

The Pre-Cana Happening

By John and Barbara Engler

[The writers are a Pre-Cana leader couple.]

Do you remember your Pre-Cana instructions? We do! We sat through four Sunday sessions listening to dedicated people talking to us, but not with us, about various aspects of married life. Not having participated in these instructions, we could very easily have left them behind when we left. For us, Pre-Cana did not provide any new insights into our future married life.

Today, in our society, marriage itself is often challenged. Our engaged couples really do not know what to expect in this new venture. They have hopes and dreams of what life will be like when they are married, but very often reality is far from their ideals.

To meet today's needs, there is a new happening in Pre-Cana. There is a need for engaged couples to express their own ideas and expectations for the future together — to bring reality to the present. This is what the new Pre-Cana is all about.

It is a discussion-type of program in which 25 engaged couples interact with five married couples, a doctor and a priest. The married couples give short presentations on various aspects of married life — communication, outside influences, finance, sex, spirituality, growth and reality in marriage, etc. After each presentation there are small group discussions in which the engaged couples relate to the married couples' experiences and express their own ideas. This is a stimulus for further thinking on important

How to Fight Sensibly

Quarrels? Sure, they'll occur occasionally — unless the marriage partners are either spineless or saints.

The Cana Conference of Chicago offers these eight ground rules for the encounter:

*Keep little things little — don't make mountains of molehills.

*Keep it to a discussion — a difference of opinion need not turn into an argument.

*Keep hold of tongue and temper — we always hurt the ones we love because we know their Achilles' heel.

*Keep it fair — reveal your feeling honestly. Don't insult or insinuate.

*Keep it to yourselves — two are enough for a good fight. Don't bring in in-laws, friends, neighbors, children.

*Keep it current — if something bothers you right now, talk about it right now.

*Keep talking — the silent treatment is deadly and defeating.

*Keep it short — never let the sun set upon your anger.

Who Pays For Physicals?

Who pays for the physical examinations prior to obtaining a marriage license? The etiquette experts say that the prospective bride pays for her physical, the prospective groom for his.

issues because the engaged couples themselves are contributing to these discussions.

We have found an overwhelmingly favorable response to this type of program. Engaged couples have told us that they have never talked so deeply as during the week when the four Pre-Cana sessions were held. At the same time, the engaged couples are gaining insights into what marriage can really be while the participating married couples are experiencing an enrichment in their own marriage. For us, this has generated a twofold satisfaction.

There is a great need for interested married couples to participate in forming new Pre-Cana teams. The diocese hopes to convert Pre-Cana instructions to this new group dynamic form. However, more married couples are needed for this transition.

If you want to help our engaged couples form more positive attitudes and expectations toward marriage to meet the challenges of today's world as married couples, please join us in this endeavor, by calling the Office of Family Life, 546-3630. The rewards are very gratifying.



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