



CORE Format

A Core is a small group of Encountered Couples, meeting on a year-round, preferably on a twice-a-month schedule, who are committed to growth in their relationship with each other and with God. Core becomes a close, warm, supportive family.

A core is the central part of anything, like the apple's core which protects the seeds that are necessary to continue life. Core is the center– the heart – of Marriage Encounter and God is at the center of Core.

Each item marked with an * is essential for all UME Core meetings. There is room for flexibility and imagination in Core, but these are the fundamentals that make your group a Core instead of a social club.

Light a Candle:

The candle reminds us of our Weekend experience and of Christ's light that God wants us to reflect. If the hosts for Core have a candle, it is nice to have a candle at the center of the prayer circle.

***Opening Prayer Circle**

The Prayer Circle can be led by the CORE hosts or the Core Coordinators.

(NOTE: A Core group may decide to choose either of the following options for the next segment of Core. The option that is not used at this point in the program is then used right before the closing prayer circle.)

***Most Endearing Quality:**

Each husband and wife shares their Most Endearing Quality about each other. There is no specific order for the sharing. Each couples shares when they are ready. This is not a time for other couples to make comments or judgments.

Face your spouse and using their name or a term of endearment, each shares (loud enough for others to hear) saying something similar to: "Your most endearing quality tonight is: _____"

OR

***Relationship Sharing:**

Relationship Sharing is an opportunity to share out loud our "now feeling(s)" about our couple relationship in response to the question, "How do I feel about our relationship right now?"

Relationship Sharing **is:**

- A sharing of feelings rather than events.
- A focus on each other and our relationship.
- Voluntary for each couple, but all are encouraged to share.
- A sharing of our joys as well as struggles.

Relationship Sharing **is not:**

- A report on frequency of our dialogue.
- Blaming our feelings on our spouse or garbage dumping.
- A review of the week's activities.
- Mandatory for each couple. Do not proceed around the circle or put pressure on those who are not yet ready to share.

Please be silent and respectful as each couple shares their "now" feeling during Relationship Sharing. Example: "I feel _____ about _____ like _____."

***Program Presentation:**

The program typically lasts about 8-12 minutes, followed by a thought provoking, carefully worded question relating to the presentation. It is now time for the 10 & 10 writing and dialogue time.

***10 & 10:**

The couple hosting Core will explain where the men & women will separate to write. The couple who is hosting the Core will time the 10 minute writing time and the 10 minute dialogue time. When each couple is reunited, read your spouse's letter twice, and then spend the remaining time focusing on the strongest feeling expressed by either the husband or wife.

***Dialogue with My Spouse:**

To begin, each spouse tells how I feel after reading your love letter. Select one strong feeling to share and explore. My mate and I can choose this feeling from any one of four sources:

- My love letter
- My spouse's love letter
- My "now" feeling after reading my spouse's love letter
- My spouse's "now" feeling after reading my love letter.

***Discussion:**

Following the program is a time for informal discussion, thoughts, and comments on the program, if any. The key rule of CORE is just like on a Weekend, all sharing is voluntary. However, when we do take the risk of sharing with our spouse and other couples, it gives each couple an opportunity to have a stake in other's marriages. This is a sharing time, not a time to try to fix the problems.

***Closing Prayer Circle**

***Business Meeting:** This is led by the Core Coordinators and should be kept as brief as possible. Business may include topics such as:

- ◆ Future Core meeting details: dates, host couples, program couples, and refreshments couples.
- ◆ Announcement of UME Weekend dates, other M.E. events, and other helpful M.E. information.
- ◆ Plans for inviting for an upcoming Weekend -- when to schedule information meetings and what to do to promote UME.

Refreshments and Fellowship

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