

M THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE



LEADER MANUAL



MATER
MEDIA

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M THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE



Why Celebrate Catholic Marriage?

Healthy Catholic marriages are **ESSENTIAL** to the faith life of parishes and the larger life of the Church. The **CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE** equips parishes to strengthen marriages and build community. The **CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE** unleashes joy, faith, hope, and laughter in the marriages in your parish. This easy-to-implement relationship enrichment makes it simple and fun for couples to flourish - in a challenging culture.

In this time of confusion and division, too many couples struggle alone. With the **CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE**, a group of couples gets energized in one fun night and are mobilized to connect and support each other. This fun evening launches them on the **7-Step Journey to Joy** to strengthen and enrich their Catholic marriage. Plus, couples have the option to join **Marriage & More** small groups.

- **SAVE Troubled Marriages...**The Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience is the way to put couples on the path of renewal. They **RECONNECT** with the joy that united them in the first place. This experience gives them hope and faith to bring their marriage back from the edge and to become **UNSHAKEABLE**.
- **SPARK Stagnant Marriages...**The Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience is the way to bring the healthy **PASSION** back to marriages that are merely surviving. This is the jumpstart to rebuilding the rock solid foundation that **UNLEASHES** the passion that couples long for.
- **SUSTAIN Exhausted Marriages...**The Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience is the way to support young couples who are weary with the work of family life. This simple structure **ENERGIZES** them to make their marriages a **PRIORITY** in the midst of raising children, caring for aging parents, and earning a living.
- **SUPERCARGE Solid Marriages...**The Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience is the way couples can develop an **INCREDIBLE** marriage. This experience **INSPIRES** couples to take their marriages to the next level.

The **CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE** delivers holy and happy results.

Pastor Checklist

- ✓ Get Familiar with this CCME Manual
- ✓ Identify your Lead Couple
- ✓ Periodically check in with your lead couple
- ✓ Assist in promoting the CCME Launch event
- ✓ Pray for the marriages in your parish

The CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE has a four-fold aim:

1. Enrich Catholic couples in their individual marriages
2. Create opportunities for couples to connect for mutual support and mentoring
3. Integrate couples more deeply within their parish community
4. Energize the faith of couples so they are more effective in passing faith on to their children

The CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE for Parishes has three facets:

1. **The In-Person Event:** The event features time to share stories that answer 4 unique conversation questions, followed by prayer, refreshments, and laughter.
2. **The 7-Step Journey to Joy:** The seven step follow-up journey is supported with video, digital, and print resources that the couples complete in their homes at their own pace. Entertaining video-based encouragement helps keep couples motivated and on track.
3. **(Optional) Marriage and More small groups** offer a simple structure for couples to strengthen and encourage each other on a continuing basis.

Parishes follow a four-step sequence to bring the CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE to the couples in their community:

Step One: PREPARATION

Step Three: EVENT EXPERIENCE

Step Two: INVITATION

Step Four: 7-Step JOURNEY & SMALL GROUPS

Who is the CCME for?

Catholic Married couples of all ages. Couples with strong marriages, stagnant marriages or struggling marriages can all benefit. In addition, couples who are highly involved in parish life **and** couples who are disengaged from much of parish life can enjoy and appreciate this experience.

THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE

"Step By Step"

CCME Step One: PREPARATION

Establish your Leadership CORE Team. Start with the Lead Couple. They then mobilize the Sharing Couple, the Communications Couple, the Registration Couple, and the Logistics Couple. Plan a meeting to go over the CCME manual and to mobilize each leader couple in their role. Some parishes have a smaller core team with tasks divided among 3 - 4 core couples.

Preparation Checklist:

1. Mobilize the CCME Leadership CORE Team
2. Confirm the Date for your CCME Event - with Pastor attending if possible.
3. The Leadership CORE team meets, reviews the manual, and sets plans in motion.
4. Commit as a team to PRAY daily for the married couples of your parish.
5. RECOMMENDED: CCME Leadership CORE Team couples - Do the 7-Step Journey to Joy. (**Mater Media makes the online resources available to leadership couples for free.*)
6. Connect with Mater Media to set up registration.
7. Put the communication and planning dates and deadlines on a shared calendar.
8. Download and order CCME promotional materials from a local printer.
9. Plan for event space, food and drink, and audio/visual equipment.

How to choose your event date? There's no bad time to host THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE. Each month offers unique theme opportunities.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
RESOLUTION: Refresh My Marriage!	Be My VALENTINE - Always!	FUN with Marriage "Madness"!	Married LIFE Renewed!	MARY, Bless Our Marriage!	Celebrate MARRIAGE!
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Fire Up the FUN in Marriage!	Late Summer DATE Night!	Moms & Dads-BTS STRONG!	FALL in love!	THANK God for My Spouse!	The GIFT of Marriage!



Leadership CORE Team Roles & Responsibilities:

Lead Couple

- Communicate and coordinate with pastor
- Identify and mobilize the registration, sharing, communication, and logistic couples. Pastor input is helpful.
- Manage calendar, select event date, and reserve the event space
- Connect with the Mater Media team to get participant resources.
- Troubleshoot problems
- Identify an emcee for the CCME event. (It can be you)

Sharing Couple

- This couple models how to answer the four conversation questions. (See manual page 16)
- Speak with and encourage participant couples during refreshment time at the event.
(*Helpful Idea: Couples who have experience with Marriage Encounter are often suited for the role of Sharing Couple).

Communications Couple

- Download, print, and distribute fliers and posters designed by Mater Media.
- Place Bulletin Announcements.
- Deploy content on Flocknotes/Parish website.
- Gather a list of names of parish ministry leaders to bring into the promo process.

Registration Couple

- Welcome/Greet couples as they arrive at the event.
- Run a registration table in the Church vestibule at weekend masses.
- Connect with the Mater Media team to get information about the custom registration landing page for your parish.
- Encourage husbands and wives to both opt-in for email follow up.
- Distribute resource packs to each couple at the end of the event.

Logistics Couple

- Plan and acquire food & drinks
- Plan and set chairs, tables, and decor
- Plan for, set up, and implement audio/visual during the event
- Plan and execute cleanup

Optional - Babysitting Couple:

- It is strongly recommended to offer babysitting for the parents of young children - Babysitting Couple coordinates with the Youth Group Leader to staff and manage the children in a room on the parish campus.

What Does Success in Preparing for the CCME Look Like?

Success in preparation for the CCME is more than accomplishing your checklist. It is an air of excitement within the Leadership CORE Team that builds awareness in the parish of the importance of cultivating Catholic Marriages that we all want to celebrate!

What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Lacking a sufficient Leadership CORE Team of fully engaged couples. Make sure you mobilize enough people on your team so no one is overwhelmed. Mater Media has worked to create an easy-to-use guide and easy-to-implement marketing materials to keep your burden light.

Failure to establish a clear plan and schedule. If you don't get your event date locked down and then lock-in your planning and promotional deadlines along the way, the time will slip away and you'll be stressed and might not see the success you desire.

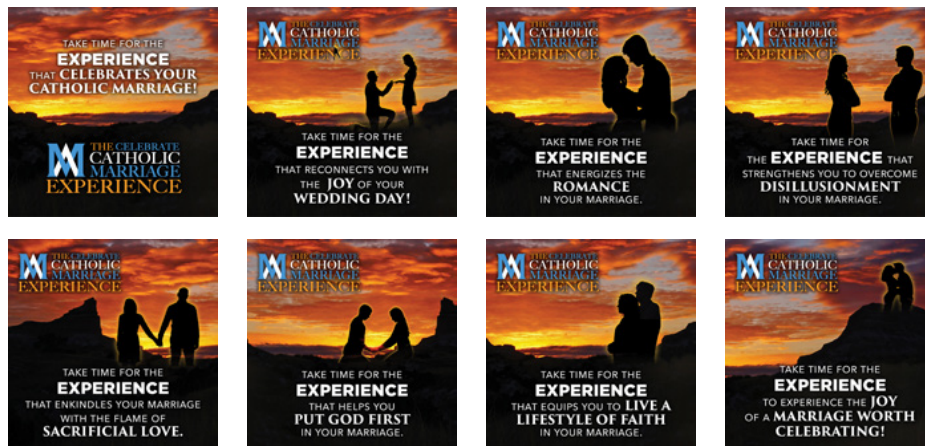
Failure of the Leadership Couples to be actively engaged in improving their own marriages. Leaders should make an effort to be pro-active in some specific way to enrich their own marriages. Lead by example.

CCME Step Two: INVITATION

A three-fold communication process builds CCME excitement in your parish. Your marketing plan includes print, digital and personal invitations. Below is a sample 7-week schedule to build momentum for great results. It's important to make the INVITATION of couples to your event a priority. The couples who need enrichment the most...are often the ones who let all of life's distractions get in the way. Effective marketing will help you succeed to energize and fortify as many couples as possible.

Print: Ready-to-use templates are available and easy to customize for: posters, fliers, and bulletin announcements. Find the templates to use and download on the Mater Media website: <https://www.matermedia.org/promoteccme>.

Digital: Use the pre-formatted content with eye-catching graphics for digital outreach through Flocknotes, email, parish website, and social media.



Personal Touch: Each member of the Leadership CORE Team is urged to personally invite leaders of the various organizations in the parish to get their group members to attend. (Examples include: Athletic Association, Senior Club, Knights of Columbus, School Board, Parish Council, Mothers of Preschoolers, PSR Parents, and more) Consider reaching out via phone calls and personal emails to leaders of organizations at other parishes also. This is one of the best ways to increase engagement and excitement. Include an image of a couple of couples talking happily to each other.

Here is your guide for timing and strategy to communicate information effectively for a great CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE at your parish.



7 WEEKS OUT: HELLO!

Print: Place your CCME poster in the church vestibule.
Small bulletin announcement.

Sample Text:

It's time to celebrate your Catholic marriage!
Be part of the Journey to JOYFULLY fortify and energize your marriage!

THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE

at **insert parish name*

Register now: **insert preferred RSVP method*

Date: **insert day of week and calendar date*

Time: **insert designated start and end time*

Location: **insert building/room location*

Digital: Add the CCME event to the parish website calendar. (Sample)

Date:

THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE at **insert parish name*

Register now: **insert preferred RSVP method*

Time: **insert designated start and end time*

Location: **insert building/room location*



11x17 Poster

6 WEEKS OUT: SAVE THE DATE!

Print: Medium bulletin announcement.

Sample Text:

Are you Married? The CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE is your chance to spend an evening rejoicing in the love that brought you and your spouse together, and to embark on an adventure to achieve NEW MOUNTAIN TOP moments in your Catholic marriage.

SAVE the DATE for this relaxed yet invigorating DATE NIGHT that launches you on an amazing journey. Joy and laughter are guaranteed! Fun conversations and camaraderie will encourage, inspire, and entertain. It's important to strengthen and nourish every Catholic Marriage...take time to enrich yours!



Bulletin Ads



Limited Seating: **insert target number of couples*
 Register now: **insert preferred RSVP method*
 Date: **insert day of week and calendar date*
 Time: **insert designated start and end time*
 Location: **insert building/room location*
**Optional: Refreshments will be served.*

It's time to celebrate your Catholic marriage! Be part of THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE at **insert parish name*.

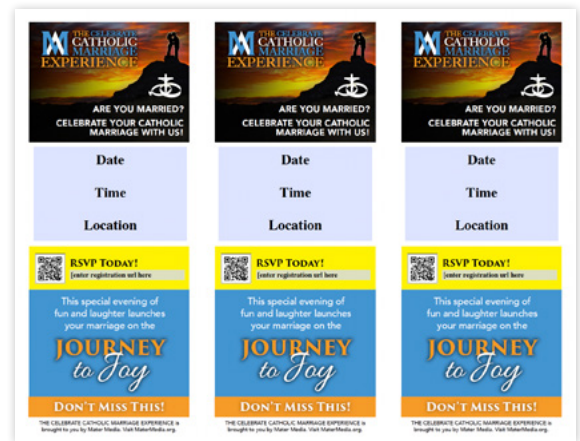
Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention.

Personal: Leadership CORE Team couples split up the list of leaders of parish groups. Plan to call and connect with them to provide fliers for their members and mobilize them to attend.

5 WEEKS OUT: BUILD EXCITEMENT!

Print: Put pew cards out in all pews.
 Large bulletin announcement.

Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention.
 Parish social media post
 #CelebrateCatholicMarriage. Use the prepared images to post a variety of reasons why couples will benefit from the CCME.



4 WEEKS OUT: GAIN MOMENTUM!

Pew Cards

Print: Large bulletin announcement.
 Put fliers out at the back of church.

Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention.
 Parish social media post.

3 WEEKS OUT: FEEL THE FERVOR!

Print: Large bulletin announcement.

Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention.
 Parish social media post.

Personal: From the pulpit - Lead Couple makes a personal invitation to parishioners.



Lettersize Flier

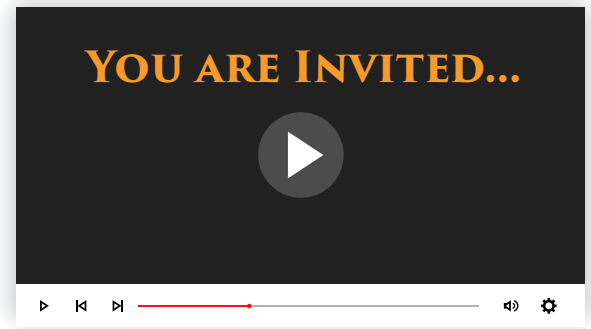


Social Media

2 WEEKS OUT: PERSONAL INVITE!

Print: Front page bulletin announcement.

Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention. Possibly record and send a short video invitation from the Pastor or the Emcee to everyone in the parish.
Parish social media post.



Personal: From the pulpit - Sharing Couple encourages all parishioner couples to be part of the EXPERIENCE, and to bring their married friends.
Registration Table at all Masses.
Mention by the priest with the parish announcements at the end of each Mass.

1 WEEK OUT: READY TO CELEBRATE!

Print: Replenish pew cards.
Front page bulletin announcement.

Digital: Flocknote/parish app mention.
Parish social media post.

Personal: Mention by priest with the parish announcements at end of each Mass.
Registration Table at all masses.

REGISTRATION:

Mater Media makes online registration simple and easy. An online landing page template is customized with your parish details. Mater Media provides an online link that directs couples to the registration page for your event. Mater Media also provides a QR code linking to a general CCME event page. Payment is processed automatically, so the parish doesn't need to find a way to collect and manage funds. The Registration Couple will be informed of registrants, plus all the names and information to check couples in at the event.



What Does Success in Marketing the CCME Look Like?

Success in the communication process builds a “buzz” in the parish, not only for couples to want to attend the event, but also to have excitement to use the CCME process to energize their marriages in new ways!

What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Thinking Personal Connections Don’t Matter: One of your most important marketing steps is the personal connections you make with the leaders of a wide array of parish organizations. Getting them to mobilize the members of their group multiplies your efforts in a powerful way.



Skipping some steps in the 7-week process: It’s human nature to want to simplify and skip some steps, but in a world with so much NOISE, it really does require a robust stream of information to get people aware and engaged.

Thinking that getting the “regulars” to participate is enough: The CCME is an important connecting point in which parish event “regulars” can come alongside of the less involved parishioners in a common cause - to refresh their marriages! Faithfulness in the marketing outreach is important to draw in the “fringe” parishioners. As they engage in the CCME, their parish participation can become more deeply involved in all sorts of ways.

CCME Step Three: THE EVENT EXPERIENCE

Event Schedule: Approximately 2 Hours

15 Minutes: Welcome, light refreshments available, couples get seated, introduction.

30 Minutes: Sharing Couple demonstrates their answers to the four Conversation Questions.

30 Minutes: Couples are guided by the Emcee to team up with one other couple, who is seated behind them. They will share their own mini-stories as the first two Conversation Questions are asked.

10 Minutes: Hold Hands / Cling to the Cross Prayer

20 Minutes: Couple share their own mini-stories in answer to the final two conversation questions

30+ Minutes: Video: Jumpstart Tips for the Journey to Joy followed by Refreshments and mingling for as long as the fun might last.
(Plan on couples enjoying this sense of community...don't rush them out.)

Event Set-Up

Event Venue: Plan on using your Parish Hall with a set-up for theater-style seating, arranged in rows with chairs set in pairs with a space between them. Also, plan for an area for refreshments and mingling before and after the scheduled activities.

Welcome Table: Set near the entry. Have a printed list of registrant information. Computer laptop available to check on any registration questions and add emails of any spouses who are not in the system yet.

Resource Table: Placed to the side of the room near the door with Participant Bags containing: 1 brochure, 2 Workbooks, and 2 Novels. Have the small crosses split up in several bags available for the team to pass out to each couple after the couples have finished answering the first two Conversation Questions.

Refreshment Tables: Seasonal decor in whatever style that the parish and planning team decides. Tables set up with some space around them as needed for food and drink (Options can range from: Coffee/soda & cookies/chips, Beer & Pretzels, Wine & Cheese, Champagne & cupcakes, etc.)

Podium, Microphone, and Chairs: Chairs to be set up theater-style grouped two by two - facing the podium and big screen. Recommended: two hand-held microphones. Microphones and speakers need to be strong enough for everyone to clearly hear the Emcee welcome and give instructions, and to hear the Sharing Couple.

Audio/Visual: Big Screen and a computer with wi-fi access. Mater Media will provide an event slide deck and 2 videos to be accessed online.

Resources Each Couple Receives:

2 copies of the workbook, **Seven Days to a Marriage Worth Celebrating**, that provides structure for the 7-Step Journey to Joy that guides their communication and relationship enrichment.

2 copies of the short novel, **The DEAL** which uses a dynamic fictional story to prompt reflection and conversation for the couple

A full color **CCME Brochure** with QR code to access the Digital Bonus Content that aligns with the theme of each of the 7-Steps.

Unlimited on-demand access to the video series, **The Promise: We Said I Do Forever**, that features real-life stories of couples whose marriages were renewed by the power of faith

Email series of **"Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G."** These video emails are critical reminders - providing encouragement and motivation for couples to make their marriage a priority in their 7-Step Journey to Joy!

CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE RESOURCES

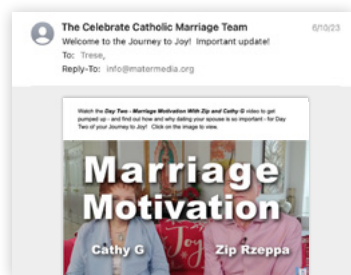
*His and Her copies
of the novel*



*His and Her copies
of the workbook*



Full color printed folded brochures



*Series of emailed videos:
"Marriage Motivation
with Zip and Cathy G."*

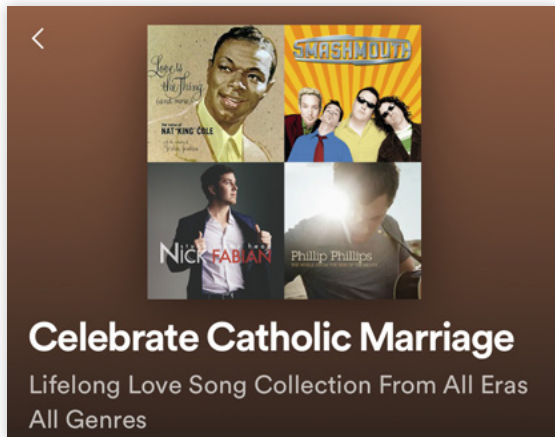


Unlimited access to The Promise



MUSIC

Everyone arrives to the ambiance of music. Play the **Celebrate Catholic Marriage Music Playlist** on Spotify. You can use a strong bluetooth speaker connected to someone's well-charged phone. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/40YPqqSHh9phdCULTz1nvh?si=zTkPLY-xReqQpdG1DKE7qQ>



#	Title	Album	Date added	
21	Restored	A Simple Record Made with My Friends for My Fr...	Aug 18, 2022	5:16
22	Stuck Like Glue	The Incredible Machine	Aug 19, 2022	4:07
23	Bless The Broken Road	Feels Like Today	Aug 19, 2022	3:46
24	One Heroic Moment	What I Wanted to Say	Aug 19, 2022	4:30
25	Someday	Human (Deluxe)	Aug 21, 2022	3:07
26	You're The First, The Last, My Everything	All-Time Greatest Hits	Aug 21, 2022	3:28
27	You Are The Sunshine Of My Life	At The Close Of A Century	Aug 21, 2022	2:58
28	Lord of All Hopefulness	Ch. 8: The Hymns Chapter (Catholic Chapters, 1-19)	Aug 22, 2022	3:04
29	My Front Porch Looking In	Playlist: The Very Best Of Lonestar	Aug 22, 2022	3:43
30	It Had to Be You	Duoets 9	Aug 23, 2022	3:48
31	Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep	Selections From Irving Berlin's White Christmas	Aug 23, 2022	3:08
32	Perfect	1 (Deluxe)	Aug 29, 2022	4:23
33	How Beautiful	Cry For The Dearest	Sep 5, 2022	4:40

WELCOME

Communications couple and other event volunteers warmly welcome event participants at the door. Make sure couples check in. Organizers confirm participant email addresses. It's important for both husband and wife to be set up for emails in the follow-up journey. Couples find a seat on their own. Open seating.

OUTLINE FOR THE EMCEE

EMCEE: (The following is important introductory information to share with the couples) Introduce yourself, thank them for coming. Emphasize that it is a date night with fun and laughter... but it's so much more!

1. **TIME TO CELEBRATE!** The CCME is an evening in which we celebrate your marriage. And no matter how you might feel right now, this can be the dawn of a new day in your relationship.
2. **CONNECT WITH OTHER COUPLES:** We are here to share stories and build relationships. You need to know that YOU are NOT alone. The devil wants to divide and conquer our marriages. We are not going to let the enemy win.
3. **TONIGHT STARTS YOU ON THE 7-STEP JOURNEY TO JOY.** You will go home well-equipped for your journey. The CCME RESOURCES include...His and Hers WORKBOOKS, His and hers NOVELS, On-demand access to THE PROMISE VIDEO Series Plus, weekly fun MARRIAGE MOTIVATION EMAILS to help you on your way!



Enough introductions! Let's get started!

EMCEE: First, the (Sharing Couple Name) will show how this evening works. After that, you get your chance to share bits of your marriage story, paired up with one other couple.

QUESTIONS & CONVERSATION

EMCEE: Introduces the "Sharing Couple." They will give a snapshot story of their marriage journey in a way that answers four questions. And later, you'll be answering those questions too. Here are the questions:

CONVERSATION QUESTION #1:

How did you meet and how did you discover that he or she was the one?

CONVERSATION QUESTION #2:

What is one of the most difficult issues you've faced in your marriage, and how did you get through it?

CONVERSATION QUESTION #3:

Where is God present in your life—and in your marriage?

CONVERSATION QUESTION #4:

**What is one of your favorite ways to make your spouse laugh or smile?
Or share a favorite memory, laughing or smiling with your spouse.**

SHARING COUPLE: Here are some thoughts to help you prepare to answer the 4 Conversation Questions. (Both husband and wife help tell the story)

Start by affirming that every married couple attending has a lot to CELEBRATE!

CONVERSATION QUESTION #1:

How did you meet and how did you discover that he or she was the one?

- What was attractive about him/her?
- What did you do that was fun and romantic?
- How did the proposal happen?
- Your wedding day – describe a memorable moment from that day.

CONVERSATION QUESTION #2:

What is one of the most difficult issues you've faced in your marriage, and how did you get through it?

- Did it ever seem like your marriage was NOT the "happily ever after" you hoped it would be?
- Describe your marriage at that low point. How did you cope?
- Did you think you were the only couple having problems?
- What were the keys that got you through?

CONVERSATION QUESTION #3:

Where is God present in your life—and in your marriage?

- How have you been aware of God at work in your own lives?
- How do you connect with God's grace to strengthen your marriage?
- Do you live your faith with prayer and sacraments shared as a family?

CONVERSATION QUESTION #4:

What is one of your favorite ways to make your spouse laugh or smile?

Or share a favorite memory, laughing or smiling with your spouse.

- Describe a special moment you shared where you found joy together.
- Describe what you do intentionally to make your spouse smile or laugh.
- What is your favorite funny story in your marriage?

Sharing couples are NOT expected to be professional speakers. Simply share your mini-stories from the heart. The goal is to invite the couples to build a Catholic Marriage they will want to CELEBRATE! – **one that is full of Faith and Hope, Smiles and Laughter!**

EMCEE: When the Sharing Couple finishes, invite couples to turn their chairs to face the couple behind them, gathering in conversation clusters of two couples.

Tell them: You heard the Sharing Couple answer the four questions. Now is your turn. We will post each question on the big screen. Here is the flow: we will do two questions, then break for a short prayer, and then do the last two questions.

**Remind the couples to make sure that both husband and wife get to talk.

Read **CONVERSATION QUESTION #1: How did you meet and how did you discover that he or she was the one?**

Tell them they will have about 10 minutes to share. Give them a 2 minute warning to wrap up their conversations.

Get their attention and tell them to move on when it's time for the next question.

Read **CONVERSATION QUESTION #2: What is one of the most difficult issues you've faced in your marriage, and how did you get through it?**

Tell them they will have about 10 minutes to share. Give them a 2 minute warning to wrap up their conversations.

Read **CONVERSATION QUESTION #3: Where is God present in your life—and in your marriage?**

Tell them they will have about 10 minutes to share. Give them a 2 minute warning to wrap up their conversations.

Get their attention and present the last question. It's time for smiles!

Read **CONVERSATION QUESTION #4: What is one of your favorite ways to make your spouse laugh or smile? Or share a favorite memory, laughing or smiling with your spouse.**

Tell them they will have about 10 minutes to share. Give them a 2 minute warning to wrap up their conversations.

PRAYER

EMCEE: Tell the couples: We are here to celebrate and energize our marriages. The power of God in the process is essential. Please look at the big screen and discover the history of the prayer we will pray together. It's the story of a town that is 96% Catholic that never had a divorce in over 100 years!

Introduce short video. After, have volunteers pass out small crosses to each couple.

Then invite the couples to hold hands around their cross, stand and pray. Arrange for a priest or deacon to go through the crowd sprinkling Holy Water to bless the crosses.

Cling to the Cross Prayer

Jesus, Your Cross represents the greatest act of love of all time.
We take hold of Your cross.

We dedicate our marriage to carry the cross as we experience it,
and cherish it as our preparation for heaven.

Help us to look to the crucifix as a focal point of our family prayer.
Help us to bring our troubles, our joys, our fears, and our tears to your cross.

May we always hold tight to Your cross,
and trust our marriage and family completely to You. Amen.

When time is up, tell the couples: I'm sure you shared some great stories tonight! It's time to get launched on your 7-Step Journey to Joy!

Show the Video of Zip and Cathy G: CCME JOURNEY TO JOY - JUMPSTART TIPS

This offers important next steps for the couples to get started on the Journey to Joy.



After the video, give the following reminders:

REMINDERS:

This evening is just the beginning. Make the choice to make your marriage your top priority!

- **TAKE HOME BAGS:** Be sure to take home your 2 books and 2 workbooks, Cross, and 7-"Day" Guide!
- **MAKE TIME:** to ENERGIZE your Catholic Marriage! If you do the seven "days" - it can be a game changer for you!
- **LIGHTEN UP:** Look for new ways to make your spouse smile.
- **CELEBRATE:** Your Marriage! During your 7-"Day" Journey to Joy, you'll receive unique ideas for date nights, good books, movies, music, and fun.

- **EMAILS:** Mater Media will be sending follow up emails with the Marriage Motivation Videos and bonus resource links for the next seven weeks to help you stay on track. Watch for them. Mark them as “not spam.”
- **MARRIAGE & MORE SMALL GROUPS:** We encourage you to do the 7-Step Journey - for the next seven weeks in a row. Many couples see more success if they connect with other couples on the Journey to Joy. Consider forming a Marriage & More small group with 3-4 other couples. People you met here tonight, or other couples you know. Pick up a flier and gather your cadre of couples. It's fine to invite a couple who couldn't make it tonight. They can get materials directly from Mater Media and get started right with you.

REFRESHMENTS / CONCLUSION:

Encourage Couples to stay...share refreshments... share more stories...more laughter.

As we CELEBRATE OUR CATHOLIC MARRIAGES together!!!

Play the music playlist again.

What Does Success with the CCME Event Look Like?

This event is a success if the couples have made connections, shared joy and laughter, and go home motivated to put their marriage first - using the enrichment included in the 7-Step Journey as their guide.



What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Don't Let the Sharing Couple be Intimidated. The Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience does not depend on “experts” or expensive guest speakers. Each couple is the expert on their own marriage. The Sharing Couple simply shares their personal experiences to give the couples confidence to share their own stories.

Don't Let Cost Be a Barrier. When parishes do the CCME as a group the regular price is \$99 per couple. Some parishes will decide to pay for a portion of the couples' cost to offer the program at a discounted price. The cost of the program is typically paid by the couples themselves. They feel invested in the evening. Parishes can also offer scholarships for couples who need help. Groups like the Knights of Columbus can have a role in providing food, drink or funding to help.

(If individual couples want to do the CCME 7-Step Journey to Joy on their own, the cost is still a great value at \$99 per couple.)

CCME Step Four: THE 7-STEP JOURNEY



When a couple leaves the CCME Parish event (or signs up for the 7-Step Journey to Joy individually) they start on a carefully facilitated process to energize and fortify their marriage. The CCME infographic shows the CCME 7-Step Journey. **The 7-Step Journey guides couples to build the habit of spending one hour a week talking about what matters most in their marriage.**

Each couple receives husband-and-wife copies of three physical resources.

- The **7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating Workbook** that gives them the content with which they will Read & Reflect, Talk and Connect.
- The novel **The DEAL** by Chuck Neff - great story that fuels reflection and conversation.
- The **Journey to Joy Brochure** - It includes the "Cling to the Cross Prayer" and a simple structure to follow for each step of their journey to help them stay on track.



Each couple receives digital resources to support their success.

- Series of seven entertaining **Marriage Motivation Videos** delivered to couples' inboxes to keep them on track. (**These videos are strategically important. For the majority of couples, taking time to strengthen their marriage can fall to the bottom of the priority list. These videos meet them where they are and personally remind them to MAKE time for each other in this powerful way.*)
- Couples get on-demand access to: **The Promise - We Said I Do Forever**, the 15-episode series of 30-minute shows produced by Chuck Neff.
- Access to the **Celebrate Catholic Marriage Music Playlist** on Spotify.
- Access to targeted links for **CCME Bonus Information** that equips couples in ways that align with each of the 7-Steps.

Here is the flow of what couples experience on the **7-"Day" Journey to Joy**.

Step One: Say I Do Every Day

- Couples receive a series of three emails in the first week:
 - 1st - Welcome
 - 2nd - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step One
 - 3rd - Journey to Joy Login Instructions
- Read & Reflect: "Step One - Your Wedding Day" - Chapter One in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Each on their own: Talk & Connect: Share your thoughts about saying "I Do" everyday.
- Bonus Resources: CCME Music Playlist on Spotify



Step Two: Romance

- Couples receive one email in the second week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Two
- Read & Reflect: Romance - The Second Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Begin planning several dates: special outings and/or cozy times at home.
- Bonus Resources: Date night ideas and movie recommendations.



Step Three: Disillusionment

- Couples receive one email in the third week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Three
- Read & Reflect: Disillusionment - The Third Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Couples discuss how they have experienced disillusionment in their marriage.
- Bonus Resources: Access links to a broad array of advice and help for all kinds of marriage problems.



Step Four: Sacrificial Love - Mercy and Forgiveness

- Couples receive one email in the fourth week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Four
- Read & Reflect: Sacrificial Love - The Fourth Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Couples discuss how to restore ruptures in their relationship through mercy and forgiveness.
- Bonus Resources: Enjoyable reading recommendations - biographies and novels that exemplify sacrificial love.



Step Five: Putting God First

- Couples receive one email in the fifth week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Five
- Read & Reflect: Putting God First - The Fifth Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Couples discuss how to put God first and pray with and for each other.
- Bonus Resources: Faith enrichment resources and links.



Step Six: Living a Lifestyle of Faith

- Couples receive one email in the sixth week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Six
- Read & Reflect: Living a Life of Faith - The Sixth Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Couples discuss how to trust God fully as a lifestyle, including the matter of family planning.
- Bonus Resources: Links to options that offer help to embrace natural means to plan family size.



Step Seven: The Rest - And BEST - of Your Life!

- Couples receive one email in the seventh week:
 - Marriage Motivation with Zip and Cathy G / Step Seven
- Read & Reflect: The Rest of Your Life - The Seventh Chapter in the "7-Steps to a Marriage Worth Celebrating" Workbook.
- Talk & Connect: Couples are invited to celebrate the progress they have made and plan how to continue the habit to talk and connect weekly.
- Bonus Resources: Discover more marriage enrichment options and programs.



What Does Success with the CCME 7-Step Journey Look Like?



Couples who are faithful in doing the 7-Step Journey to Joy will be delighted by the way their marriage can be enriched by taking a little time together in a structured, yet personalized, way. They will be happy to discover the way each step is a springboard for conversations that they might have neglected or avoided otherwise. They will be excited to experience the spiritual growth that now unites them more deeply than ever!

What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Technology troubles: Couples need to be reminded to mark the CCME emails as "not spam" and look for them in their mailboxes.

Human Nature: It's easy for couples to go home from an event with some good vibes and then lay the materials on a table, opt out of the emails and leave the marriage on auto-pilot. Settling for the status-quo is destructive. Like so many things in life, if the marriage is NOT growing, it likely is dying. This is where the camaraderie and accountability of "**Marriage & More small groups**" can help couples stay on track and experience great results! See the description in the **Marriage & More** section that follows.

CCME Step Five: ONGOING ENRICHMENT

One of the most valuable facets of the CCME is that it offers parishes the opportunity to build community among couples through small groups. We highly recommend that part of your core team preparation includes the planning for small groups. One to two of your core team couples should be prepared and ready to sign people up, answer questions, and help small groups to grow and thrive.

MARRIAGE & MORE SMALL GROUPS: Don't Go It Alone



STRUCTURE

The CCME Marriage & More Small Groups are 4–6 couples who are doing, or have done, the CCME 7-Step Journey to Joy. These are organically generated groups. A parish can facilitate couples connecting, but individual couples can gather a Marriage & More group on their own. It's up to the couples themselves to structure their times to meet, what they do in regard to food and drink, etc. They keep it going.

PURPOSE

For most married couples, it is VERY difficult to take time to focus on cultivating the health and strength of their relationship. This problem is accelerated the more isolated a couple feels from other married couples. The spiritual enemy attacks relentlessly - trying to weaken and destroy marriages. The devil's signature tactic is "divide and conquer." Couples need to fight intentionally to prevent dark forces from pulling them apart. They come together to help each other stay strong. Marriage & More groups cultivate connection and esprit-de-corps—this common spirit unites members with enthusiasm, devotion, and the desire to win in their mission...to have a great marriage that builds a legacy with a strong family of faith.

Recommended Format for CCME Marriage & More Small Groups Meetings:

DATES TO MEET

Plan on opportunities to gather at times that fit the schedules of the couples involved. Families with young children are encouraged to get babysitting arranged. The typical schedule is a structured monthly meeting for approximately 9 months of the year, with optional gatherings in the summer to include a social meet-up, or a family get-together with children.

GATHERING FLOW

Approximately 2 1/2 hours

- 6:00 PM - Food & Drink
- 6:45 PM - Pray FOR my Spouse: Host Couple starts the M & M circle of prayer. Each husband and wife says a brief prayer for their spouse.
- 7:00 PM - Marriage & More Enrichment Experience/Activity: The rotating Host Couple introduces the M & M Enrichment for the gathering. For the first several months of gatherings, the Enrichment Experience/Activity time is spent with the Host Couple sharing "Our Story" (their marriage story). After those meetings, the Host Couple can choose the content. It can be reading/discussing a chapter in a book, watching and discussing a video, trying out the "dialogue" method of sharing a love letter, or doing a trust-building activity.
- 8:15 PM - Pray WITH My Spouse: Host Couple invites the group to share brief prayer intentions and then pray the Cling to the Cross Prayer together. (Holding hands with spouse while praying is recommended, but optional.)
- 8:25 PM - Checking In and Making Plans: Take a moment for each couple to share how many weeks they successfully shared a "Talk & Connect" hour since the last gathering. (The goal is 1x per week). Then confirm who is the Host Couple for the next gathering, date, time, and any other necessary plans.





What Does Success with CCME Marriage & More Small Groups Look Like?

Successful Marriage & More Small Groups are marked with solid friendship that sticks together through the tough times and share joyful moments too. These bonds can, for some groups, endure for a lifetime. The organic nature of how groups are formed can help with success and longevity.

What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Being Too Structured: Avoid being overly structured in your group. The gatherings should feel natural, not forced.

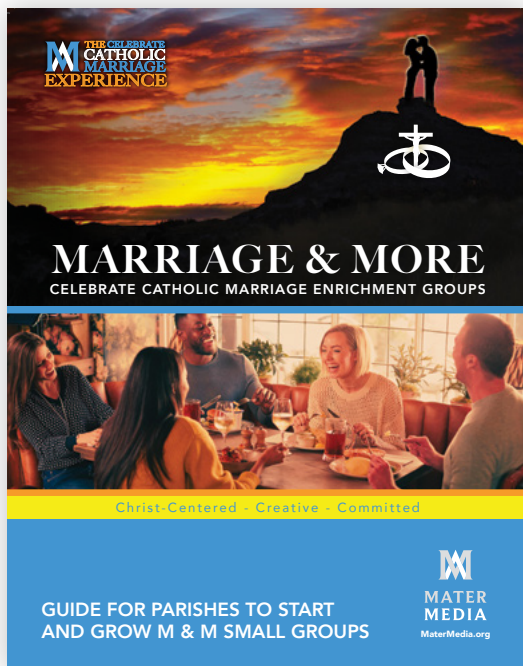
Stay Spiritually Grounded: Don't skip the time of prayer and sharing of faith. The spiritual enemy wants these gatherings to become just a social club. Without clinging to the Cross with a spiritual foundation linking you together, the group will likely falter and fade.

Don't Be Afraid to Go Deep: Don't be afraid to hold each other accountable and have tough conversations. The value of a tight-knit long-standing group is that your relationship gains a depth and strength to confront and support each other through the really tough stuff like: health problems, infidelity, addiction and more. Faith and friendship can overcome a lot!

Sample of the Marriage & More Flyer

To get couples started with Marriage & More small groups, make the M&M Flyers available at the CCME event and at other faith formation activities. (example shown here)

Your parish will be provided with the downloadable PDF to print.



Marriage & More Booklet

The Marriage & More Booklet provides parish leaders and CCME Core Team Couples with a full understanding of the purpose, power, and process of establishing Marriage & More Small Groups. These groups require minimal coordination from the parish, and build strong community and solidarity among the couples.

Your parish will be provided with the downloadable PDF to view online or print.

CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE SUNDAY: Celebrating Sacramental Grace

Pastors can choose special Sundays to designate as “Celebrate Catholic Marriage Sunday.” The first one can be scheduled on the weekend when the parish hosts the CCME event on Saturday or Sunday night. It’s a great time to get a show of hands for all who attended or who will be attending the event and are starting on their 7-Step Journey.

Small cards with the “Cling to the Cross” prayer can be passed out to the married couples in the congregation and everyone can pray it together. Encourage couples to consider praying regularly together at home. This is a great opportunity to offer a special blessing to all couples who recently celebrated, or soon will celebrate, their anniversary.

Some Parishes like the idea of designating a Celebrate Catholic Marriage Sunday once a season (4x per year) in which all the couples with an anniversary in the past season get a special blessing. Pass out the Cling to the Cross Prayer cards. Possibly follow certain Masses with coffee and donuts. It can be a great opportunity to invite couples to form Marriage & More Small Groups.

Marriage Mentors: Parishes who want to use the CCME as a springboard for ongoing marriage ministry can begin by introducing the concept of “Marriage Mentor” couples during refreshment time at the CCME Event and/or during coffee and donuts after Celebrate Catholic Marriage Sunday Masses. Mentors can offer to meet with, offer helpful encouragement, and pray for and with, married couples who might need a boost.

What Does Success with the Celebrate Catholic Marriage Sunday Look Like?

Celebrate Catholic Marriage Sunday is a success when it helps couples take time to prayerfully strengthen and celebrate the eternal value of their Catholic marriage. When couples have strong marriages and connect with other couples, the whole community reaps the benefits!

What are the Pitfalls You Want to Avoid?

Letting the Plight of Divorced Couples Get in the Way. Parishes want to minister to the brokenness and suffering that divorced men and women deal with. That’s great. But take a both/and approach. There are times to show charity to divorced individuals AND other times to encourage couples to strengthen and celebrate their intact Catholic marriages.





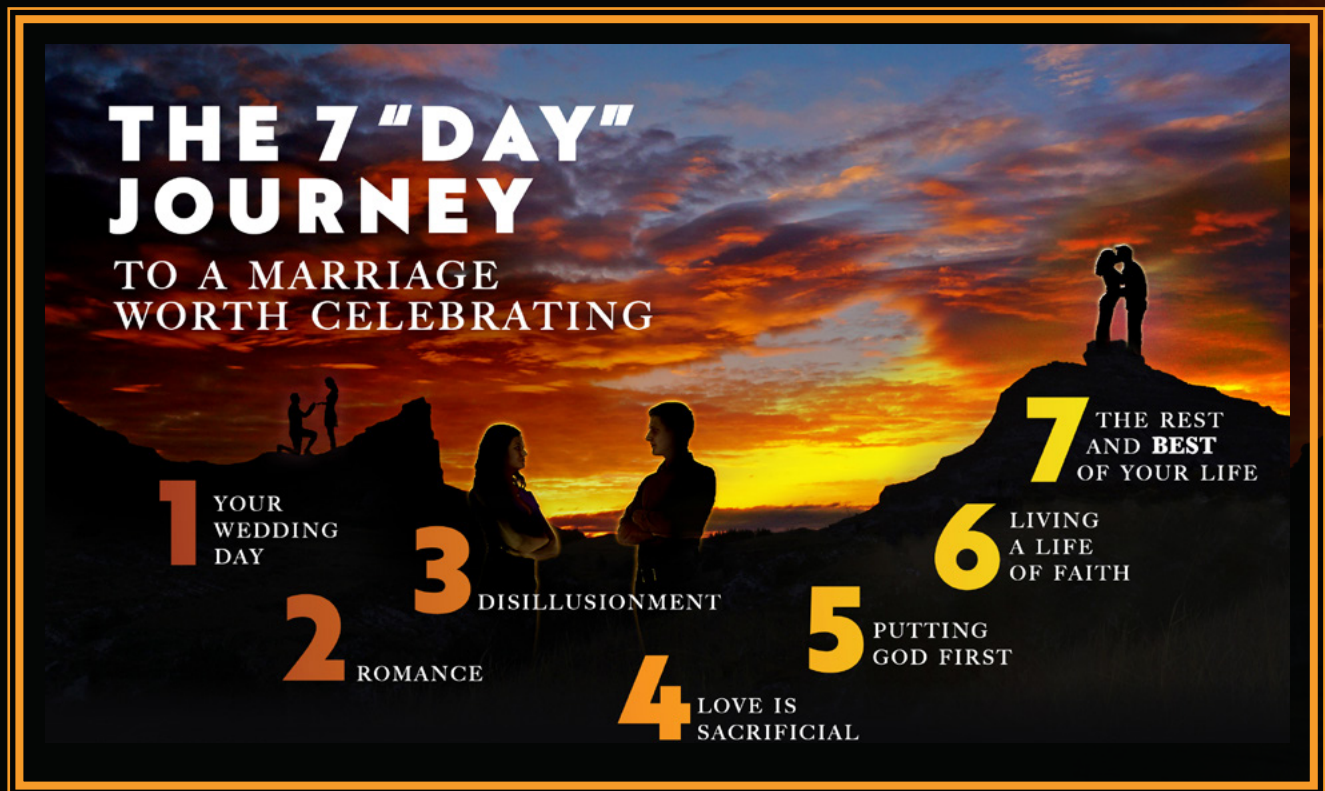
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THE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE (CCME)
begins with a powerful event for married couples that launches
them on the 7 Step Journey to energize and strengthen their
marriage in lasting ways!



The CELEBRATE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE is an initiative of the Mater Media Catholic Apostolate working to make Jesus Christ more known and more loved by more people through media and marriage ministry.

