

ROMANCE DINNER  
PLANNING ♥ INFORMATION  
GUIDE



U S SECRETARIAT – WEEKEND PILLAR

JANUARY 2002

Updated by Baltimore ME November 2002

# **Worldwide Marriage Encounter**

## **Romance Dinner Planning Resource**

### **Overview**

The purpose of a Romance Dinner is provide the atmosphere and opportunity for couples attending to reminisce about their dating days and early marriage. We are giving them a taste of what they recapture for their relationships now – by attending a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend.

This event can successfully be held in a church facility that has a full service kitchen or a school cafeteria. The space can easily be transformed into a romantic “café” with some simple decorations.

Each couple should be seated at their own private card table (complete with table cloth, flower & candle light). Waite couples/priests should be assigned to no more than 3 tables – so they can provide excellent service. (The waite couples should always attend to their assigned tables as a couple)

If the room is equipped with 6 or 8 foot long tables, use them to create an intimate space. Fold in one of the table legs and stand it up using the remaining leg outstretched leg as it’s ground support. You can create a wall by putting these “on end” tables side-by-side, thereby transforming a large room into a small and cozy café. String Christmas white lights along the tops of the upright tables and you’ll be amazed at the effect combined with your elegantly decorated card tables.

The results from hosting Romance Dinners in this format is remarkable. Couples attending this style of Romance Dinner sign up at a rate of 90% or higher – and usually on the night of the dinner. It is important that you make the Inviting Presentation at the end of the evening to “close the deal.”

### **Registration Fee**

If you are inviting couples via church bulletins Vs. ME couples inviting their friends/relatives, you may want to consider a small registration fee (\$10.00 or so) to limit no shows and to help make the registration process a little easier. Couples paying their fee confirms their reservation and reduces the # of calls the registration couple makes to confirm.

### **Reimbursement**

WWME encourages the participating members to donate what they can towards the funding of the Romance Dinner. However, if reimbursement is anticipated, please estimate the reimbursement amount ahead of the event and seek approval from the Local Area Coordinators.

### **This Document**

This document is meant as a guideline and you are encouraged to “localize” it as needed. It is available electronically so you can make the necessary changes and additions to the letters, talks and charts, that fits your local event planning.

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# To Do Planning Chart

TASK	COUPLE OR PRIEST ASSIGNED
Bulletin Letter to Pastor (if using this)	
Invitation List Collector (collects names and addresses of invitees)	
Invitation Printing & Mailing to Couples	
Dinner Handouts Printing	
Table Place Cards Printing (optional but nice)	
RSVP "Registration Couple	
Kitchen Coordinator	
Menu Items & Cooks Assignments (see menu planning chart)	
Waite Couples/priests White Shirts, Bow Ties, Black Pants, Skirts or Dresses	
Maitre D' Couple or Priest	
Inviting Talk Presentors	
Set Up - Decorating	Everyone
Clean Up	Everyone

## Menu Planning and Assignment Chart

ITEM	ASSIGNMENT
Entree	
Starch	
Vegetable	
Salad & Dressing	
Bread	
Dessert (ice cream Sundays for 2 in 1 bowl are fun and economical)	
Wine	
Iced Tea & Sliced Lemons	
Drinking Water	
Andes After Dinner Mints (to be served with "bills")	
Butter Pats (available at "club" stores)	
Sugar, Equal Creamer Packets	
Salt & Pepper Packets or Shakers	
Cheese & Crackers (optional at a "serve yourself" table while waiting for all to arrive & be seated)	
Invite them to dance if they wish (you will have great romantic slow music)	

You can prepare enough food for the workers to eat after the dinner (when the guests have gone) or order pizza for delivery after Set Up (before the guests arrive) or after the dinner is over. Suggest paper plates for workers (minimizes clean up)



## Local Area Inventory and Assignment Chart

<b>ITEM</b>	<b># IN INVENTORY</b>	<b># NEEDED</b>	<b>COUPLE / PRIEST ASSIGNED</b>
China			
Flatware			
Water Glasses			
Wine Glasses			
Wine Carafes			
Tea/Water Pitchers			
Coffee Maker			
Bread Baskets			
Serving Utensils			
Card Tables - rent what you can't get from ME			
Table Cloths			
Napkins			
"Bill" Folders			
Pens			
Flower Vases			
Silk Flowers			
Glass Votive Cups			
Tea Light Candles			
Café Sign			
Lattice Work			
White Lights Strings			
Extention Cords			
Romantic Music			
C D Player			
Inviting Display Boards			
Heart Confetti			
Diswashing soap			
Sponges			
Dish Towels			
Podium for Maitre D & Inviting Talk (most churches have this)			

## Romantic Dinner Sample Inviting Talk

The sample talk included in this resource material is included to give you an idea of what to share with the Romance Dinner attendees after you have wined and dined them. The couple presenting will need to insert their own love story and impact of the weekend on their relationship.

The informational material can be given as is or changed as you see fit. Romantic Dinners are highly successful – usually 90% and higher sign up at the dinner. Don't be afraid to "close the deal". Give the talk – they will want to know how "to get" what their wait-couples have. We know we "got it" from the experience of our weekends – share that passion with them.

<<Him>>

Good evening, thank you all for coming tonight. We hope you have enjoyed your dinner. I'm *Name*, this is my wife *Name*. We are very excited to be here this evening to share with you an experience that has touched our lives. That experience was our Marriage Encounter Weekend.

First, let me give you a little background about Marriage Encounter. Marriage Encounter is a worldwide movement within the church designed to help married couples deepen and enrich their relationship. It is also designed to help priests and religious deepen and enrich their relationship with their spouse, which is the Church and all of its people. The weekend is for couples, priests and religious who have a good relationship, but want to make it a great relationship. So far, over 3 million couples and religious in 91 countries have experienced a Marriage Encounter weekend.

<<Her>>

We hope that you had a chance, during dinner, to talk about the questions on the handouts at your table and to reminisce about the romance which was present in your lives when you were dating and first married.

I remember when *Name* and I were dating and first married and how much in love we were. We would sit for hours on end and talk or just look into each other's eyes. *Name* would always tell me how nice I looked and was eager to hold my hand and put his arm around me in public. He was also very romantic. He would surprise me with a love note saying "I can't wait to be with you tonight", or bring home flowers or small gifts just to surprise me. Marriage with *Name* was romantic, fun and better than anything I could ever have imagined.

<<Him>>

I remember when *Name* and I were first married we were inseparable. We couldn't stand to be apart. We went everywhere and did everything together. I was drawn to *Name* fun loving and playful nature. She brightened my world and made life fun. We were passionately in love with each other and Janetta was my dream come true.

After we were married a while though, our relationship just didn't seem to have that same spark anymore. The children came and we started spending more and more of our time with them. And when I did have leisure time, I usually spent it away from *Name* with friends. We quit making time for each other and I began to feel lonely in our marriage.

<<Her>>

For me, after several years of marriage, I also began to feel lonely and insecure. I was rebellious toward *Name* and what he thought my role as a wife should be. I became so busy taking care of the kids, doing volunteer work, and caring for friends, that our relationship became last on my list of priorities. I felt lonely and distant from *Name* and wondered what had happened to that passion we once shared.

We began to schedule our lives around our jobs, the kids various activities, or what program was on TV that evening. When we were alone our conversations were usually shallow like two strangers meeting for the first time.

We came to accept our busy lifestyles and the way we were living. We told ourselves that it was normal that once you've been married for a while, the romance just fades away. We still loved each other, but deep down we realized something was missing in our relationship.

We know each of you has a love story of your own. As you think back, is the romance you remember when you were dating and first married still present in your lives today? If not, what's happened to it? Do you sit close to each other anymore? Do you have romantic dinners alone? Do your jobs, children, and the TV take priority over the two of you and your relationship?

As I looked ahead, I could envision a time when they would no longer live at home and be the center of our lives. I began to worry if we could recapture the couple we were when we were first married, after being Mom and Dad for so many years.

<<Him>>

I had never been one for deep, emotional sharing with *Name*, but the nightly routine of "What's for dinner?" and "What's on TV?" was bothering me. I began asking myself if I still loved *Name*. The answer was always "yes" but I will admit I was becoming bored. Our weekend brought back the joy and enthusiasm we had when we were dating and first married. We no longer did things separately to avoid each other, we did things together to enjoy each other.

When Father talked at church about a Marriage Encounter weekend, I was hesitant. I was not going to get up in front of a group of strangers and bare my soul to them. But he stated that all sharing on the weekend is strictly between husband and wife in the privacy of their hotel room. This was a key selling point for me. The weekend was worth every moment. I can still recall the love and warmth I felt for *Name* as we drove home that Sunday night of our weekend and # years later, it is still there. Our Marriage Encounter weekend was the best thing that has ever happened to our marriage. It brought the romance back.

<<Her>>

You're probably wondering what a Marriage Encounter weekend is. The weekend begins on a Friday evening about 7:30 and ends on a Sunday evening at approximately 5:00. The weekends are held at *Locations* which is a wonderful way for you to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. During the weekend you will hear a series of talks presented by 3 couples and a priest. These talks will reflect upon the different aspects of married life and religious life and the couples and the priest will share from their own experiences. After the presentations you are given the opportunity to return to the privacy of your own room for your own personal discussion. The weekend is oriented strictly to each individual couple or priest so you don't have to worry about any group sharing.

<<Him>>

The weekend is NOT a religious retreat. It is not an exercise in baring your soul to everyone. It is a time for you and your spouse to share with each other without the distractions of everyday life.

This weekend is for married couples and priests who want to experience the fullness that their love has to offer. All of you sitting here this evening DESERVE a Marriage Encounter weekend. Ask yourselves -- If there was a possibility that you and your marriage could be better, that you and your spouse could be happier, would you take that chance?

We would like to invite you to take that chance and sign up for a weekend tonight. The very worst thing that could happen is that you would spend a weekend alone.

<<Her>>

The Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend is Catholic in orientation. But, you do NOT have to be Catholic to attend the weekend. It is open to all married couples, so a certain number of spaces are reserved each weekend for couples of other faiths.

You are probably wondering how much the weekend will cost you. There is a \$? non-refundable registration fee which confirms your reservation. During the weekend you will be asked to make a free will donation to help cover the expenses.

There is a Marriage Encounter weekend scheduled for *Date* at the *Facility Name* in *City*. We already have a number of couples registered for the weekend. However, we have reserved a space for all couples invited here tonight, but, space is limited so if you are thinking about going you need to go ahead and register tonight to be assured a spot on the weekend. Should *Date* not be a convenient time for you to attend the weekend, there are other weekend dates available. Even if you are unable to attend the *Date* weekend, chances are better that you will be assured a spot on the weekend of your choice if you register here tonight. The \$? registration fee will carry over to the next available weekend.

<<Him>>

The wonderful meal you have received tonight was prepared by Marriage Encounter couples, who very lovingly gave of themselves. Those same loving couples will come out in a few minutes with an application form. All you need to do is fill out the application and get ready to have the weekend of your life.

If you still have doubts, talk with the couples and ask them about their own weekend and what the weekend has done for them. Everyone has had their own experience of the wonderful weekend, which changed their life.

We will be here as well, to answer any questions that you may have or to tell you more about the weekend. Your wait-couples will also have information about the other scheduled weekends available. For now, we thank you for listening and we encourage you to care enough about your marriage to make it a priority and invest one weekend to make it even better. God bless you.



# Worldwide Marriage Encounter

## Baltimore Archdiocese

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are pleased to announce that our (name the sponsor here – circle or community name) will be hosting a Romance Dinner on (date) at ( place). The purpose of the dinner is for couples to be wined and dined by loving Marriage Encounter couples and at the end of the evening hear a short talk on a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Before each meal course they will hear a poem and be given questions about their dating and early marriage years. This is where the evening takes off for them as they reminisce about the romance stage of their relationship. After dessert the short talk is presented and they have the opportunity to sign up for a weekend. The sign up rate at these events is over 90%.

You are welcome to invite one or 2 couples to the dinner and participate in the evening either in the kitchen or as the server couple for the couple(s) you invited. The dinner is free to the guests and the costs for the event will be covered by the couples who are hosting this evening. An added bonus of the night is that the servers have as much fun as the guests.

We will begin planning this event \_\_\_\_\_(if this is a circle sponsored event – use part of you circle meeting to avoid multiple meetings).

If you would like to participate in any way and can't make the meeting please call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope to hear from you.

Hugs,

name

phone #



# *Worldwide Marriage Encounter*

Baltimore Archdiocese

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We have been told by the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Registration Couple that in the past you have inquired about or signed up for a Marriage Encounter Weekend, but have not yet attended a Weekend. We know that at times it is very difficult to take an entire weekend just for yourselves. Because of this we would like to invite you to be our guests at a Candlelight Dinner on \_\_\_\_\_. Please see the enclosed invitation.

This Candlelight Dinner is being given for couples like you who have expressed an interest in enriching their relationship. It is being planned and hosted by other couples who have already attended a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The reason we want you to be our guests is that we believe, as married couples, that we need to take time out for romance from time to time. At the end of the evening we will be telling you a little bit about the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend, but you are under no obligation to commit to anything.

Please let us know by \_\_\_\_\_ if you can join us - we'd love to have you there. You can reach us at \_\_\_\_\_. If we aren't home, just leave a message on our answering machine. Thanks!

Sincerely,



# Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Baltimore Archdiocese

Date

Dear Father «PriestName»,

In an effort to invite and register couples for the upcoming (*Weekend Date*) Worldwide Marriage Encounter in (*Location*), the Marriage Encounter community is hosting a free Romantic Dinner to married couples from your parish. We would like to ask if you would please place the below listed announcement in your Parish bulletins each weekend from now until (*Date*) if possible.

We appreciate all the assistance you have given us in placing announcements in your bulletins. The Marriage Encounter movement relies greatly on couples who receive information published about upcoming Weekends from their parish bulletin announcements.

Sincerely,

*Name ♥ Name Last Name*

WWME (*Local area name*) Area Coordinators

*address*

*city state zip*

*phone*

*email*

## **Bulletin Announcement** **To be placed in (*Date – Date*) Church Bulletins**

Attention all Married Couples!! You are invited to a **Free Romantic Dinner** on *Date* at *time* p.m. at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church Parish Life Center, sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Come enjoy a quiet, romantic dinner for two and find out what a Marriage Encounter Weekend is all about. To make your dinner reservation call *Name & Name* at *Number* (open to the first 20 married couples).

## **Handouts**

We suggest that you print the handouts on the following pages on colored paper – a different color for each course is more user friendly for you and the couples.

It is quite wonderful to see the couples reaction to the poems and then to see them discussing the questions. Make sure the kitchen crew gets a glimpse of this scene. It's one of many of God's graces your group will enjoy in the planning and hosting this experience.

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Before the Soup and Salad.....

NOT LONG AGO...THIS GOOD LOOKING GUY MET THIS NEAT LITTLE GAL, AND THEN THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN...

*Do you remember the first day you met? Do you remember how it happened? How did you feel inside?*

WELL, ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND THEY REALLY DISCOVERED THEY LIKED EACH OTHER...SO THEY DECIDED TO GO OUT TOGETHER.

*Do you remember your first date? What was it like?*

AS DATING GOES, ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES....THEY DISCOVERED THEY REALLY LIKED EACH OTHER, SO HE ASKED HER FOR A KISS.

*Do you remember your first kiss? Do you remember where you were? How did you feel?*

NOW AS THINGS WENT ON, THEY REALIZED THEY HAD BECOME A "THING", A STEADY, PERMANENT "DUO ABOUT TOWN". ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND SOON THEY WERE SPENDING ALL THEIR TIME TOGETHER.

*Do you remember sharing your dreams for life with each other? And how you wanted to live? Talk about those dreams and schemes you both had.*

AND DON'T YOU KNOW IT, THIS GOOD LOOKING GUY AND THIS NEAT LITTLE GAL SOON DISCOVERED, NOT ONLY DID THEY LIKE EACH OTHER, BUT THEY HAD FALLEN IN LOVE.

*Do you remember the day you two became engaged? What was it like? Talk about what you've just heard, and discuss the questions we've just read.*

**SALAD** is served.....by your servers

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.Before Dessert....

## As We Are One

When you and I were wed, my love,  
It never dawned on me,

How two persons could become  
One personality.

I loved you for your charm,  
Of physical design.

And all the glances and smiles,  
I longed to claim as mine.

But I discovered I became  
As much a part of you.

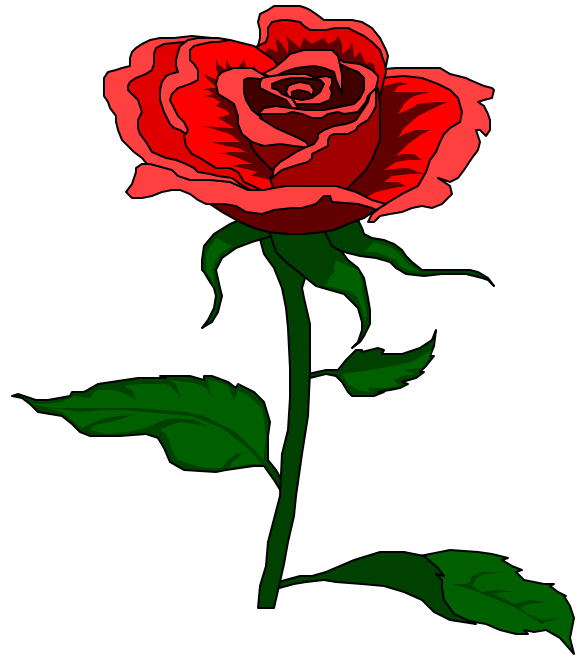
And in the final picture,  
We were one, instead of two.

I mean, I really love you for  
The way you think and feel.

For your mind and soul,  
Instead of just your sexual appeal.

And every night until the dawn,  
And to the setting sun,

I give my heartfelt thanks to God,  
That we are truly one!



DESSERT & COFFEE are served.....by your servers

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....Before the Main Course....

AND BEFORE YOU KNEW IT, THE BIG DAY WAS HERE...HER HEART WAS AFLUTTER,...HIS NERVES WERE ON END; THE DAY WAS PERFECT FOR THE WEDDING DAY JITTERS.

*Do you remember your wedding day? And how she was the most beautiful woman in the world? And how perfect and handsome he was?*

THEIR WEDDING DAY, NOW A TREASURED MEMORY THEY SHARED. AS THEY STARTED THEIR NEW LIFE AS ONE....

*Do you remember your first apartment or house? Where was it? How did you find it? How did you decorate it?*

*Do you remember your first fight as husband and wife? And the sweet joy of making up as you held each other in your arms.*

*Do you remember the day you brought your first child home? And the joy and happiness you felt as you held him or her?*

AND THEIR LIFE WENT ON...THIS GOOD LOOKING GUY AND THIS NEAT LITTLE GAL. THEY BEGAN TO FILL UP THEIR TREASURE CHEST, FULL OF MEMORIES...EACH NEW DAY AND EVERY YEAR BROUGHT JOY, SORROW AND TEARS....AND SO THEY CONTINUED TO FILL EACH PAGE OF THEIR BOOK OF MEMORIES WITH LOVE.

THE YEARS GO ON,...AND NOW HERE YOU SIT, THAT GOOD LOOKING GUY AND THAT NEAT LITTLE GAL. YOUR LOVE STILL SHINES FROM YOUR EYES...WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR TREASURED MEMORIES WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND AND PAL.

*What are the treasured memories in your life? Reflect on these special moments...and relive those happy times and cherished memories with your spouse.*

The MAIN COURSE is served.....by your servers

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