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Weekend Marriage Retreat Plan

A Weekend Marriage Enrichment Retreat seems essential to many marriages, ranging from those that are newly weds to those that have been married for many years. As I think about this retreat my goal is to make it robust, fun, and enlightening. The outline of my retreat is meant to cater towards different relational needs that I have noted from this enrichment course and my internship working with married couples. The retreat will also incorporate spirituality in a way that will draw the two partners' closer to each other and collectively draw them closer to their faith.

The retreat would ideally be held on Saturday and Sunday, the expectation is that the couples will arrive to their hotel by 6pm on Friday. The destination would be Hawaii, I do recognize this is perhaps not financially accessible to a lot of people, however I appreciate the laidback and unified culture of this island. Once the participants arrive to the hotel, the first directive would be to check in with their partner on their feelings/thoughts about starting the retreat. Once the couples arrive to the first day of the retreat, Saturday starting at 8am, I would ask each partner to share their interpretation of what their partner said to them the night before and allow the partner to clarify or confirm that their partner heard correctly. In my opinion, I think this would be a great segue to our first activity which would start at 9am after they ate their breakfast and were able to engage in an icebreaker with the other couples. The first activity would be focusing on Communication Skills. This activity would last from 9-11, and I would give a lecture firstly and role play of what good communication looks like, and then I would provide all couples with a topic to engage their communication skills. At 12pm there would be lunch until 1pm. At 1pm would begin the Love Languages portion, in this section of the retreat I would have another short presentation on love languages and then I would have participants share how they feel most loved, what their partner does that satisfies this need, and what they

desired their partner to do more to satisfy that need. At 3:00pm we would start the two-hour portion on Parenting as a Team. I would provide a questionnaire for the couples to answer questions related to different areas in parenting, for instance a section on boundaries between parent and child, a section on the different styles of parenting, and which they identify with now and what they wish would be different, how they would need their partner's help in this area, and lastly a section on discipline. On Sunday there would be two robust topics in the morning from 9 to 12pm it would focus on Sexuality and from 1pm to 4pm it would focus on Spirituality. For Sexuality, there would first be a lecture with the purpose of providing psychoeducation on the importance of maintaining sexual intimacy, then we would talk about sexual dysfunction and have a time to take any specific questions on the topic. This retreat would have a Spirituality portion and I would start this presentation discussing how Christianity, Catholicism and any other religions relate to marriage, sexuality, and gender roles.

The goal of this retreat is to help partners to gain better understanding of themselves and each other; to learn about each other's greatest hopes, sensitivities, vision for the future, and vulnerable parts that have yet to be exposed. The scheduling of the retreat in my mind is in sequence of intensity and deepness. I hope to start the retreat in an inviting and nonintimidating manner, so that my participants can ease into the weekend as the second has workshops that can be more emotionally and mentally taxing. In creating this outline, I had in mind how to balance out the fun activities, group sessions, couple activities and assignments/free time. The beginning of the retreat has a lot of opportunity for fun and group activities, in the congregative breakfast time, introductions, and ice breakers. I also plan to have relaxing music in the background to help create a fun and nonintimidating environment. The bulk of the activities will be couple activities, as one of the main purposes of my retreat will be for the partners to connect and

increase their understanding of each other. My retreat will promote enjoying their free time, I would create an itinerary of fun, romantic, and important places in Hawaii, to invite the partners to connect and enjoy their time in Hawaii. I also will ensure that there is a designated time for lunch for both dates.

The topics of the sessions fit together because each session sets up for the coming session. For example, the communication skills workshop is first, because this skill is important and necessary in order to discuss parenting styles. Additionally, the dates are divided between, the first date pertaining to lighter topics that will still help the partner's to learn more about each other and collaborate, and the second date will focus on topics that are more difficult to discuss due to the vulnerability that is required.

After the retreat has ended, I will allow the participants to share what was helpful and unhelpful in the retreat, and I will also ask them for any suggestions for the next retreat. Secondly, I would be emailing them a survey to ask more specifics about the retreat, for instance questions asking if they enjoyed the food, if the speaker seemed knowledgeable, if there was any part of the retreat that felt unnecessary, and if they would return in the future. This will help me measure the level of success and help me plan ahead to create more effective retreats.

In the retreat, on the second day in the second half it will be fully dedicated to spirituality, there will first be a questionnaire to help both partners better understand their partner's view on spirituality. Then I would have a presentation on the connections that have been found between sexuality, marriage, and gender roles in connection with different forms of spirituality. Lastly, I will prompt the partners to discuss how their spirituality serves them in their marriage and create a plan on how else they would like to incorporate their spirituality in their marriage.