PLANNING OUTLINE FOR THE 3 C’s of MARRIAGE SEMINAR

Overnight Getaway Option

For your planning purposes: We have prepared this outline to help you plan and organize a marriage seminar for your church. Our prayer is that this seminar can be a glory to God and also be strengthening to your church and the couples that attend. We are thankful to have had the opportunity to present seminars for many of our churches around the country in the last few years. Over time, this has given us experience to learn about what tends to work (and not!) at seminars. This has led us to write down these guidelines so that churches have a “blueprint” to work from that, with God’s help, will lead to a successful outcome. We understand that the specifics in this document may need to vary depending upon your church, the location of the seminar, etc. However, please let us know about any significant departures that you make from this planning document.

1. Designating a planning committee:

- We recommend that the Elder of the hosting church designate a Marriage Seminar planning committee.
- A committee consisting of four couples is commonly used; with one couple designated as chairpersons. Of course, the size of the committee will vary based on the needs of your church.
- The size of the committee should be large enough to distribute the workload while not being so large that communication and decision-making becomes complex.
- We recommend that the planning committee have regular contact with the church Elder (or his designee) throughout the planning process. This would include copying e-mail correspondence about the planning.

The seminar planning committee would be in charge of activities including:

Making hotel arrangements:

- Finding a suitable hotel with the appropriate lodging and conference facilities, etc.
- Negotiating the room rate and renting a block of rooms for Friday night.
- Renting sufficient conference room space for the seminar.
- Tracking the cost of the seminar and ensuring that bills are paid.
- Planning and setting up the conference room, including the seating arrangement for the seminar and meals, the AV equipment, decorations, etc. See specifics below.

Planning meals and snacks:

- Deciding what type of meals/snacks will be provided on Friday night and Saturday.
- Coordinating with the hotel regarding their policies on whether food can be brought into the facility or whether the hotel requires that all food be furnished by the hotel.
• Since this presentation is quite long, it is advisable to provide an assortment of drinks and snacks for attendees. For example, coffee, water, and soda (diet and regular; with and without caffeine) could be provided. Snacks have ranged from passing around some candy, to providing fruit, granola bars, or pastries.
• Planning and/or setting up the tables/seating arrangement for meals and snacks.
• Note that specific time limits are placed on break times and lunch. We will hold tightly to our time schedule.

Determining the how broad (or narrow) of a group to invite to the seminar:

• Each hosting church needs to decide how broad (or narrow) to spread the invitation to attend the seminar.
• For smaller churches, this may include all of the married couples in a congregation or several Apostolic Christian churches.
• For larger churches it becomes more important to decide what age group(s) to target for the seminar.
• Each church needs to ensure that adequate numbers of people are available to baby-sit for couples with young children. Thus, larger churches often need to invite specific segments of the church (e.g., by length of marriage) or limit the number of couples attending.

Invitations & Announcements:

• Writing announcements and having them presented to the local church.
• Sending out invitations to the couples in the targeted group(s).
• Soliciting feedback from attendees, if desired.

2. Suggestions for managing the costs associated with hosting the marriage seminar:

• In order to ensure that cost does not prohibit any couple from attending, we recommend that the local church, initially, cover the cost of the entire seminar (including lodging, conference space and fees, cost for ACCFS to provide speakers, etc.)
• At or after the seminar, you can provide the couples attending with the approximate cost per couple and then allow them to donate back to the church as they are able or as they feel led.
• We recommend that collecting money at the seminar be avoided.
• Couples have the opportunity to donate above and beyond the per-couple amount and cover the cost for other couples who are less able to pay.

3. Selecting a location:

• The seminar should be held at a hotel that is no more than 60 minutes from your area.
• This distance is far enough away to so that the seminar can be a “getaway” for the couples so they are not distracted; yet close enough that travel does not burden them or add significant cost.
• The hotel must have a sufficient number of rooms for lodging and conference facilities to comfortably accommodate the group.
• All of the couples attending the seminar should strongly be encouraged to stay at the hotel on Friday night. If a couple simply cannot come on Friday night, they are welcome to come for Saturday only. However, this should be the exception and not the rule.

4. Seminar format:

• The presentation is conducted using PowerPoint.
• Each attendee will get handouts of the PowerPoint slides.
• You should provide pens: one for each attendee.
• Five days before the seminar, you will need to give us an approximate number of attendees so we can make enough copies.

5. Setup of the room/facility:

• Husbands and wives should sit together during the seminar.
• Depending on the facility, couples can either sit in rows of chairs or at tables.
• If setting up rows of chairs, please ensure there is adequate spacing between chairs so that the attendees do not feel cramped.

6. The planning committee will need to ensure that the hotel furnishes the following:

• A screen large enough for all attendees to clearly see the PowerPoint slides.
• A small table set at the front and center of the room where we can set our laptop and PowerPoint projector (we do not need a podium or note stand).
• An extension cord is needed if electrical outlets are more than 8 feet away from the small table for the laptop and projector.
• Two flip charts with large pads of paper and two new sets of colored markers.
• Two tables (4’ X 8’ large rectangular or large circular) for brochures, pamphlets, handouts, and books. These two tables should be set in a location where they are easy to access during the breaks and fellowship time so that attendees can browse through the materials.
• Microphones for the speakers. We prefer to use wireless lapel microphones, if possible. Please have a second microphone available for the times when we both will be answering questions and for the interview portions of the seminar.

7. Time Styles Interview Couple

• For this segment of the presentation we would like to interview a couple that has to manage busy schedules and that might have difficulty finding time to invest in their marriage relationship. We would like to schedule a short phone call with the couple a few weeks before the seminar, have them take an online time-style assessment, identify their time-style, and then talk about how their time-styles play into finding time to spend together for relationship-building. The total time-commitment for preparing for the interview will be less than a half hour for each spouse. The committee can supply us with the name of the couple and their contact information at least 3 weeks before the seminar date. Kaleb or Ted can help you if you have questions on finding a good couple to match this interview segment.
8. Appreciating Your Mate Section of the Presentation:

- In this section of the Marriage Seminar, we would like to interview an older couple from your local church about their marriage.
- Some churches have asked a widow and/or widower to share about what they appreciated about their spouses.
- In many ways, it is a similar format to a testimony; however the only difference is that this is a testimony about their marriage.
- After your committee identifies some potential couples for this part of the seminar, please talk with either Kaleb Beyer or Ted Witzig, Jr. before asking the couple. We would like to work with you to ensure that the couple selected would be a good match with the activity.
- You can provide the brother and sister with the questions ahead of time (see below) so they know what types of questions that we are going to ask them. However, we don’t want them to have overly prepared responses. We would like them to provide spontaneous answers and to let the Spirit lead them. You can see the interview questions on the next page:
Appreciating Your Mate Interview Questions
Three C’s Marriage Seminar

• How did you meet each other? What character qualities did you notice and admire?

Leaving and Cleaving:
1. How were your family backgrounds different and how did you go about establishing your own identity as a couple?
2. Please share some about how you have gone about making big decisions as a couple? Do you solve problems in a similar way? Does one need alone time? Need to talk it out? Is one more decisive? Quick? Slow?
3. Please share some of the things you have tried to intentionally pass on to your children?

Transforming conflict into closeness:
1. Compare how you handled and viewed conflict early in your marriage to the way you handle and view it now. What lessons have you learned as a couple in terms of being able to handle conflict effectively?
2. How are each of you different emotionally? How did you first start to notice it? How have you learned to manage these differences?
3. Share any thoughts on the part you believe forgiveness has played and does play in your relationship.

Connecting Well:
1. What are some individual personality differences that you noticed in each other? How has this presented a struggle and how has it proved to be a blessing?
2. What are some habits for time management that have served you well as a couple in order to set aside time for healthy connection?
3. What are some leisure or fun activities that you have discovered that you enjoy to do as a couple in order to create enjoyable shared memories together?

• How did you need to change to be a blessing and support to your spouse?
• How is your spouse a support to you and how do they make up for your weaknesses? (for each)
• From your experiences in marriage, what advice would you give to couples?
9. Some things to consider:

- Do you plan on recording the seminar? If so, you will need to ensure that recording equipment and someone who can run the recording equipment is available.
- When deciding how many people to invite, you need to consider the availability of people to baby sit the children of the couples coming to the seminar.
- Do you want to provide the couples with a gift to take home from the Marriage Seminar? For example, in the past some hosting churches have given each couple attending the seminar a gift bag with snacks and a copy of either of the books *The Five Love Languages* or *Love and Respect* in it. Some churches have given couples a gift card to go out to eat.
- Do you want to solicit feedback from the attendees? If so, how will you do this?

10. Sample Schedule (Please Note: We will hold very tightly to the schedule)

**Friday Night**

6:30 – 7:00  Arrive and find seats  
7:00 – 7:10  Welcome/Orientation/Opening Prayer  
7:10 – 7:25  Mixer - Couples slide show  
7:25 – 7:30  Hymn  
7:30 – 8:35  Leaving and Cleaving  
8:35 – 8:45  Break  
8:45 – 9:15  Leaving and Cleaving  
9:15 – 9:30  Hymn/Closing Comments/Prayer

**Saturday**

8:45 – 9:00  Arrive and find seats  
9:00 – 9:05  Welcome and Prayer  
9:05 – 9:15  Singing  
9:15 – 10:25  Transforming Conflict into Closeness  
10:25 – 10:35  Break  
10:20 – 11:50  Transforming Conflict into Closeness/ACCFS Overview  

11:50 – 1:00  Lunch Instructions/Lunch  

1:00 – 2:15  Connecting Well  
2:15 – 2:25  Break  
2:25 – 3:50  Connecting Well  
3:50 – 4:00  Break  
4:00 – 4:25  Appreciating Your Mate Interview  
4:25 – 4:35  Feedback forms/Questions/Comments  
4:35 – 4:40  Closing Comments and Prayer