal reflection, handout materials and homework.
7. The length of a session varied between zero and ten hours, while most sessions were one and one-half to two hours in length.
8. The personnel for the program definitely included the minister; some used a married couple; a very few used other engaged couples.



9. The best publicity about the program was "word of mouth".
10. The setting for marriage preparation was the minister's office.
11. The flexibility of the program ranged from "moderate" to "much".
12. All thirty ministers took a Christian approach to marriage preparation.
13. Materials for the program included books, manuals, inventories, worksheets, articles and tapes.
14. Usually there was no cost for the program on the part of the engaged couple.
15. The ministers felt that their couples understood themselves and others better, understood the Christian aspect of marriage and had a better understanding of the scriptural background to marriage.
16. The ministers felt that their couples were able to communicate better as a result of their program.
17. The ministers felt that the couple knew their minister, had a better understanding about conflict, knew about the principles and challenges of marriage, knew about the high potential of marriage and the seriousness of their commitment.
18. The ministers felt their couples had the opportunity to grow and converse openly; most of all, their couples had the time to evaluate their relationship and reconsider their decision to marry.
19. The ministers felt their programs were doing a good job in the areas of expectations and marital relationships.
20. The ministers were very individualistic in their responses as to what ministers needed to improve in their marriage preparation programs.
21. The ministers indicated that their programs should maintain a scriptural basis, an emphasis on relationships, the "spark in the eyes of the couple" and some uniformity among pastoral counselors.
22. The ministers called for changes in the areas of misconceptions in marriage preparation, the couples' dreams and reality and the counseling format.
23. The ministers requested to see an increase in the spiritual emphasis, a growth in love and faith, more and better ways of marriage preparation, the freedom of the couple to live and love, an awareness of the importance of faith in peoples' lives, required attendance prior to any wedding, a certain amount of hours of preparation before marriage and homework.
24. The ministers saw a need to develop a framework for continued growth in the love of the couple, new suggestions for changing needs, a social program for the newly married, counseling services where couples could be referred, more work in the area of spirituality, peer and lay leadership in small

groups for marriage preparation and marriage enrichment seminars for the newly married.

25. The question-- "If you can't handle the marriage preparation, then how can you manage marriage itself?"-- drew many varied responses from the area clergy.
26. The ministers saw some needs to be responded to in the area of marriage preparation at the school, parish, community, state, nation and world levels.
27. The ministers all agreed that the Church should support the newly married couples.
28. The ministers all agreed that marriage preparation is important.

The survey indicates an emphasis on marriage preparation by the various Churches and denominations, but there is a lack of uniformity among the traditions. The preparation ranged from a one-hour session to a 75-100 hour process, and the time-frame ranged from one day to one and one-half years.

In addition to the marriage preparation the ministers seem to be in favor of some type of support afterwards for the newly married couple.

Although the universal format is the pastor and the couple, there seems to be a move to involve married couples from the parish-- possibly on a small group level. All the ministers recommend a Christian approach, and some suggested that the Churches work together in this endeavor. With work now being done by various churches in the areas of unemployment and the elderly, would it not be possible (and practical?) to assist one another in the field of marriage preparation?

## An Analysis of Sixteen Catholic Marriage Preparation Programs

### Introduction

The comparison study included sixteen marriage preparation programs within the Catholic Church. Seven of the programs were prepared by individuals to be used within a parish or a diocese, while two were prepared by individuals for local use. Six of the programs were prepared by the diocese for use within the diocese, and one of the programs was put together by a national group.

### Pastoral Considerations for Pre- and Post-Marriage Ministry in the Parish

### Definition of Marriage

There is definitely a big difference between getting married at Church and in the Church. All vocations in the Church are gentle invitations to the couple contemplating marriage; they are not commands. Thus, the basic question in the terms of a Christian marriage is not whether the two want to love each other, but do they want to love each other totally, to make their relationship their whole way of life, to belong fully to the Christian community, to let their tenderness toward each other and their unity become the very source of these qualities in the community of believers. As we define marriage today, there are new questions, and there are Christian answers.

Marriage today can be described in these Christian terms: matrimony, parish community, vocation, a call and a response, sacrament, an invitation and challenge, commitment, permanence, covenant, love,

mission, service, Father-Son-Holy Spirit, understanding, communication, friendship, change, celebration, trust, forgiveness, fully human, sign, God's plan, religion, spirituality, prayer, unconditional promise, fidelity, growth, fruitfulness and faith-filled. There is an element of mystery as one defines this word. And yet marriage can bring one closest to the Kingdom of God on earth. If one desires to see the love of God, one need not go any farther than the love of a married couple.

#### Goals and Purposes of Marriage Preparation

Below are listed the goals of marriage preparation as presented by the different marriage preparation programs in the Catholic Church:

1. For the couples to experience their relationship as number one;
2. For the couples to realize that the real issue to face is their love for each other;
3. To provide the couples not only the message of the call, but an experience of what it means to live out the vocation of marriage;
4. To invite married couples to take a look at their marriage;
5. To allow married couples to grow as Christians in their marital union;
6. The program "ends" when the married couple reach out to others in social action;
7. To enable couples to prepare themselves conscientiously for life together as husband and wife;
8. The multiplication of loving, prosperous families which will enhance and strengthen the nation;
9. For married couples to spread the Good News;
10. To stress the permanence of marriage;
11. To make fidelity the cornerstone of marriage;
12. To make a relationship that is the source of mutual love and procreation;
13. That more and more couples will discover the wonder of each other;
14. The couples will discover the goodness and joy in the Church;
15. To meet the basic pastoral needs of the couples;
16. To develop and/or increase open and honest communication between engaged couples;
17. To provide an extended period of time together for each engaged couple in a rather serious and intense atmosphere;

18. To give the engaged couple an opportunity to probe deeply into their own relationship and discover significant values, questions, issues or problems that they have to face if their marriage is to be successful;
19. To provide the framework where the engaged couples can assess their own readiness to marry;
20. To give the Church the opportunity to fulfill its responsibility by joining in this assessment;
21. To provide a common policy for the diocese;
22. To avoid the common obstacles to readiness for marriage;
23. To bring the engaged couples to a new and better awareness of communications, sexuality, family life and sacraments;
24. To deepen the couple's personal relationship with the Father in Christ;
25. To see pre-marriage ministry as only the beginning;
26. To continue ministry to the newly married.

Below are the purposes of marriage preparation as perceived by the sixteen programs of marriage preparation:

1. Not to replace personal guidance and counseling;
2. To combat the free love, promiscuity and indifference (apathy);
3. To teach couples what marriage is all about;
4. To add to other programs already available (not to replace them);
5. To provide an atmosphere of how engaged couples can achieve the intimate lifelong union they desire;
6. To provide incentive for engaged couples to share with each other their stories and their songs;
7. To enrich and strengthen the couples already married;
8. To help couples live a Christian marriage in a secular society;
9. To allow married couples to take a look at themselves in the light of Christ's teachings;
10. To examine why couples marry and why they live marriage the way they do;
11. To give direction to the couples needed to fulfill their dreams of a permanent relationship;
12. To understand the couples' values and needs and to give direction to their behaviors;
13. To show how being real, understanding, caring and loving are processes that create the best conditions for being married;
14. To avoid the stress and strain that come to newly married couples;
15. To provide a theological understanding of the sacrament of marriage;
16. To teach simple and effective skills in communication;
17. To enrich the family life of married couples;

18. To assist Church leaders who are pastorally concerned to provide engaged couples with encouragement and support so important in their laying of a foundation for a successful marriage;
19. To contribute to the unity in love which begins on the wedding day, but lasts a lifetime;
20. To explore how membership in the Body of Christ enriches the love of the couple;
21. To probe new areas of growth in the couple's relationship;
22. To help those who work with engaged couples (training couples to be team or sponsor couples);
23. To review the decision that the engaged couple made about their life together;
24. To understand the family background of the couples (where they have come from and where they are now);
25. To go past their own respective families in the creation of a new family (where they are going);
26. To provide sacramental preparation;
27. To fulfill the Church's canonical requirements and the state's requirements;
28. To seek to prevent "problem" marriages;
29. To see that the common policy for pastoral marriage preparation in the diocese is written to help engaged couples live a more enriching married life;
30. To see how the Church is a caring, Christian community;
31. To help couples see the seriousness and the sacred nature of the sacrament of marriage;
32. To see the need for a comprehensive and in-depth look at the self and the future spouse in a structured setting before making a lifetime commitment;
33. To give the couple a look at the joys and sorrows of married life;
34. To provide an interpersonal approach;
35. To begin where the couple is in their relationship and then go from there;
36. To realize that there is always room for growth in a love relationship;
37. To recognize that their love is a lifelong adventure;
38. To understand that the Church wants their marriages to succeed;
39. To recognize the serious obligations that bishops, priests, deacons and other ministers have in the preparation of the faithful for all the sacraments;
40. To promote formation of the engaged couples through dialogue and integration;
41. To show respect to both the engaged couples and the team and sponsor couples;
42. To welcome all into the Christian community with an evident Christian celebration of spirituality and sacramentality of marriage;

43. To explore not only the issues of marriage, but also the core issues which give real meaning to life;
44. To provide engaged couples with the opportunity to hear, see and experience the beauty of another Christian marriage and to decide what they desire to build;
45. To share as much as possible the experience of married and engaged couples;
46. For the engaged couples to share from their own lives with other engaged and married couples (story-telling).

### Ministry to the Newly Married

As the author has already pointed out in the paper and can be seen from the goals and purposes listed above, ministry to the engaged includes a "follow-up". And the programs reviewed were not lacking in their suggestions of support for these newly married couples. Their suggestions included:

1. Pray for the newly married couples.
2. Write a letter of congratulations to them.
3. Share a meal with them.
4. Attend a Sunday liturgy with them.
5. Share in their Engaged Encounter as a prayer couple.
6. Participate in their wedding.
7. Share in the joy of their wedding pictures.
8. Send them an anniversary card.
9. Help the engaged couple with their wedding.
10. Help them adjust to marriage and enter into the parish community.
11. Recommend they join a support group for newly marrieds.
12. Encourage the newly married couple to take time for themselves.
13. Encourage them to make a retreat (each year?).
14. Encourage them several years after their marriage to participate in a Marriage Encounter.
15. Recommend they have annual physical exams.
16. Encourage them to remain healthy and attractive.
17. Take part in some follow-up instruction six to twelve months after marriage.
18. Give a gift of a Bible, a magazine subscription.
19. Send them periodic mailings of literature or pamphlets or suggested readings in the area of marriage and family life.
20. The parish can send them an anniversary greeting.
21. Keep the couples informed about events in the parish related to marriage and the family.

22. The parish priest/pastor could make a visit to the home.
23. Invite the newly married couples to take part in the marriage preparation process.
24. Encourage the parish to offer programs of peer support and counseling in troubled situations (not professional counseling), enrichment for good marriages, parenting support systems, day care opportunities, training for natural family planning, pre-engagement education beginning at the junior high level.
25. List the resources available in the area for married couples.
26. Assist in their first baptismal preparation.
27. Celebrate in the Church their re-commitments to each other and the parish.
28. Provide enrichment groups for the newly married.
29. Create a welcoming committee for the newly married.
30. Send a notice to the couple's new parish about their arrival into that parish community and about their recent marriage.
31. Have a reunion of all the couples each year.
32. List the retreat houses available in the area.
33. Provide pre-natal classes for the birth of the couple's first child.
34. Have the newly married couples become involved in the parish.
35. List the counseling services available in the area.
36. Have the couples subscribe to the diocesan newspaper.
37. Have the couples watch certain television shows or listen to certain radio programs.
38. Stress the need for a support group for the newly married; provide a monthly group meeting for them.

#### Common Policies in Marriage Preparation

It appears that there is a growing trend to include a common policy along with the program of marriage preparation. In fact, there are two major areas: (a) the assessment process and (b) the instructional process. Several of the programs alluded to the third, namely, (c) the liturgical process. Our own developmental model-- the Sponsor Couple Process-- includes all three areas, and adds a fourth one-- (d) the period of support to the newly married couples. This includes the twelve months after the couple's wedding (unless the couple decides to marry at a much later date than anticipated in the one and one-half year process). However, the couples are invited to come together each year



for a reunion, and to meet the newest group of married couples. In that way the support travels much farther than the twelve months allocated.

As far as who takes part in the marriage preparation, this question is still open for further research. Our own developmental model reaches out to couples in many situations (and sometimes the couple is in more than one situation). However, there are advantages to mixing such couples, for the couples can be placed in small groups according to their similarities. This has seemed to work well in the two Sponsor Couple Processes that we have already initiated at the Christian Community of St. Patrick. The use of the "flow chart" is helpful, and this chart quickly gives the reader an overall view of the marriage preparation process. Reasons for delay and referrals are also important to list in the common policy.

#### Roles of the Church, Team Couple, Sponsor Couple, Parish Priest and the Engaged Couple

The strength of the parish lies in the strength of its families, and the pre-marriage ministry (and post-marriage) belongs to the parish community (and larger community) as a whole, especially those living out the sacrament of marriage. This process is on-going, and calls for a "comprehensive parish plan for the engaged and newly married". The team couple facilitates the entire process, and works under the direction of a parish staff person. The sponsor couple works with one to three engaged couples, and is a sponsor in the truest sense of the word. The sponsor's title is not just "honorary". To the contrary, the sponsor

couple ministers to the engaged and offers their time and commitment. The sponsor couple is a friend, guide, source of information, consultant and celebrator. The sponsor couple ministers to the engaged couples, but paradoxically, the sponsor couple is ministered to by the engaged couples and other sponsor couples. In all of this there is a definite need for the team and sponsor couples to receive training, and a good part of this training can come from an actual initiation into the marriage preparation process. Although much of the workload has been transferred over to the married couples in the parish, the parish priest/minister has a role to play, and an important one. But the functioning of the process does not stand alone on the person who has been ordained and called to serve the parish community (no matter what the size of the parish is). This task involves a shared responsibility, and all the baptized have a responsibility to somehow minister to couples in the community preparing for Christian marriage. And in the service to the engaged couples the Christian community itself is renewed and refreshed.

#### The Development of Our Own Sponsor Couple Process

Chapter Five began with an introduction to the development of a parish Sponsor Couple Process for those preparing for marriage, and then followed with an actual tracing of the process as it has unfolded at the Christian Community of St. Patrick in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the past two years. The content of the Sponsor Couple Process was discussed, some reactions to the process were shared and up-to-date information on the second Sponsor Couple Process was shared.

A core group of four married couples and one parish priest began meeting in October 1981. In the next sixteen months the core group met twelve times, and the team couple and parish priest met an additional five times as they constructed the model of marriage preparation which they called "Sponsor Couple Process for the Engaged". In January 1983 the parish priest and three married couples (one married couple had moved out of the parish) began the first Sponsor Couple Process; there were fourteen couples who were at one time considering the program, but ten stuck to the process. The first group of sponsor couples and now newly married are presently in stage four of the four-part process.

In the content section there were an overview of the meetings with the engaged couples and approaches to active participation. The reactions to the first Sponsor Couple Process included the results from three evaluation instruments, and the final section described the second Sponsor Couple Process which began in September 1983. This second group of four sponsor couples and seven engaged and one married couples is presently in stage three. There is already a waiting list of eight couples for the third Sponsor Couple Process which is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 1984.

#### Unique Concerns

Ideally, the engaged couple along with the sharing of other engaged couples and the modeling of the sponsor couples comes to the decision about their readiness to marry-- not just themselves but within the context of a Christian community. The parish community, or better yet, the entire community, needs to lend its support and

prayer to the couple contemplating Christian marriage. The Church, parish priest or minister, the sponsor couples and engaged couples all play a part. The approach is very pastoral, and includes the elements of assessment, instruction, liturgical preparation and support. The strength lies in the friendships that can form in the group, and the support that can be extended, especially after the wedding ceremony. Marriage preparation is not just a case of "marrying" and "burying" and "good luck" in-between.

The proposed model of the Sponsor Couple Process employs the use of dyads, small groups (one sponsor couple to three engaged couples) and large group (one team couple, eight sponsor couples, twenty-four engaged couples). There is the opportunity for the engaged couples to meet one-on-one with the sponsor couple if need be, but the emphasis is on the interaction of the couple themselves and the sharing with other engaged couples. This approach differs remarkably from the standard pastor/parish priest and the engaged couple, or the married couple and an engaged couple. The process also differs from others (like the sixteen programs described in chapter four) in the fact that the team couple directs and oversees the process. The team couple can easily report back to the parish staff. And this releases the parish priest for other areas of parish life, and allows the baptized people to fulfill their proper ministries in the Church. Basically, this translates into the fact that "you don't need a priest" for this process to work. With the predicted decline of the total number of priests in the United States in the future years, this process should

be seen as a helpful aid to the overall total ministry to the engaged and newly married.

The study also suggests that parishes from different religious backgrounds could and can work together in this endeavor. In this age of ecumenism God could easily be asking us to pool our resources together rather than duplicating them or competing against one another. At least the road is open for further discussion and sharing in this vital ministry in the churches. Often the first place couples who are considering marriage contact is a parish, but there is a definite lack of unity and conformity in the way marriage preparation is carried out. Inter-parish cooperation among the Christian Churches, let alone the Catholic Churches, is needed. And cooperation and support from local, state and national agencies would be appreciated--especially in terms of a common social policy.

#### The Author's Reactions

This author has been extremely pleased with the results of the small group of team and sponsor couples. In a sense, the final product (the manual that will be produced later this year) does not equal the one and one-half years of work that went into the small group dynamics of one parish priest and three (four) married couples. The tracing of the Sponsor Couple Process and the actual content of the program are very much inter-related.

This is only a beginning, and there remains much work in the sense of evaluating the effectiveness of the Sponsor Couple Process. But this is beyond the scope of this research paper. The author felt

it necessary to review the literature and the various Catholic programs before actually jumping into the development of a local parish program for marriage preparation.

The Sponsor Couple Process is creative and innovative. The contents have been well thought out, and the policy will be elaborated when the manual is produced.

The question arises, "Who can benefit from such a process in marriage preparation?" The Sponsor Couple Process has been adapted to the parish setting, but can easily be switched over to a community setting or deanery level or even to a diocesan level. There is also the author's hope that churches of various traditions can work together in this vital ministry to their people and share their resources. What a sign and model this would be to the larger community, not to mention the couples preparing for Christian marriage. God does work in beautiful ways, and this author believes that our potentialities have only been partially touched in this area of marriage preparation.

The author does not see the institutions of marriage and family on the decline, but rather in the process of change. Hence, there will be a need for the churches to change and adopt new policies and programs to meet the ever-changing needs of those couples who are preparing to enter into a Christian marriage. The problems appear to rest in unreal expectations of the couples and the lack of preparation that our society gives. For example, in the state of Iowa, it is easier for a person to obtain a marriage license than to obtain a driver's license. And we spend at least twelve years in education to

prepare ourselves for a particular job that will probably not outlast our own lifetime, whereas we take little in the line of marriage preparation, a commitment that supposedly lasts "all the days of my life". We need to continue to adjust to the emotional, educational, social and religious needs of our couples, and to assist them in discerning their readiness to marry. Are they ready? Are they willing? Are they able?

May God bless us in this ministry, and may we come closer to experiencing God's Kingdom here on earth through the wonderful and beautiful sacrament of Christian marriage.

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Appendix A

Cedar Falls Survey in Marriage Preparation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have a title for your program for couples preparing for marriage?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_

No: \_\_\_\_\_

If "Yes", what is your program's title?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What type of resource do you employ in your marriage preparation program?

Group Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Book/Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailed Materials: \_\_\_\_\_

Person to Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion and Group

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Manual/Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Newsletter: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is (are) the objective(s) of the marriage preparation?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the content of the program?

Please note: Check the areas that your program covers. If you use a handout, please send a copy to Fr. Paul along with this survey. He will return the copy to you! Also, include the source of the handout.

Communication: _____	Spirituality: _____
Ecumenical Marriage: _____	Sexuality: _____
Family Planning: _____	Economics: _____
Engagement Liturgy: _____	Marriage Liturgy: _____
"Why Marry?": _____	"Getting in Touch with Myself": _____
Roles in Marriage: _____	"When We Are Out of Tune": _____
Outside Influences in Marriage: _____	"Putting Zest and Vitality into Marriage": _____
Sharing Love with Each other: _____	Relationships: _____
"Celebrating Marriage": _____	Conflicts: _____
Values: _____	Sacrament of Marriage: _____
Decision-Making: _____	Being Real: _____
Needs: _____	Understanding of Others: _____
Defense Mechanisms: _____	In-Laws: _____
Sex: _____	Expectations About Marriage: _____
Children: _____	Family Background: _____
Intimacy: _____	Requirements: _____
Scripture Preparation: _____	Music: _____

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who takes part in this marriage preparation? (check any that apply)

Those couples planning to get married: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Those couples who are engaged: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Couples who have been married before (either one or both): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Those couples who are just thinking about the  
 possibility of marriage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 One spouse-to-be (the other is unable to be there): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Those couples who have been going together for a certain  
 period of time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Any couple...any person: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the method employed? (check any that apply)

Presentations: _____	Questions/Answers: _____
Couple Sharing: _____	Group Sharing: _____
Dialogue and Discussion: _____	Certain Selected Topics: _____
Personal Reflection: _____	Sharing By Spouses-to-Be: _____
Phone: _____	Personal Visits: _____
Exercises: _____	Homework: _____
Handout Materials: _____	Personal Witness: _____
Lecture: _____	A.V. Materials: _____
Meeting with Pastor: _____	Meeting with a Married Couple: _____
Meeting in a Large Group: _____	

Mixture of Small/Large Group Meetings: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting in a Small Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the time frame of your marriage preparation program?

How many sessions: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of session: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of session (morning, afternoon, evening): \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of time (days, weeks, months, years): \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Who make up the personnel? (check any that apply)

Married Couples: \_\_\_\_\_ If So, How Many: \_\_\_\_\_

Priests/Pastors: \_\_\_\_\_

Deacons: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Engaged Couples: \_\_\_\_\_ If So, How Many: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator Person: \_\_\_\_\_ (or) Facilitator Couple: \_\_\_\_\_

A Church Staff Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Life Office: \_\_\_\_\_

A Team Composed of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How is this marriage preparation program organized?

Letter of Invitation: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Word of Mouth: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Media: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Bulletin: \_\_\_\_\_

Visitation: \_\_\_\_\_

Brochure: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Files: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign-Up: \_\_\_\_\_

Engaged Couple Contacts Pastor  
Several Months in Advance  
of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

No organization: \_\_\_\_\_

If So, How Many Months  
Before: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



10. What type of facilities do you have?

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11. How much flexibility is there in your marriage preparation program?

None: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Much: \_\_\_\_\_

Moderate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 More in discussion, less in  
 topics: \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is the religious assumption of your program for marriage preparation?

Christian: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your number of participants in the marriage preparation program?

Varies: \_\_\_\_\_  
 A Certain Amount of Couples: \_\_\_\_\_ Is So, How Many Couples: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. What materials do you use? (Please include names of books, an outline, question sheets, handouts, booklets, letters, newsletters, material for leaders, questions for couples, kits, inventories, films, articles, etc.)

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(If you need more space, write on the back of this sheet)

15. What background resources would you recommend?

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16. What is the cost of your program?

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17. As a result of the experiences provided in this marriage preparation, the couple

Knows: \_\_\_\_\_

Is able to: \_\_\_\_\_

Feels: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the opportunity to: \_\_\_\_\_

18. In responding to the needs of engaged couples in the area of marriage preparation, your program

Does a good job of: \_\_\_\_\_

Needs to improve: \_\_\_\_\_

19. I would like to see the marriage preparation program

Maintain: \_\_\_\_\_

Change: \_\_\_\_\_

Increase: \_\_\_\_\_

Develop: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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20. It has been said, "If you can't handle the marriage preparation, then how can you manage marriage itself?" What is your reaction to this statement?

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21. How could we better respond to the needs of our engaged couples?

Our schools: \_\_\_\_\_

Our parishes: \_\_\_\_\_

Our community: \_\_\_\_\_

Our state: \_\_\_\_\_

Our nation: \_\_\_\_\_

Our world: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Once we have assisted in the marriage preparation process and the actual witnessing of the wedding of the couple, is it necessary to offer support to the newly married couple?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_

No: \_\_\_\_\_

If "Yes", why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Is marriage preparation for those considering marriage necessary? If so, why? If not, what would you suggest?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Who could we contact for more information about your program of marriage preparation?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Additional Comments:

## Appendix B

First Letter to Area Pastors

29 May 1983

Dear

Hi! Und GrÜB Gott, that is, God's blessings to you this Holy Trinity and Memorial weekend!

I have a request-- could you please take a moment and fill out the Cedar Falls Parish Survey for Marriage Preparation? I have included a self-addressed and stamped envelope for easy-returning, and I would ask that these surveys be returned by Monday, 13 June 1983. I sure would appreciate this, for I am presently writing my research paper at the University of Northern Iowa in the area of marriage preparation, and they want a rough copy by the first part of July! Thus, the urgent request!

I would ask that you respond briefly and distinctly to the questions, and answer them as they apply to your own local setting. Also, if you have an outline of your program for those couples preparing for marriage, I would like a copy (or I will take a picture of it and send it back to you). Also, if you have any special handouts or inventories or kits, I would like to take a look at them. Needless to say, they will be returned (or I will be glad to have a complimentary copy).

My paper will basically have four parts: (a) introduction to marriage and problems in the area; (b) marriage preparation programs; (c) the explanation of the Sponsor Couple Process we have put together here over the past two years; and (d) the process itself as an appendix.

Basically, I need your input for the second chapter, and I have written to all the pastors in the city of Cedar Falls. And I will be happy to make these findings available (but at the same time keeping confidentiality)..

In addition to the local talent that I will be gathering in the area of marriage preparation from Cedar Falls, I will also be obtaining marriage programs that are offered nationally (...). I have marriage preparation programs from Omaha, Kansas City, Chicago, St. Paul/Minneapolis, Toledo, Dubuque and Milwaukee. I am excited and overwhelmed at the material out there for marriage preparation.

Two years ago I did a "rough survey" of nine parishes in the city, but this approach is more systematic and uniform (in the sense of one standard questionnaire). However, the input of two years ago has not gone unnoticed or untouched. And I am grateful for those who shared. Thanks. Although I am writing the paper in the area of marriage preparation, the degree is technically an MA in Guidance and Counseling on the Secondary Level. I got interested in this through my teaching part-time at Columbus High School, but as an associate at the Christian Community of St. Patrick, I have been drawn in the area of marriage preparation through the over eighty weddings that I have been called to celebrate in.

If you are interested in the Sponsor Couple Process that we have begun at the Christian Community of St. Patrick, please indicate below. Also, if you would like to obtain a copy of the research paper on marriage preparation, a copy of the results of the churches in the area

as to what they are doing in the area of marriage preparation or a manual for the administration of the Sponsor Couple Process (this, hopefully, will be a three-ring notebook with everything inside ), please indicate this below also.

Thanks for your cooperation in this matter. May God continue to bless us in His ministry as we serve His people in this area of Christian marriage preparation. Your thoughts, opinions and feelings on this topic will be most appreciated.

Your brother in Christ

Fr. Paul Lippstock

-----  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Paul,

Yes, we would like the following materials when available:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the research paper on marriage preparation
- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the results of the churches in the Cedar Falls area as to what they are presently doing in the area of marriage preparation
- \_\_\_\_\_ An outline of the Sponsor Couple Process at the Christian Community of St. Patrick
- \_\_\_\_\_ The manual for the administration of the Sponsor Couple Process

## Appendix C

Second Letter to Area Pastors

8 July 1983

Dear

Hi again! And God's blessings to you people. I just finished three comprehensives at the University of Northern Iowa, and I am preparing for "full-throttle" on this research paper in the area of marriage preparation.

Last month I took five hours out and visited thirty-nine churches in our city. At this point twenty-nine pastors have responded to the parish survey in the area of marriage preparation. The response has been beautiful. Yesterday I spent several hours calling the other nineteen pastors, and through these calls I promised to send the following materials-- a survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

I would please ask your assistance in this endeavor. Your responses to the twenty-five questions need not be "exhaustive". Short answers will be acceptable, especially since I don't have a computer to sort through all of these results. Also, all the information gathered will be kept confidential. Also, if you would like to request some information from this study, you may check the appropriate boxes below. I have also been "toying around" with the idea of presenting a special workshop to our community in the area of marriage preparation after this is all over, and the dust settles (i.e., the typewriter rests).

In addition to the local survey of our pastors, I have already

obtained ten to fifteen copies of programs of marriage preparation in circulation. They came from the dioceses of Kansas City- St. Joseph, Dubuque, St. Paul/Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Toledo, Kalamazoo, Chicago and Providence. These programs I will be comparing to the one that we have already begun to "pilot test" in our own parish, the Sponsor Couple Process for the Engaged.

I thank you for your willingness and cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our Parish Offices, and if I am not present, our secretary (...) will take the call. God bless all of us, and have a good summer (and relaxing vacations)..

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Paul Lippstock

-----  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Paul,

Yes, we would like the following materials:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the research paper on marriage preparation
- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the results of the survey of parishes in Cedar Falls
- \_\_\_\_\_ An outline of the Sponsor Couple Process at St. Patrick
- \_\_\_\_\_ The manual for the administration of the Sponsor Couple Process



## Appendix D

First Letter to Married Couples

19 September 1981

Dear

Hi! Und GrÜB Gott!

Finally, I am getting around to the marriage preparation within the parish. This past summer I incorporated marriage preparation into the two courses at the University of Northern Iowa. I also conducted a survey with nine other pastors in the community and learned much from them about their marriage preparation.

This semester I am enrolled in a course entitled "Group Dynamics". There are four of us who formed a group, and our topic is "Marriage Preparation". (I seem to have this thing about marriage preparation!) Our end product for the group is to be a five-day (thirty-hour) workshop. In addition to the final product, our instructor, Dr. Robert Frank, is interested how we arrive at that destination. This should be very interesting-- I am the only male in the group, and two of the four are unmarried!

I will be meeting at Mike and Maureen Oates' home on Sunday, 11 October 1981 at 2:00pm. Mike and Maureen have done much in the area of marriage enrichment, and have agreed to "chair" this. I would like to invite you to our first official get-together; I will bring the "tons" of material that I have been collecting, plus several good programs

already in print. Personally, I see a relationship between what we are about to do and the RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) process!

Well, that's it for now. Thank you so much for patiently waiting-- from today's readings, we could term it "perseverance". Take care, and till we meet again-- peace. Your friend and priest,

In His Name,

Fr. Paul Lippstock

## Appendix E

Proposed Schedule for Marriage Preparation(Prepared for the October Deanery Meeting)A. Initial Preparation

## 1. Session One

- a. Team preparation
- b. Opening prayer
- c. Welcome, introduction
- d. Purpose, orientation (the three-part process)
- e. Fill out registration/information sheets
- f. Introduction by sponsor and team couples and witness
- g. Serendipity exercise (get-acquainted)
- h. Wrap-up, closing prayer

## 2. Session Two

- a. Team preparation
- b. Opening prayer, welcome
- c. Exercise: "Our Journey and Our Story of Faith"
- d. Large group sharing
- e. Set up individual interviews with sponsor couples/engaged couples and priest
- f. Wrap-up, closing prayer

## 3. Individual Interviews

- a. The engaged couple meets with the sponsor couple in their home. They go over the following--
  - (1) The parish "regulations" (a copy for the engaged couple, a copy for the sponsor couple and one for the priest)
  - (2) The information sheet
  - (3) The "Initial Interview" (which they received from Session One)
  - (4) Information on the Engaged Encounters

- b. The engaged couple then meets with the priest in the parish offices. They go over the following--
  - (1) Welcome and time for questions about the process
  - (2) Eligibility (civil and Church)
  - (3) Sets a "tentative date" for the wedding
  - (4) Sets a second date meeting (for some time during Part B)

#### 4. Session Three

- a. Team preparation
- b. Opening prayer, welcome
- c. Administration of the Premarital Inventory (PMI)
- d. Small group discussions
- e. Wrap-up, closing prayer

#### 5. Small Group Discussions

The engaged couples as a small group meet with their sponsor couple and go over the PMI. The sponsor couple will use the PMI Guideline Sheets (already filled out for each individual engaged couple).

NB: At this point the sponsor couple should have a fairly good idea about the "whereabouts" of the engaged couple. An Intensive Marriage Preparation Program (IMPP) referral could be made at this point.

#### 6. Session Four

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Speaker presentation: "The Sacrament of Marriage" (I)
- d. Small group discussions
- e. Speaker presentation: "The Sacrament of Marriage" (II)
- f. Large group discussion
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

#### Helpful Articles:

1. "About Sacramental Marriage" (Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed: Manual for Engaged Couples. St. Paul, Minnesota: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981, pp. 23-28)
2. "The Love at the Center of Love: A Theological Interpretation of Marriage" (Nilson, Jon. Chicago Studies, vol. 18, no. 3, 1979, pp. 3-14)
3. "The One Hour Monologue/Dialogue" (Jacobson, Rev. Robert. Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa)

4. "What Different Christian Churches Believe About Marriage" (Whalen, William J. U.S. Catholic, July 1980, pp. 31-37)
5. "Sacrament of Matrimony" (Tarrant, Msgr. Daniel J. Pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick in Cedar Falls, Iowa, January 1981)
6. "Marriage" (Clark, Bishop Matthew. Origins: NC Documentary Service, Vol. 10, No. 43, 9 April 1981, pp. 684-688)
7. "Spiritual Direction Before Marriage" (Hurley, Rev. John. Aids in Ministry, Summer 1979, pp. 19-22)
8. The topic of marriage as dealt with at the Dubuque Fifth Archdiocesan Clergy Convention in Waterloo, Iowa, on 21-23 October 1979

## 7. Session Five

- a. Team Preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Speaker presentation: "Ecumenical Marriages"
- d. Large group discussion
- e. Speaker presentation: "Prayer"
- f. Small group discussions
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

### Helpful Articles:

1. "Prayer" (Tarrant, Msgr. Daniel J. Pastor of the Christian Community of St. Patrick in Cedar Falls, Iowa)
2. "God's Word" (Larsen, Rev. Homer. Pastor of Nazareth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa)
3. Lord, Hear Our Prayer. Compiled by Thomas McNally and William G. Storey. Notre Dame, IN.: Ave Maria Press, 1978.

## B. Primary Marriage Preparation

### 1. Session One

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Exercise: "One-Way, Two-Way Communication"
- d. Speaker presentation: "Messages" (Fr. John Powell's talk on "Families")
- e. Individual assignment: "Communication"
- f. Small group discussions
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

### Helpful Articles:

1. Fryling, Robert and Alice. A Handbook for Engaged Couples. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1977.

2. "One-On-One for Couples Getting Married" (no date)
3. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
4. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for Engaged Couples). St. Paul, MN.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
5. Tournier, Paul. To Understand Each Other.

## 2. Session Two

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Session 2: "Values and Conflicts in Our Relationship"
- d. Wrap-up, prayer

### Helpful Articles:

1. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for Engaged Couples). St. Paul, MN.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
2. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
3. "Eight Rules for Handling Conflicts" (no date)

## 3. Session Three

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Speaker presentation: "Finances and Budget"
- d. Assignment: "Monthly Expense Budget"
- e. Film: "What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women: Money, Sex and Children"
- f. Small group discussions
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

### Helpful Articles:

1. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for Engaged Couples). St. Paul, MN.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
2. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.

## 4. Session Four

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Session 3: "Marital Sexuality and Intimacy"
- d. Wrap-up, prayer

## Helpful Articles:

1. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for Engaged Couples). St. Paul, MN.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.
2. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
3. McHugh, Msgr. James T. A Theological Perspective on Natural Family Planning. Washington, D.C.: Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning, 1983.
4. "Sexuality and Intimacy in Marriage" (Whitehead, Evelyn and James D. Chicago Studies, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 15-25)

## 5. Session Five

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Speaker presentation: "Children"
- d. Large group discussion
- e. Film (take your pick from the list on the next page)
- f. Small group discussions
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

## Helpful Articles:

1. Films
  - "The Strong-Willed Child"
  - "Shaping the Will Without Breaking the Spirit"
  - "Christian Fathering"
  - "Preparing for Adolescence: The Origins of Self Doubt"
  - "Preparing for Adolescence: Peer Pressure and Sexuality"
2. "Memories" (Powell, Fr. John. His talk on "Families")
3. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.

## 6. Session Six

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome

- c. Speaker presentation: "Love and Marriage"
- d. Large group discussion
- e. Speaker presentation: "Meaning of Life"
- f. Small group discussions
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

Helpful Articles:

1. Film  
"What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women: The Lonely Housewife"
2. Powell, Fr. John. Unconditional Love. Allen, Texas: Argus Communications, 1978.
3. Powell, Fr. John. The Secret of Staying in Love. Allen, Texas: Argus Communications, 1974.
4. Powell, Fr. John. Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am? Allen, Texas: Argus Communications, 1969.
5. Powell, Fr. John. Why Am I Afraid to Love? Allen, Texas: Argus Communications, 1967.

7. Session Seven

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Session 4: "Our Marriage-- A Celebration of Life and Love"
- d. Wrap-up, prayer

Helpful Articles:

1. Champlin, Joseph M. Together for Life. Notre Dame, IN.: Ave Maria Press, 1970.
2. Ruhnke, Rev. Robert, C.S.S.R. For Better and For Ever (Dialogue Packet). Liguori, MO.: Liguori Publications, 1981.
3. Tate-O'Brien, Judith. Love in Deed (Manual for the Engaged Couples). St. Paul, MN.: International Marriage Encounter, Inc., 1981.

8. Individual Interviews

The engaged couple meets the second time with their parish priest. They go over the following:

- a. Their experience of the sponsor couple program
- b. Their feelings about the Engaged Encounter (if concluded)
- c. The necessary documents
- d. Confirmation of wedding date
- e. Preliminary questions about the marriage liturgy
- f. Set a third meeting date



9. Parish Celebration of Engagement (Presentation of the engaged couples to the parish)

This is more suited to parishes where there is a large number of weddings each year. It is usually done at the main liturgy on Sunday. Couples are instructed to notify the pastor in advance so that he can prepare for the ceremony.

10. Individual Interviews

The engaged couple meets the third time with their parish priest. They go over the following:

- a. The wedding ceremony
- b. The completion of necessary papers
- c. Any "loose ends"

C. Follow-Up Throughout the Marriage Preparation and After the Marriage Ceremony

1. Suggestions for the Sponsor Couple

- a. Sharing a meal with the bride and groom-to-be (or the newly married)
- b. Attending Sunday liturgy with the couple
- c. Being an Engaged Encounter "Prayer Couple"
- d. Being with the couple at their wedding
- e. Sharing wedding pictures with the newlyweds
- f. Sending a wedding anniversary card to the couple

2. Suggestions for the priest

- a. Sharing a meal with the newly married
- b. Sending a card
- c. The gift of a Bible

3. A Special Session: One

- a. Prayer, welcome
- b. Social
- c. Meal
- d. Speaker (or witness talk by newly married)

4. A Special Session: Two

- a. Team preparation
- b. Prayer, welcome
- c. Speaker presentation: "Ministry to Marital Growth: A Developmental Perspective"

- d. Large group discussion
- e. Speaker presentation: "Parish Suggestions for Total Family Life"
- f. Large group discussion
- g. Wrap-up, prayer

Helpful Articles/Ideas:

1. Marriage Encounter
  2. Retorno
  3. A renewal of the couple's wedding vows
  4. "Ministry to Marital Growth: A Developmental Perspective"  
(Joyce, Gerald P., and Zullo, James R. Chicago Studies,  
Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 26-40)
5. To Assist Now As A Sponsor Couples Themselves

## Appendix F

Second Letter to Stewardship Couples

April 1982

Dear

Once again we are contacting you to let you know what the Sponsor Couple Process committee is doing.

There is a great deal of time being given to studying the various programs already in progress. Time is also being spent searching for what would best meet the needs of the engaged and newly married of our parish.

There is a concensus that this type of effort should not be limited to pre-marriage, it should continue for at least a year or two after marriage.

A tentative time-line is for the Sponsor Couple Process team to spend this Spring in study and decision-making. In the Fall an effort will be made to work with those of you who are still willing to be involved. Possibly the team will also be conducting a pilot program for a few couples. In January 1983 we project that our series of engaged and sponsor couples' meetings will take place.

We also wish to tell you that our diocese's Family Life Office will be putting on two Sponsor Couple workshops in June. They will take place 12-13 in Dubuque and 19-20 in Cedar Rapids. If you are interested in attending, please notify us.

We appreciate your patience with us. We ask your prayers as we study this Spring and we thank you for your interest and desire to implement the Sponsor Couple Process in our parish.

In God's love,  
The Sponsor Couple Team  
Fr. Paul Lippstock  
Ray and Alvina Beyer  
Dave and Mary Fish  
Mike and Maureen Oates  
Mike and Cheri Throop

## Appendix G

The Sponsor Couple Process for Those Considering a Christian MarriageSTAGE ONE (9 January- 19 March 1983)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A. "Welcome"  | 9 January 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria    |
| B. "Journey"  | 16 January 1983 2-5pm<br>School Cafeteria   |
| C. Interview (the sponsor couple meets with couple considering marriage)                                | 17-29 January 1983 (arrange)                |
| D. "Pre-Marriage Inventory"   | 30 January 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria   |
| E. Small Group Discussions of Pre-Marriage Inventory (the sponsor couple meets with their small groups) | Month of February (arrange)                 |
| F. "Why A Church Wedding?"  | 27 February 1983 2-5pm<br>Room #1 in school |
| G. "Lord, Teach Us How to Play!"  | 6 March 1983 2-5pm<br>Room #1 in school     |
| H. Interview (the couple considering marriage meets with the parish priest)                             | 7-19 March 1983 (arrange)                   |

STAGE TWO (20 March- 12 May 1983)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. "Love of Self-Neighbor-God"   | 20 March 1983 2-5pm<br>Room #1 in school                                   |
| B. "Communication"   | 10 April 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria                                    |
| C. "Conflict and Decision-Making"  | 17 April 1983 2-5pm<br>Room #1 in school                                   |
| D. "Finances and Budget"   | 24 April 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria                                    |
| E. "Marital Sexuality and Intimacy"  | 1 May 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria                                       |
| F. "Celebration of Life and Love" (followed by picnic in park and the couples' families are invited) | 8 May 1983 2-5pm<br>School cafeteria<br>5pm-???<br>George Wyth Park Picnic |

STAGE THREE (13 May- The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. "Retreat"   | 13 May 1983 7-10pm<br>Youth Center                         |
|  | 14 May 1983 1-5pm<br>Youth Center                          |
| B. "Celebration of Engagement"   | 14 May 1983 5:15pm Mass<br>Church                          |
| C. "Engaged Encounter"<br>(the Engaged Encounter dates<br>are 4-5 February 1983 and<br>18-20 March 1983) | ???<br>American Martyrs Retreat House<br>Cedar Falls, Iowa |
| D. Interviews  |  |
| 1. Engaged couple meets with<br>sponsor couple   | (arrange)  |
| 2. Engaged couple meets with<br>parish priest  | (arrange)  |
| E. "Celebration of Christian<br>Marriage"  | ???  |

STAGE FOUR (1983-1984)

- A. A Year of Support After the Celebration of Marriage  
 B. Further Details Will Be Provided As We Proceed on this Journey

## Appendix H

Stage Four of Sponsor Couple Process("Year of Support")

- A. Time for yourselves
- B. Large group gatherings

1. Choose one date: \_\_\_\_\_ 21 August 1983  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 27 November 1983  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 29 April 1984

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. 30 December 1983 (Friday)-- Holy Family Day

4:45pm Evening Prayer  
 5:15pm Mass  
 6:00pm Meal  
 7:30pm Presentation: "Children"

3. 24 June 1984 (Sunday)

12:00Noon Mass (recommitment of wedding vows)  
 1:00pm Final evaluation  
 2:00pm Sharing  
 3:00pm Picnic at one of the sponsor couple's homes

- C. Small group gatherings

1. Sometime in October 1983 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sometime in January 1984 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sometime in April 1984 \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested format:

- a. 1-2 hours of discussion of "Facts of Married Life"  
 b. 0-1 hours of quiet time (prayer)  
 c. ? meal time  
 d. ? fun activity

D. Other suggestions

1. Sponsor couple and newly married couple share a meal together (or small groups)
2. Sponsor couple and newly married couple share wedding pictures (or small groups)
3. Celebrate each others' weddings
4. Helping out with the Sponsor Couple Process of 1983-1985
5. Participate in the newly married couples' group in the parish
6. Attend liturgies together
7. Keep in contact (write an anniversary card to each other)
8. Make a Marriage Encounter (after five years)

E. Suggestions/comments



## Appendix I

"Mid-Way Evaluation of the Sponsor Couple Process"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. As a result of the experiences provided by the Sponsor Couple Process, I

know: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

am able to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

feel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

have the opportunity to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In responding to the needs in the area of marriage preparation, this Sponsor Couple Process of the Christian Community of St. Patrick

does a good job of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

needs to improve: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The Sponsor Couple Process should

maintain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

change: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

increase: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

develop: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The space below is provided for any additional comments or suggestions that you may wish to make:





17. Was our group...

prayerful?

sharing?

liturgical?

of service?

celebrative?

community-oriented?

reflective?

mission-oriented?

18. Was our approach Christian? Explain.

Yes

No

---

---

## Appendix K

"Evaluation of Written Exercises"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Below are the written exercises that were either administered during one of the sessions or distributed afterwards for your own homework. Please circle the appropriate number as far as the helpfulness of the exercise.

	Very helpful		Moderately helpful		Not at all	Did not do
<u>Session-- Welcome</u>						
1. "Initial Interview"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Family Adaptability Profile"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "Family Cohesion Profile"	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Session-- Journey</u>						
1. "Our Journey and Our Story of Faith"	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Session-- Why Get Married in the Church?</u>						
1. "Reflections #1"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Reflections #2"	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Session-- Lord, Teach Us How to Play!</u>						
1. "How Do You Spend the 168 Hours in the Week?"	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Session-- Life and Love</u>						
1. "Our Vision of Self, Other People, Life, World, God"	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Session-- Communication</u>						
1. "Pizza Parlor"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Back Rubs"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "One-Way, Two-Way: A Communications Experiment"	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. "Experiencing Non-Attending in a One-to-One Conversation"	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. "One-on-One for Couples Getting Married"	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. "Communication"	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. "About General Communication"	1	2	3	4	5	6

Session-- Values, Conflicts and  
Decision-Making

1. "The Tate Family"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Conflict Fantasy: A Self- Examination"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "An Exercise About Values"	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. "Twenty Questions About Values"	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. "About Conflict"	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. "Conflict and Learning to Grow"	1	2	3	4	5	6

Session-- Budgets and Finances

1. "Monthly Expense Budget"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Money and Career"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "About Financial Priorities"	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. "Money"	1	2	3	4	5	6

Session-- Marital Sexuality and  
Intimacy

1. "You and Your Feelings"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Statements on Attitudes Toward Sex in Marriage"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "Two Checklists About Marital Sex"	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. "Sexual Values Worksheet"	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. "Points and Questions About Sex and Intimacy"	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. "Sex and Intimacy"	1	2	3	4	5	6

Session-- Retreat

1. "The Religious Side of Our Life Together"	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. "Mid-Way Evaluation of the Sponsor Couple Process"	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. "Group Evaluation"	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. "Evaluation of Written Exercises"	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix L

Outline for Second Sponsor Couple Process

- I. Stage One-- "Inquiry into a Christian Marriage"  
(11 September 1983- 7 January 1984)
- A. Welcome      11 September 1983      2:00pm-5:00pm
- B. Journey      18 September 1983      2:00pm-5:00pm
- C. Interview-- sponsor couple meets with engaged couple sometime  
between 19 September 1983 and 1 October 1983)
- \*Engaged Encounter (30 September- 2 October in Dubuque)
- D. Pre-Marriage Inventory      2 October 1983      2:00pm-5:00pm
- E. Small Group Discussions of the PMI-- sponsor couple meets with  
their small groups between 3 October 1983 and  
3 December 1983)
- \*Parish Renew (9 October 1983- 18 November 1983)  
    \*Engaged Encounter (18-20 November 1983 in Cedar Falls)
- F. Why a Church Wedding?      4 December 1983      2:00pm-5:00pm
- G. Lord, Teach Us How to Play!      11 December 1983      2:00pm-5:00pm
- H. Interview-- engaged couple meets with their parish priest  
somewhere between 12 December 1983 and 7 January 1984
- II. Stage Two-- "Instructions for Marriage"  
(8 January 1984- 26 February 1984)
- A. Life and Love      8 January 1984      2:00pm-5:00pm
- B. Communication      22 January 1984      2:00pm-5:00pm
- C. Conflict, Values, Decisions      5 February 1984  
2:00pm-5:00pm
- \*Engaged Encounter (3-5 February 1984 in Cedar Falls)
- D. Finances and Budget      19 February 1984      2:00pm-5:00pm





D. Other Suggestions

1. Sponsor Couple and Newly Married Couple Share a Meal Together (or small groups)
2. Sponsor Couple and Newly Married Couple Share Wedding Pictures (or small groups)
3. Celebrate with Each Other at Wedding
4. Assist with the Third Sponsor Couple Process (1984-1986)
5. Participate in the Newly Married Couples' Group
6. Attend Eucharist Together
7. Write Anniversary Notes
8. Attend a Marriage Encounter (after five years of marriage)

## Appendix M

Letter to Prospective Sponsor Couples

Dear

We appreciate your patience and support of the Sponsor Couple Process as we prepared and completed the pilot program.

Now we are planning for the next group of engaged couples. We will start in September and end in May (1983-1984).

The team wonders if you are still able and willing to become a sponsor couple. We know you have other commitments and we will certainly understand whatever decision you make.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have and would appreciate it if we could hear from you by July 10 with your decision.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Sincerely,

Mike and Maureen Oates

Ray and Alvina Beyer

Fr. Paul Lippstock

## Appendix N

Letter to Parish Priests and Deacons

Dear

The Sponsor Couple Process is on its way!

We are planning for the next group of engaged couples now. This time though it will be spread over eight-nine months. The first meeting will be on September 11, 1983, from 2:00pm-5:00pm.

The team would really appreciate your presence at this first meeting which purpose is "Welcome". It is important and helpful for the engaged and sponsor couples to know of your support for this process.

If you have any questions, we would be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

Mike and Maureen Oates

Ray and Alvina Beyer

Fr. Paul Lippstock

Appendix 0  
Proposed Budget 1984-1985  
(Sponsor Couple Process)

Expenses:

1. \$15.00 Bible per couple	\$15 x 24= \$360.00
2. \$1.25 <u>Together for Life</u> per person	\$1.25 x 48= \$60.00
3. \$90.00 per couple for Engaged Encounter	\$90.00 x 24= \$2160.00
4. \$40.00 for drinks provided throughout the 1½-years of preparation	\$40.00
5. \$30 per couple for inventory materials and computer printout materials	\$30.00 x 24= \$720.00
6. \$100 for miscellaneous	\$100.00
7. \$60.00 for movie rental fees	\$60.00
8. \$100.00 for stationery, letters, postage	\$100.00
9. \$200.00 for paper	\$200.00
	Total: \$3800.00

Income:

1. \$25.00 fee for use of Church per couple	\$25.00 x 24= \$600.00
2. Fee for books  (these were not included in the expenses above)	
3. Donation for Engaged Encounter Program	(Between 0 and \$2160.00)
4. Group Service Project	\$100.00
5. Fee for Process (\$30)	\$30.00 x 24= \$720.00
	Total: Between \$1420.00 and \$3580.00

FEES: \$1420.00  
 PARISH SUBSIDY: \$2380.00