

A look at WWME Community

Where two or more are gathered...
(fifth in a series of five articles)

By Jack and Karen Baker

In *Community: Who Are WE?*, we shared an article with you regarding four ways WWME Communities provide ongoing support. They are:

- An environment of acceptance.
- Focus on priority of spousal relationship.
- Help with discernment of gifts.
- Facilitating the Weekend.

With this final article in this series we hope we have offered you some insight in how you as Community can offer support to other couples and priests who have made a Weekend. But, you might ask, how can facilitation of a Weekend support those who have already made the Weekend? Our response is: love isn't love until you give it away. Through inviting couples and priests to help support a Weekend you offer them the opportunity to give to others what they have received. In doing this you offer them a sense of belonging as they give to others.

Some might ask what they can do and how that might make a difference. Of ultimate importance is the first step of every Weekend: **invite others to attend a weekend**. As a Community you might do this as a group by hosting coffee and rolls at your parish as couples. Another fun option is to put on a Romantic Dinner or dinner-dance. As a Community invite potential couples and/or priests or religious to come to a romantic dinner. The Community gathers to cook and serve the meal to those invited. Following dinner those in attendance are given a short informational invitation to attend a Weekend and their "bill" for the dinner, which is a Weekend registration form.

Another way of supporting those who have attended a Weekend is through inviting them to be a prayer couple, priest or religious for a couple, priest or religious attending a Weekend. Offering a written outline that explains the duties of being a Prayer Couple helps them to feel more like a part of the Community. If you add to this an opportunity before or during the Weekend to pray together as a Community, you can build a spiritual element of belonging to Community. We like to start Friday night of a Weekend by meeting with other prayer couples to pray the rosary for the Weekend followed by a pot-luck dinner or a trip to a favorite restaurant.

Other ways to build Community through facilitation of a Weekend is working as a group on Friday to set up the Weekend facility, set out the chairs and place Workbooks and/or notebooks on each. You can also be there to greet couples, priests and/or religious on Sunday as the Weekend closes. We are aware of different styles of doing this "greet-off" that range from potluck dinners or cake receptions at the facility to dinners at the homes of Community members.

Whatever you do to help facilitate a Weekend, we know that through working together as Community, you will help build relationships as well as create the welcoming atmosphere of love that helps Marriage Encounter to be the greatest pro-marriage group in the world.

Our WWME mission statement calls us to be Community in order to support the Weekend and to support the attending couples after the Weekend. It is a privilege and a treat to assist the Weekend.

I (Jack) believe it is being asked to be active that has kept me involved in WWME.

For me (Karen) there is an excitement that wells up inside me as I help to prepare for a Weekend. Sometimes that feeling is like the excitement in the air as I approach a fair or other special event. That excitement feeds the anticipation of participating with others in preparing for and following up with the Weekend experience. I am so touched and gratified to be involved in a life changing experience for these deserving participants. I can't help but recall how special our Weekend was, and I am touched again and again as I see new couples, priests and religious desiring more and working for more in their relationships. Helping the Weekend, no matter the capacity, is a rewarding endeavor that renews my excitement for our relationship. The gifts of helping with the Weekend are many and I hope you will experience them for yourself during the upcoming Weekends in your area.

We invite you to submit a paragraph or short article telling eMatrimony readers what the WWME Community means to you. Whether you have just made your Weekend, or made it long ago, we would like to hear from you. Just email your response to editors@eMatrimony.org . We will collect your responses and add them to this series of articles.

YOU ARE COMMUNITY; LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!

Contact your local leadership and ask how you can help.

Local leadership, give the gift of love by seeking out and encouraging others to help.