

host manual

A step-by-step guide on how
to promote, host and wrap-up
an AOM event



the art of  marriage®

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THE ART OF MARRIAGE®

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FAMILYLIFE®

Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

the art of 
marriage[®]
getting to the heart of God's design





before
the event

getting started

Congratulations on hosting the Art of Marriage (AOM)! You are hereby becoming an active agent in facilitating healthier families.

But where do you start? We've created this little booklet to give you all the guidance you need to maximize your event!

5 Steps to Host an Event:

1. **Pray**
2. **Date, Schedule, and Location**
3. **Determine Registration Price**
4. **Register Your Event**
5. **Recruit Your Team**

1 pray

"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." – Proverbs 16:9

We believe that prayer is the most important detail of any event. Unless the Holy Spirit is at work, the hearts of men and women will not be changed, no matter how perfectly an event is planned. We encourage you to commit every part of the planning process to prayer. Begin praying for the couples in your community, and pray for wisdom in selecting the best location for this event.



Best Practices Tip

Use the 40 Day Pre-Event Prayer Guide! We've included it in your Kit for this very reason.

2 date, schedule, and location

We are encouraging as many people as possible to host The Art of Marriage video event. Consider your organization's calendar as well as the community's calendar.

Give yourself roughly 16 weeks (4 months) to prepare and plan your event. Once you have a location in mind, take steps to reserve the facility for the dates of your event. If you plan to host the event at your church, make sure you receive permission from your pastor and keep him informed throughout the planning process. You can download materials for sharing more about the event with your pastor from theartofmarriage.com.

Beyond the church setting, we hope many other venues will be utilized to help couples experience The Art of Marriage. Locations such as community centers, restaurants, colleges, meeting rooms, convention facilities, banquet halls, retreat centers, campgrounds, and hotels are also great places to host this event.



Best Practices Tip

- When considering your location, think about your target audience! If many couples are unfamiliar with a church environment, perhaps hosting the event outside of a church setting might make them feel more comfortable. Pray about it! God will direct you through the process!
- Be mindful of holiday weekends! Often times, people are unaware of three-day weekends until it is too late. We would hate for you to accrue any last minute cancellations.

3 determine registration price

In addition to the costs of renting a facility, be mindful of all the elements that will factor into your budget. Tally them all up, and divide the total by the number of couples you think will be attending. This will give you a rough estimate of the registration price.



Best Practices Tip

Number of Couples _____

Facility Costs _____

Food or Snacks _____

Childcare Costs _____

Other Expenses _____

TOTAL _____

TOTAL Divided by _____ = Registration Fee Per Couple _____

Below are the basic elements you need to consider:

Facility

You will probably have to rent a space. It's a huge plus if you can secure a location for free, but don't necessarily count on it. Be prepared to make an offer that is realistic. You will appear more professional, AND you'll leave a good impression on the vendor.

Materials

You've already acquired your AOM Experience Kit for \$199. But you will also need to purchase manuals for your guests. Each couple gets a set. The AOM Manuals (including the new Date Night Calendar!) are available at www.shopfamilylife.com for \$34.99 per couple set.



Best Practices Tip

- Order early and often! Place your initial order for manuals no later than 3 weeks before your event to ensure delivery. We encourage you to order 5-10% above the number of people you expect, to cover same day registrations. If you have a surge of registrations, place a second order with expedited shipping if needed!
- Pens! Each couple will need a few. Make sure you have spares!
- Name Tags! They make for a nice touch, and are super helpful during registration.
- Note that the Art of Marriage videos are engaging themselves, yet if played without the accompanying manuals then it will not provide the same life-impact that couples can receive when following the videos with their manuals.

Childcare

If you plan on providing childcare, PLEASE make sure your facility can accommodate it in such a way that will NOT be close or near parents. Factor in the costs and manpower required to facilitate childcare properly.



Best Practices Tip

Avoid providing childcare if you can! We've found that childcare, although sometimes necessary, can often times be a distraction for parents. The goal is to immerse them into the AOM event, without having to worry about their kids in the back of their minds.

Refreshments

We recommend having some type of refreshment table at the event. Snacks are comforting; they take the edge off attitudes for guests who had a hectic and crazy time getting to the event. Plus, they're a great way to boost your blood sugar and concentration for that extra hour before lunch break. But don't go overboard with a buffet. Keep it simple.



Best Practices Tip

- Prepackaged grab-n-go snacks make it easy for the guests, and eliminate the need for plates and plastic wear.
- Easy to eat fruits like apples and bananas satisfy those with dietary needs.
- Have plenty of coffee and water!
- Try doing something fun, like sprinkling Hershey's Kisses on the tables. Remember... kisses are good!
- Consider having each of the couples on your team or hospitality team provide a snack for the event. Not only is this a great way for them to get involved but could also be a cost savings to the event budget.

Lunch

We strongly encourage you NOT to provide lunch, but to urge couples to view that time as an opportunity to go on a date! Couples will be taking in a lot during the event. And meal breaks are the perfect chance to pull away and talk about what they've taken in.

Lunch is ALSO a great time for your AOM team to spend together; sharing what they've seen in the couples around them, praying about what God is doing, and discussing how the event is impacting them. It takes the stress off of the team if they don't have to be in "work mode" the entire day. Plus, they will have the chance to laugh, bond, and grow closer.



Best Practices Tip

- Gift cards for near-by restaurants make great giveaways for the couples!
- Coupons or discount offers to near-by restaurants may be a nice touch as well.
- If you DO provide childcare, make sure you think about lunch for the kids.

Special Touches

Think of ways you can create an experience for your guests! What says romantic? Roses on the tables? Candles? Twinkle lights? Try to transform your facility into a place that feels like a getaway.



Best Practices Tip

- Music matters! Create a playlist for intro's, breaks, and registration to create an environment that doesn't feel like "dead space." Check out the music suggestions we've included in your Kit. Take it from us: everyone likes a little Sinatra!
- Rent an old school photobooth! OR...designate a team member to take photos during the event. Run down to your local photo store, have them printed in an hour, and have them waiting for couples on Saturday morning.
- The more giveaways, the better! Everyone likes to win something. Plus, canvassing your local businesses is a great way to build relationships with your community.

Discounts

Our thought: give 'em if you can! It's always a good idea to provide scholarships for couples that truly need to be at the event, but cannot afford registration. Build some type of discount into your budget if possible.



Best Practices Tip

- Try partnering with a local military chaplain or first responders (fire, police, ambulance) who may be able to subsidize the cost of manuals.
- Consider providing slots for local pastors to attend the event for free. It's a great chance for you to bless those who bless others on a daily basis. Give them a chance to be ministered to for a change.

Promotion

There are a myriad of ways to promote your event. We'll talk about this in more detail in the next section. But for now, in your budgeting process, consider what you may need to purchase. From signs and billboards to newspaper and radio ads, be strategic about what is most effective in your area.

The Team

In order to create an amazing AOM experience for your guests, the team will be onsite long before and after the guests each day. Build into your budget monies to take care of them: dinner on Friday, lunch on Saturday, etc.



Best Practices Tip

Create shirts that distinguish your team! It will help them look, feel, and ACT more professional. Plus, it helps create a safe environment for your guests, knowing there are official AOM personnel standing by, designated to guide them through the event.

4 register your event

Once you have secured a location, to register your event go to www.theartofmarriage.com and click on the "register event" link. Registering offers three key benefits:

1. **You'll receive email reminders at critical promotional milestones prior to your event.**
2. **As a service, you'll be able to set up your own event website allowing you to promote, manage, and even receive payments for your event online! In fact, in today's culture, the online registration is CRUCIAL in making the process easy for your guests.**
3. **Guests will be able to search TheArtofMarriage.com to locate and register for your event, giving you the ability to reach even a broader audience!**

5 recruit your team

Pray about couples you know who are marriage-minded and have the heart for other couples learning God's truth, hope and vision for marriage. Ask them to prayerfully consider:

- **Meeting six times as part of the team leading up to the event; to watch and experience The Art of Marriage as a small group (using the event DVD's and manuals).**
- **Committing to pray daily leading up to the event, using the 40 Day Prayer Guide.**
- **Planning as a team to provide The Art of Marriage event experience, from promoting, setting up, and providing refreshments, to greeting, praying, serving, and facilitating the event.**

Once you've recruited your team, make them aware of the different roles that will need to be filled during the event, in addition to all the prep that goes into the pre-event phase.

The basic roles are as follows:

1. Greeters

This team will welcome couples at the door, escort them to the registration table, make them familiar with their surroundings, and direct them to the room where the event is held.

2. Registration

This team will facilitate the onsite registration, print/write nametags, provide manuals and pens, and briefly explain the event schedule.

3. Resource Table

This team will man the resource table, answer questions about the various resources, recommend further reading/lectures/events, and complete sales transactions.

4. Prayer

This team will commit to praying before the event, during the event, and after the event; as well as be available to pray with couples throughout the weekend.

Each couple on your team should be prepared to give a brief testimony about their marriage. Where they were before, what difficulties they've had, and how God has helped them work through their differences.



Best Practices Tip

- Use the Powerpoint template we created to highlight your team members' brief testimony. The slides are great to have playing in the background during the event.
- Designate one key couple to host a small group study after the event for guests who want to take the next step and dive deeper!

promoting the event

When do you start promoting The Art of Marriage Event? As soon as you've agreed on a date, schedule, price, and location! Create your flyers, posters, digital send-outs, and begin to saturate the culture around you. Below we've listed several ways you can create a buzz!

Personal Invitation

Many studies have shown the most effective form of promotion to be a personal invitation. As a team, have each team member make a list of people in their sphere of influence they will personally invite – friends, family, coworkers, ministry partners, sports contacts, community groups, etc. Distribute AOM event flyers to them with the pertinent information, including the link to register online.

Social Media

Leverage your contacts on Facebook, Twitter, email, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Plaxo, as well as your "blog-sphere" to encourage your friends near and far to register for their local AOM event.



Best Practices Tip

- Create an event on Facebook!
- Tweet about your excitement surrounding the planning process!
- Keep event news up-to-date on your church website.
- Send out an "email blast!"
- Use the free tools provided by Eventbrite, an online registration system that will help you promote your event. Eventbrite has an email template, website widgets, social media tie-ins, and other electronic invitations all available online at: <http://www.eventbrite.com/l/artofmarriage>

Venue Promotion

What venue have you chosen to host the event at? Do you have access to the facility leading up to the event? Is it a church? Are you able to set up a table in the lobby with information? Here are some various forms of promotion to consider:

- Posters
- Flyers
- Banners
- Brochures
- Information table
- AOM invitations/registration cards
- Pulpit announcements
- Bulletin inserts
- Newsletter Articles
- Skits
- Your personal testimony
- AOM Gift Certificates



Best Practices Tip

- If you have access to video production gear, create an easy-to-edit 30-second promotional clip that you can play at various venues leading up to the event!
- Digital sign can be a great place to put an ad.

Community Promotion

Check your local newspaper and radio station websites! Do they have community calendars on which to post events? Don't overlook National Public Radio stations or Christian radio stations, which often have online community calendars. Consider posting flyers on community boards at coffee shops, military bases, libraries, frozen yogurt shops, coffee shops, colleges, community centers, YMCA's, gyms, spas, barber shops, hair dressers, etc. Get creative!

Community Contacts

Include local organizations and business owners in your event by inviting their members or employees to attend. Make announcements, show videos, and use newsletters and websites to publish invitations and endorsements. Organizations may include: athletic clubs, teachers' associations, music/arts groups, schools, neighborhood organizations, and business clubs.

Discounts

If you've been able to provide discounted registration for target groups such as military, first responders, pre-married couples, or pastors, make sure to create specific flyers for those various target groups!



Best Practices Tip

- Invite local pastors to attend the AOM event for free! If that's not possible due to time commitments, at least ask them to sit through one session and give them a "backstage tour!" This might encourage them to host an event in their church in the future!

Future Event Promotion

We've found it's helpful for couples to offer "follow-up events" where they can dive deeper into teachings on marriage. If you choose to offer this, plan on what that format would look like with your AOM team or pastor. It could be a stand-alone Wednesday night teaching, a Sunday School series, or a small group study. Whatever the format, make sure you have details in place to promote it at your AOM event.



Best Practices Tip

AOM Small Group Study is a great review the AOM for six weeks following the Event. The small group uses some of the same video so it is a great way to remind couples about some of the key items discussed and to go into deeper discussion with others.

pre-event checklist

You have 16 weeks to prepare! Consult your calendar and count out the weeks prior to your event. Then fill in your "phase to be completed" dates below!

Event Date ____ / ____ / ____

planning phase

Weeks 16-11 before Event

Planning Phase to be completed by this date, 11 weeks before event:

____ / ____ / ____

Checklist:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer - See prayer guide for details | <input type="checkbox"/> Register your Event @ www.theartofmarriage.com | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit your team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date, Location, and Schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan to invite others, soft invite via personal contacts | <input type="checkbox"/> Begin creating promotional materials @ www.theartofmarriage.com/promo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determine registration price | | <input type="checkbox"/> Present Promotional Plan to Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain permissions for location, if required | | |

preparation phase

Weeks 10-8 before Event

Planning Phase to be completed by this date, 8 weeks before event:

_____ / _____ / _____

Checklist:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact local newspapers, radio stations, businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Plan the "follow-up" event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Order AOM Manuals | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare invites for email, Facebook, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go live with your registration website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch AOM DVD's with your team | <input type="checkbox"/> Create videos, additional signage, banners, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact military chaplains/first responders to help subsidize costs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a music playlist for intro's and breaks | | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep inviting people |

promotion phase

Weeks 7-5 before Event

Promotion Phase to be completed by this date, 5 weeks before event:

_____ / _____ / _____

Checklist:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up info table (e.g. at your church/venue) | <input type="checkbox"/> Post your event in community calendars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email Blast | <input type="checkbox"/> Hang banners/posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Promote via radio, newspaper, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Invite (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hit up local businesses/ community organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Announce regularly in your church (e.g. via video, skits, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute Flyers | | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep inviting people |

registration phase

Weeks 4-3 before Event

Registration Phase to be completed by this date, 3 weeks before event:

____ / ____ / ____

Checklist:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of other purchases needed for event (lights, flowers, candles, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Order more AOM Manuals if need be |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divide up your team's responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Test the DVD's and audio/visual equipment in your facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Powerpoint slides with your team's testimonies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly staff the information table; include Registration Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize "last day to register" in your promotions | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep inviting people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of snacks/refreshments that need to be purchased | | |

momentum phase

Weeks 2-1 before Event

This is it! It's go time! The final 2 week push before the event. If you're on task, you should have no problem tying up all the loose ends.

____ / ____ / ____

Checklist:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep praying! | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up the venue as soon as you have access to your facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your team clearly understands their responsibilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate all purchases (snacks, refreshments, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your info table is stocked | <input type="checkbox"/> Go over your schedule and do a soft "run-through" with your team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Send out a final email blast with "registration deadline" | <input type="checkbox"/> Test audio/visual | <input type="checkbox"/> Visualize the entire event from Registration to Finish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expedite additional AOM Manuals if need be | <input type="checkbox"/> Test music playlist | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep inviting people |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Test lights | |

day of event: you made it!!!

Congratulations! You're ready! Now, gather your team, pray together, and trust that you've done all you can. The rest is up to God. And that's a good thing!

faq's

We encourage you to take time to read through the following FAQ's. A solid understanding of the event will help you clearly answer any question from potential attendees.

Q: Why choose FamilyLife's The Art of Marriage over another video marriage conference?

A: Rather than simply filming a live event at a location such as a hotel ballroom or church, we specifically designed this event to work in a video setting. FamilyLife weaved together expert teaching, engaging stories, real-life testimonies, and humorous vignettes in a video composition to help couples fully experience God's design for marriage.

Q: Can we bring children?

A: FamilyLife cares deeply about children. However, to keep the event free of distractions, and as a courtesy to other participants, we recommend that children (including infants) not be allowed at the event.

Q: Will I have to engage in group discussion?

A: FamilyLife has not designed the event with any planned group discussions. However, each local event coordinator has the freedom to structure the event to meet the needs of his or her group. If you have concerns about group discussion, check with your local host before attending the event.

Q: Will I be required to participate in the projects with my spouse?

A: This event was designed so that the projects are an essential part of the event experience. The projects allow you to immediately apply what you've learned from the videos to your marriage. We highly recommend that you make the completion of the projects a priority during the event. We've received many comments from other attendees who say the projects were the best part of the event.

Q: Can singles or engaged attend The Art of Marriage?

A: ABSOLUTELY! In fact, we HIGHLY recommend it. The event will give individuals a clear understanding of what a marriage commitment truly means, and is also a great foundation for engaged couples who are soon to be married.

Q: I have been divorced. Will I feel uncomfortable at this event?

A: We understand that divorce is a reality, and we have designed this event with that reality in mind. We have tried to focus on the condition of your current marriage, rather than creating guilt for mistakes made in the past. We also recognize that even in such an environment, one might feel uncomfortable at times because of past memories and regrets that are stirred up. Our prayer is that you would come to this event excited to make your current marriage a strong, healthy, lasting one, even if it means dealing with some painful memories.

Q: We have a great marriage. Why should we attend the event?

A: Every marriage relationship is in a constant state of movement: You are either growing closer together or further apart. Unfortunately, it seems that the natural inclination of human hearts is to drift apart over time. Every marriage needs a tune-up from time to time, no matter how well it might be running. This event is designed to heighten even the best of marriages. It also serves as a great reminder that you are God's gift to each other.

Q: What if I register and for some reason can't attend? Can I get a refund?

A: Group coordinators should decide in advance with your leadership team how you will respond.



the event

facilitating the event

By now you are hopefully already familiar with the DVD's as well as the manuals. You'll notice that although the DVD's can be watched back-to-back, they are much more effective if they are introduced by a separate party during the live event. This is where you come in! You will essentially be a guide for your guests throughout the weekend, weaving them through the sessions in a way that feels natural and is easy to follow.

We highly encourage you and your spouse to host the event as a couple. This will provide the other couples with an obvious example as you explore the subject of marriage together. It will also provide continuity and an opportunity for you to build relationship with your guests. As you share your testimony in combination with the video, you will bring the subject matter to life. Just make sure you plan in advance which sections of the material you and your spouse will each be covering. Or if you plan to co-host the entire time, know at what point to switch off. You don't have a lot of time. And there's a lot of material to get through!

In the following sections, we go into more detail on how to specifically host each session. None of this is mandatory. By all means, you are free to design the experience in such a way that you feel would most benefit your specific community. But here's what we've found has worked best for previous hosts!



Best Practices Tip

- Use cue cards during the event!
- Make notes of any items you don't want to forget.

Note:

The DVD's include a 15-minute countdown to help you gather everyone for the start of each session. In order to utilize these timers, we recommend you select the "PLAY ALL" option on the DVD menu. By selecting this option, you initiate a sequence that allows you to start the first session, and each following session or countdown timer by simply hitting "ENTER" or "PLAY" after a session.

Once a session or the 15-minute countdown ends, the player will automatically transition to a looping logo of The Art of Marriage. To move to the next segment (either a countdown timer or another session), simply press "ENTER" or "PLAY." You may want to test this functionality on your DVD player before the event begins. See "The Art of Marriage Technical Guide" on the AOM website for more information.



Best Practices Tip

- Turn off the sound on the DVD during the 15-minute countdown, and instead replace it with the music playlist you created ahead of time!
- Dim the lights. We've found this helps couples relax when they feel like they're not in the spotlight. Allow them to be a fly on the wall.

sample schedules

We've found the AOM-Event works best when hosted on Friday through Saturday. Most couples have weekends off. And if they have part-time weekend jobs, it's usually fairly easy to get time off if they're aware of the event well enough in advance.

sample event schedule

Friday

6:00pm Doors Open
7:00 – 7:15pm Welcome and Introduction
7:15 – 8:15pm Session One: Love Happens
8:15 – 8:30pm Break
8:30 – 9:30pm Session Two: Love Fades
9:30pm Dismiss for Project One

Saturday

8:30am Doors Open
9:00 – 10:00am Session Three: Love Dances
10:00 – 11:00am Break for Project Two
11:00am – NOON Session Four: Love Interrupted
NOON – 1:45pm Break for Lunch and Project Three
1:45 – 2:45pm Session Five: Love Sizzles
2:45 – 3:00pm Break
3:00 – 4:00pm Session Six: Love Always
4:00pm Dismissal

tasking schedule

Friday

3:00pm

Begin Setup

- Lobby
- Tables for nametags/manuals/pens
- Unwrap manuals/stuff with inserts
- Print and arrange nametags alphabetically
- Tables for resources and T-shirts
- Tables for refreshments
- Tables for onsite registration
- Decorate
- Hallways
- Post directional signage
- Designate a room for the team to gather/eat/pray
- Assemble prayer boxes, prayer slips and pens; place in restrooms and lobbies
- Take registration list into prayer room and pray over names

Follow the Prayer Guide

- Have extra copies of Event Prayer Guide on hand for your team.

Media team in place

- Order of service
- DVD's
- Music and slideshow for breaks
- 2 cordless microphones

5:00pm

Team dinner and prayer

Saturday

6:00pm

Doors open

- Registration begins
- 3-4 couples greet guests at door
- Refreshments

7:00-7:15pm

Welcome and Introduction – Cue Card #1

7:15-8:15pm

Session One: Love Happens

- Check prayer boxes during session
- Pray through registration list
- Pray through session according to Prayer Guide
- Consolidate remaining manual/nametags/etc.

8:15-8:30pm

Break

- Be available in lobby for questions at resource table

8:30-9:30pm

Session Two: Love Fades – Cue Card #2

- Check prayer boxes during session
- Pray through registration list
- Pray through session according to Prayer Guide
- Replenish refreshments as needed

9:30pm

Dismiss for Project One

Registration (for couples who didn't show up

Friday)

- Resource table open (2 couples needed)
- Coffee/water/snacks

9:00-10:00am

Session Three: Love Dances

- Check prayer boxes during session
- Pray through registration list
- Pray through session according to Prayer Guide
- Replenish refreshments as needed

10:00 – 11:00am

Break for Project Two

- Be available in lobby for questions at resource table

11:00-Noon

Session Four: Love Interrupted

- Check prayer boxes during session
- Pray through registration list
- Pray through session according to Prayer Guide

Noon-1:45pm

Break for Lunch and Project Three

- Be available in lobby for questions at resource table

- Team lunch together

- Pray together using the Prayer Guide

- Replenish refreshments as needed

- At the end of the break, light candles, dim the lights, and bust out some Barry White tunes!

1:45-2:45pm

Session Five: Love Sizzles

- Check prayer boxes during session
- Pray through registration list
- Pray through session according to Prayer Guide
- Replenish refreshments as needed

2:45-3:00pm

Break

- Be available in lobby for questions at resource table

3:00-4:00pm

Session Six: Love Always

- Team distributes pledges and feedback forms

4:00-4:30pm

Closing

- Team on stage for pledge
- Couples make pledges
- Final farewell with information on any follow-up events

4:30-6:00pm

Breakdown

- Tear down
- Clean
- Collect/review feedback forms

6:00pm

Team Dinner

- Team Photo
- Closing Prayer
- Celebrate!

session one

love happens

intro

In many ways, this opening session is the most important one for you, the host. It is your job to introduce the entire Art of Marriage Event. First impressions are key. And this is your chance to make a good one! Whether you like it or not, you will be seen as the face of the event. And your guests will be looking to you for guidance and direction. They don't know what they are about to experience. But you do. So be calm yet confident, instructive yet gentle, and assertive yet patient.

The goals during your introduction are to orient everyone to the schedule, explain the basic flow of the event, and familiarize your guests with how the manual works alongside of the DVD content. Keep in mind that most of them will have had a long week. They may be tired, cranky, and not fully ready to engage with the material. So help couples relax and feel comfortable. Smile. Be excited (without going overboard). Above all, you want them to be thinking: *This is going to be good. I'm glad I'm here.*

Here's a sample format you might want to consider using for your introduction:

1. Welcome

Start by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. Introduce yourselves and your team! Share your own excitement about the weekend and why you've been looking forward to going through The Art of Marriage.

2. Break The Ice!

This is a great time for a giveaway! Here are a couple suggestions:

Longest Married:

- Please stand if you've been married more than five years. Wow!
- If you've been married more than 10 years, keep standing.
- 15 years, keep standing.
- And so on until you have the winner: the longest married couple.

Newlyweds:

- **If you've been married less than five years, stand up.**
- **Less than one year, keep standing.**
- **Less than six months, etc. until you have the winner: the most recently wed couple.**

3. Walk Through

Briefly walk your guests through the schedule of the event. Two sessions during this initial meeting and four sessions the next day. Mention the session length and break times. Remind them of the start time the following morning, as well as what time they can expect the event to come to a close. This is also a good opportunity to promote any local restaurants you feel would be good lunch date spots the next day.

4. Lay The Ground Rules

"The only person you can change is yourself." Hold couples accountable to listen for themselves, not for their spouse. No throwing elbows or sneaky glances. No moral superiority. No "I hope you're listening" or "That message is for you." Encourage couples to be obedient to the event and let it spark them toward intentional, honest, and above all patient interaction with their spouse.

5. Materials

Give your guests a quick rundown on how the manuals work. Make sure each individual has one. Let them know they don't need to worry about tracking along in real time, as most of the content is already in the manual. Also, make them aware of the new Date Night Calendar, and that they will NOT be using it until after the event. Finally, draw their attention to any further resources you've prepared at your resource table. And now...get ready to cue the DVD!

**Best Practices Tip**

When welcoming your guests, be careful to avoid religious clichés or "churchspeak." Avoid saying things like "I think we're really going to be blessed by these sessions" or "We're really looking forward to fellowshiping with you." Keep in mind that many couples might not be familiar with church culture, and that they might be put off by that type of rhetoric.

play dvd

Session One

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

This is where you, as a host, get back on the microphone and lead your guests into the break or next phase of the event. You might want to end each session by highlighting one quote or teaching that you found to be particularly helpful.

- **Remind the group that there is a 15-minute break and that the next video event will begin promptly at [X:XX]PM.**
- **Draw their attention to the refreshment tables.**
- **You might want to point out that the next session begins with a story they will not want to miss.**
- **Dismiss for break.**



Best Practices Tip

If you are co-hosting as a couple, this would be a great time to share how you were on two separate sheets of music when you got married. Tell your story about how God used your differences to perfect you, instead of protecting you from yourselves.

love fades

intro

Welcome everyone back to their seats. Get your guests excited for a give-away. If their name is called, encourage them to respond like they're on "The Price is Right!" Pull a name from the jar, call that couple up, ask them where they're from, and give them their prize. Then tell everyone to buckle up and get ready for LOVE FADES.



Best Practices Tip

We've found that often times couples want to be left alone and just take it in. That's fine! It's good to be energetic, but don't make your guests feel uncomfortable if you feel they don't wish to respond. Respect their bubble and trust that God is working!

play dvd

Session Two

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

These wrap-up times are for you to facilitate in a way you see fit. Be yourself. Have fun with it. Find your groove. But here are a couple suggestions to start you off in the right direction:

- **Direct your guests to the vignette where the counselor talks about marriage turning into "Let's Make a Deal." Does that hit home? Share your testimony or have a couple on your team share theirs.**
- **Assign tonight's project on page 44 in the AOM Manual. Encourage your guests to spend some time that evening to complete it together.**
- **Use the chance to offer a call to faith: "You may recall that Dennis talked about the importance of knowing Jesus. On page 46, you can find more information about how to do that. Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to talk with anyone on the team!"**
- **Announce what time you will begin the following morning. Encourage guests to come 15 minutes early for some coffee and a snack.**

session three

love dances

intro

Welcome everyone back! Congratulate them for the commitment they've made to "stick it out" another day. Ask who went "parking" last night. *wink*

Explain that you've placed prayer boxes with little slips around the facility and encourage your guests to write down their prayer requests. Share that the team has been praying for each guest by name for months now and that you'd be honored to pray for and with them during the event.

Finally, give a brief recap from the previous evening and a preview for the remaining sessions. It could look something like this:

"Last night we talked about God's plan for marriage and the fact that his plan was corrupted by sin. But we were also reminded that Christ came to restore what was broken by rescuing us from our sin. Today we'll look at some specific ways we can continue to strengthen our marriages with God's help. We'll learn about God's design for men and women in marriage, we'll explore ways we can communicate in the midst of conflict, and we'll also learn more about sexual intimacy. Our last session will be on the importance of leaving a godly legacy."



Best Practices Tip

These intros are always great spots for give-aways! It loosens any potential tension and creates a little anticipation. Plus, it usually prompts your guests to show up ON TIME!

play dvd

Session Three

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

Direct your guests to page 74 of their AOM Manuals. During this next project, they'll have the opportunity to write a love letter to their spouse. Encourage them to switch manuals and write their letter directly in their spouse's manual. Many couples find they end up keeping their manuals, just because of these heartfelt letters.

Encourage couples to spread out. Point out any areas in the facility that would offer privacy for them to complete this project.

Let couples know when the next session will begin. And finally, dismiss the group to work on the Love Letter Project.



Best Practices Tip

Before you draw attention to the love letter project, select a couple from your team to share from their experience on the roles in marriage. As a husband/wife duo, have them talk about the dynamic between loving and leading vs. submitting and respecting.

session four

love interrupted

intro

For many couples, the project they've just completed will have been a meaningful and moving time. As you welcome them back for Session Four, reflect on the project. Ask them how they were impacted by the exercise. Emphasize the power of words, especially our written words. Encourage your guests to not just let this be a one-time thing, but to get into the habit of writing one another letters of this sort from time to time.

Then, transition into Session Four. The next segment is all about communication, and how to resolve conflict when it occurs. And let's be frank. It most definitely occurs. Perhaps you'd like to begin by sharing a funny story out of your own life, where you and your spouse recently dealt with conflict. Maybe it's as recent as this weekend!



Best Practices Tip

Ask if one of your guest-couples would like to share with the group how they were impacted by the Love Letter Project. This is a great opportunity for couples that would like to share their experience. It also unifies the group because the other guests become aware of the fact that they are not alone in this.

play dvd

Session Four

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

At the end of the session, use the opportunity to highlight a short quote or important point from the video. Since you've already made yourself familiar with the content ahead of time, you'll have time to prepare. OR, use a couple from your team to briefly share their testimony with the group.

Next, direct your guests to page 96 of their AOM Manuals. Encourage them to complete this section over a lunch date. Let them know you've given them extra time for lunch so they don't feel rushed. Remind them of some great lunch spots in the area, or create a list of nearby restaurants and insert them into the manuals!

Finally, ask your guests to return promptly at [X:XX]PM, in time for the next session about sexual intimacy. "You won't want to miss this one!"

session five

love sizzles

intro

Welcome everyone back from lunch! We recommend having some sexy tunes playing in the background, a la Barry White. But that's entirely up to you!

Keep in mind that the project on conflict may have been hard for some couples. Affirm them for pressing in and encourage them that the hard work will pay off.

This may go without saying, but this is a great spot for...yup, you guessed it: a giveaway!

Finally, introduce the next session. What your guests are about to see in the video is rather candid. But it's appropriate, and we shouldn't shy away from it. Encourage your guests to hang in there, even if it makes them squirm at times. Affirm that God wants to teach us, and we can always learn more when it comes to our sex life.

play dvd

Session Five

A portion of Session 5 includes a frank and candid presentation about a woman's body and orgasms (beginning at 31:55 and continuing for roughly 7 minutes to 39:21). Because some may be uncomfortable presenting this material in a mixed group setting, we have provided an alternate version of Session 5 that deletes the material. The default version will play automatically if you have selected "PLAY ALL" on the DVD menu. Review Session 5 in advance to determine which version will work best for your group.

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

After the session, give a brief insight into ways you as a host-couple have learned to communicate with each other sexually. This can be a good way to take the content from the video and present it in a real life context.

Congratulate the group for being obedient to the event and for sticking it out this far! Remind them that there is a 15-minute break and that the next session will start promptly at [X:XX]PM. Also, let them know that the next and final session is a little shorter than the others.

Before you dismiss your guests, inform them about upcoming small group studies or marriage lectures you have planned with your team. Give them instructions on how to sign up. Finally, dismiss the group for break.

session six

love always

intro

Before beginning the last session, have everyone fill out the evaluation form for the weekend (see the tear-out sheet in the back of the manual). Let them know that you genuinely appreciate their feedback and you'd like to know not only how they liked the event, but also how you did as hosts. Give your guests about 10 minutes to fill them out. Make sure you've cued a music playlist for this time.



Best Practices Tip

Perhaps you'll want to create your own evaluation form! This way, you can tailor the questions to the specific culture you're trying to impact. Make sure your team has the forms ready to hand out!

Finally, get ready to start the last session!

play dvd

Session Six

***Set yourself a cue 3 minutes before the video is done. Be ready for the...

wrap up

This is your last official moment in front of your guests as a host. There are three main things you need to accomplish during this closing time. You are more than welcome to facilitate the close your own way, but we've found the following order usually works best:

1. What's Next?

Direct your guests to next steps they can take to dive deeper into the content:

- **Draw the group's attention to page 140 in their AOM Manuals. Encourage your guests to finish this project sometime in the next 48 hours – preferably before the weekend is over.**

- Highlight the new Date Night Calendar, which is included in their AOM Manual set. Explain how it is designed to help them create intentional moments of intimacy throughout the month.
- Let your guests know about further follow-up events they can attend. Direct them to the resource table for more information.
- Remind everyone to give their evaluation forms to one of the team members before they depart.



Best Practices Tip

- Promote your AOM Small Group!
- This is the perfect time to make a Small Group Announcement for those who wish to dive deeper.
- Make sure you plan ahead with dates, times, and location.
- You can also order more AOM Small Group resources at www.aomresources.com

2. Congratulations and Thanks!

Congratulate everyone! They've made it! Hopefully they've grown, been challenged, encouraged, and made new friends in the process. Communicate to your guests that you're proud of them, and thank them for giving you the opportunity to host this event.



Best Practices Tip

Give your guests the opportunity to share with the group what they got out of it. End on a high note! We've found that most couples leave this event feeling uplifted and encouraged. Give them a chance to shout it from the mountaintop!

Next, call your AOM Team to the stage. Lead everyone in applause as they make their way up. These are the people that have directly contributed to making the event as successful as it was. Highlight all their hard work and dedication, and give your guests a chance to honor them.

The couples will then remain on stage and exchange their pledges along with the rest of the group.

3. Legacy Pledge

This is it. The final moment. The climax. This is the chance for your couples to hammer a stake in the ground!

Direct your guests to page 143 in their AOM Manual. There you will find a legacy pledge. The goal is for everyone to stand, have couples face each other, and verbally state the words in the pledge while looking directly at their spouse.

Before you begin, be mindful of couples that are not ready to make the pledge. Issues may have been raised during the weekend that may still need to be resolved before reciting these words. Let the couples know that they are not required to say the words if they feel they are not ready. But nonetheless, encourage them to stand, hold their spouse's hand, and make eye contact. This gives them the chance to communicate that they still care and that they're committed to the relationship.



Best Practices Tip

- Order Legacy Pledges!
- Make it fancy! Order official AOM Legacy Pledge Certificates online at www.aomresources.com. By making it look and feel more legitimate, your guests will likely be more intentional when they make their pledge to their spouse. The official Legacy Pledge Certificates are also great for framing after the event!
- Encourage them to take it home and sign it in front of witnesses, e.g. their children, family members, or friends!

Then, get ready! Encourage your guests to listen carefully as you read the pledge aloud once. Urge them to be mindful of what they are about to say.

Next, have the couples stand and face each other! Read the opening paragraph alone. Then instruct the husbands to repeat after you for their portion. Do the same with the wives. Then, have the couples join together and repeat the final section together.



Best Practices Tip

- You may want to practice reading this aloud with someone to get a feel for how long of a portion you should ask the group to repeat.
- If you are co-hosting, switch off leading the pledge with your spouse. Husbands for the men. Wives for the women.

After the pledge, encourage couples to kiss! Then lead everyone in one last round of applause!

Finally, dismiss the group on a high note!

Congratulations! You've successfully completed your mission! The rest is up to God!

after the event



wrap it up

After the last guest leaves, gather your team together for a debriefing of the event. Thank your team for all their hard work and encourage them that God has used them to build his kingdom!

- **Together, review the evaluations forms as a team.**
- **Discuss strong points and weak points.**
- **See how many evaluations indicate a first time decision for Jesus Christ. Celebrate each decision!**
- **Ask team members to share meaningful moments.**
- **Determine who will follow up with couples.**
- **Finally, PRAY. Pray for the couples, the team, and the legacies that were altered through the event. Thank God for the ground that was taken back from the enemy and ask for God to reveal upcoming opportunities to take back more ground!**

Next, work together to restore the facility to its pre-event condition. Leave it better than when you found it! Remember, these are simple, yet important ways to demonstrate good character and leave a positive impression on the vendor. Don't get lazy. You're almost there. Finish strong!

Finally, CELEBRATE! You're done! Take your team to dinner. Or order pizza! Take a group photo. Have fun. Relax. Take a load off. Enjoy each other's company. And know that this was indeed...a weekend well spent!



Best Practices Tip

Share your evaluations with us! Email your stories, testimonies, and salvations to ArtOfMarriage@familylife.com. Our staff loves to hear about how God uses AOM to change lives!