



Equipes Notre-Dame  
Teams

# Manual For Pilot Couples



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## 1. The pilot couple

It is important for pilot couples to have received appropriate guidance prior to starting piloting a new Team. They also need to have experience of the wider Teams movement, such as having attended Teams gatherings and Mixed Teams events. A pilot couple needs to be flexible, but not too prescriptive and to be sensitive and gentle. Inexperienced pilot couples need support before and during piloting from an experienced pilot couple (to be arranged by the sector couple).

## 2. The underlying approach to piloting

- This manual should be used as a step-by-step guide to piloting. It is intended for use in planning each meeting, not necessarily running it. It is essential for the pilot couple to have made their own notes for use during the meeting, as every new team and every piloting experience will be different. In this manual, more detail has been included in the early meetings than the later meetings, to avoid repetition.
- It cannot be stressed enough, the importance of prayerful planning and preparation prior to each meeting. This is crucial to successful piloting.
- It is important to have a balance between not being patronising, but neither making assumptions about people's individual levels of spiritual activity. As piloting progresses, new team members should increasingly do more of the talking, not the pilot couple, and everyone should be included.
- The pilot couple needs to set an example of how to be part of a team. Therefore for the first few meetings they should go first at each stage, i.e. start the sharing, commence the prayers etc.

## 3. Aims and objectives of piloting

Essentially what the pilot couple is aiming to do is quite straightforward:

- To provide an opportunity for people to try out Teams over several months to decide whether or not it has anything to offer them
- To pass on the Teams formula for running a Teams meeting
- To teach the new team about Teams life and encourage attendance at Teams events
- To give an understanding of the Teams movement and its history
- Hopefully to encourage commitment to the new Team

## 4. Meeting preparation

Set aside time as a couple for a prayerful planning and preparation session. This is crucial to successful piloting. Make notes on who will lead each section and plan approximate timings for each part of the meeting.

For example:

Meal and sharing – 1 hour

Business – 10 mins

Prayer – 30 mins

Endeavours – 20 mins

Study topic – 30 mins

Plan in advance what you each will share on, to show 2 different styles of sharing e.g. one light sharing, perhaps on an event and one on something slightly more heavy and/or 'touchy feely'.

Likewise with prayer, one should pray at more length and one more simply. This gives encouragement for those who are not used to praying in a group, that a simple short prayer is perfectly acceptable.

Having agreed a date and venue for the first meeting, contact the host couple early on to put them at their ease and to stress the importance of keeping the meal simple. Check out whether the meal will be eaten round a table or on laps. Offer to take



extra chairs, plates etc if required. A suggestion is soup (packet or tinned,) bread, cheese, followed by fruit. Alternatively try cold meat, salad, bread and fruit. Tell the host couple you will arrive 15 minutes early. Phone each couple to tell them what food to bring and ask them to bring their diary with them. Give them the address and phone number of the host couple's house and ask them to arrive promptly. Confirm all this by email or in writing. It is sometimes best to hold the first 1 or 2 meeting in the pilot couple's house. They can then demonstrate how to be a host couple, such as not getting up and down during the meal and to have everything prepared in advance.

## 5. The meetings

### MEETING 1

#### Introduction

Once everyone is seated (ensuring that everyone is seated next to their spouse), give an introduction before the meal is served so you have everyone's full attention. Welcome the couples and thank the hosts for their hospitality. Briefly explain the format of the evening and the 5 parts of the meeting.

1. Meal and sharing
2. Business e.g. date of next meeting
3. Prayer time
4. Sharing on endeavours
5. Study topic

Explain that the first meeting is likely to feel a little strange, as when starting any new activity. Re-assure them that more will be explained as you go through the evening and also at further meetings.

#### Meal and sharing

Emphasise very clearly that, unlike what happens at a social gathering or dinner party, there should be only one conversation at the team meal, everyone listens to the one who is speaking; this is the caring and sharing aspect of the meal. It can be difficult at first, but the couples will soon come to see the value of it.

Say grace and serve the meal. When everybody is settled and eating, each couple briefly introduces themselves, giving name, number of years married, family, faith background. It's best not to mention your job at this stage.

Then explain that every person will share on a high and low over the past month. Explain to them about confidentiality. The Pilot Couple starts, in order to show the way.

If time permits, explain the significance of the meal and why it is part of the meeting:

- the agape of the early Christians (Acts 2:46)
- hospitality of each couple in turn (Rom. 12,13)
- caring and sharing of news
- opportunity to relax together around the table after a day's work

Arrive early yourself to take pressure off the host couple. Be relaxed and informal yourself (however nervous you may be!). Welcome people on arrival and encourage them to sit in the room where the meal will be. People often congregate in the kitchen and start chatting and this should be avoided. Teams discipline of starting on time needs enforcing from the first meeting.

Clarify what time people need to leave (e.g. for babysitters) and re-assure them that you will finish on time. Be prepared to be flexible with your timings if all doesn't go to plan.

In order to emphasise the importance of listening, tell the Team that food is only passed around or the hosts should only leave the table, between couples sharing. This may sound over the top regimentation but actually it helps to stop the evening becoming a dinner party and supports the structure that makes Teams succeed.

Do introductions even if they all know each other, as it will help you as pilot couple.

Make sure that both of you speak so that there isn't a male/female dominance. Sometimes couples get through their sharing very quickly because they are nervous - this is fine, it is far worse to be the other way.

Request water on the table. Do not serve tea/ coffee after the meal, as this is disruptive.



At the end of the meal, explain this is the part of the meeting when the team spends about 10 minutes on business matters. Fix the date of the next meeting; this is not a commitment for people to come if they do not wish to carry on with Teams, but ask them to let you know in advance if they decide not to come.

Ask for a volunteer to host the next meeting. Remind them that it is not necessary to have a big table – eating on laps is perfectly acceptable.

If you can arrange who will bring what food, do it now, but this can easily turn into a long debate, so it is often better to do it by phone at a later date.

Don't be too regimented but also keep an eye on the time. Now give the leaflet for Meeting 1 and the team meeting card to the couples and move away from the table (where appropriate).

Fixing a date can be a major problem - finding a night that everyone can make!

If necessary, encourage people to compromise and not always meet on the same day.

## Prayer time

Many people nowadays are used to praying in a group but do not assume this. However, the format of Team prayer is still unusual for many people and will take several months for the couples to become familiar with it. Explain that Teams recognize that everyone is at a different point on their faith journey and accepts that some people are much better than others at praying out aloud. No one should feel under pressure. Explain that the role of the spiritual counsellor is an equal member of the team and he/she is not there to lead any part of the meeting. However, there may be occasions when they can give a few words of guidance. For example, sharing a few thoughts on the meditation.

Explain the sequence of the prayer:

**Recollection:** We quieten our mind, to prepare to meet God.

[The prayer to the Holy Spirit can be used as part of this recollection.]

**Scripture:** Reading the text - we listen to God's Word.

**Silent Meditation:** Quiet reflection - God speaks to us.

**Response:** Shared Prayer on the Theme of the Text - having listened, we speak to God, not with an intellectual exercise, e.g. 'the point I see in this text...,' but with a prayer from the heart: praise, thanksgiving, understanding, resolution, etc.

This part is not easy and everyone initially finds it difficult. Explain that they can use a short set prayer if they find it easier or to repeat a line of the text that has made an impact on them. The important thing is that, as far as possible, each member should take part. Encourage people to say Amen at the end of their prayer, so the others know they have finished.

You could try getting the team to pray spontaneously, i.e. not going round the room. Advise the team that it is fine if there are silences.

**Bidding prayers:** having responded to God, we now humbly and confidently present our petitions: something of personal concern and something of general concern. Saying it aloud, we share with the other members, thus bearing one another's burdens.

End each bidding prayer with "Lord hear us" - "Lord graciously hear us" or similar. This helps to distinguish a bidding prayer from a response to the scripture text, which people often find confusing.

Remind couples that it doesn't matter if someone repeats what has already been said.

The pilot couple should start each round of prayer. One of the pilot couple should pray at more length and one more simply. This gives encouragement for those who are not used to praying in a group, that a simple short prayer is perfectly acceptable.

Couples are unlikely to remember all this, especially if people are nervous, so having explained it initially, explain it again as you start each part of the prayer session. This sounds laborious but is sometimes needed.

The pilot couple may want to prepare a prayer in advance if necessary, as it is often difficult to be prayerful and inspired when piloting for the first time.



Ask the couples to do it in turn, working around the room so they know when to speak. Advise people that they can just say the name of someone they want to pray for if they don't feel ready to pray out aloud. By doing this, at least everyone gets a chance to pray out aloud, if only very simply.

**Psalm and Concluding Prayer:** because we are not just a little group, but members of Christ's Church, we pray the prayer of the Church with a Psalm and end with a Concluding Prayer. Also these are the prayers that Jesus knew and used.

## Endeavours

Explain there are 6 endeavours . . . .

- Personal prayer
- Couple/family prayer
- Word of God
- Sit down
- Rule of Life
- Retreat

. . . . and that they will be introduced gradually during the piloting process.

It is really important to ensure that you teach the team **how to share** on endeavours, not just to have a discussion about the general topic of endeavours.

The first 2 endeavours will be covered in the first meeting. Use the booklet "Prayer in Teams" for preparation and give the booklet to each couple at the end of the meeting.

Prayer is a relationship with God. There are many prayer styles and it is up to each of us to work out the prayer relationship that is right for us. The Teams movement places importance on Family Prayer as:

- a) Prayer has a fundamental place in the life of a Christian family.
- b) The form of prayer varies with families and within a family; parents must see and accept the need for change as children grow.
- c) The important thing is that there should be a family prayer that is truly a small community at worship.

This is why we are asked, as members of the Teams, to undertake it or to continue to practise it. We are asked to pray regularly on our own but also with our spouse and/or children (where applicable).

Ask the couples to talk, in turn, about prayer (both family and personal) as they practise it now (if they do not practise it now, then as they did when they were children). Give your own examples. Allow enough time for people to relax and open up, but keep to the subject!

After everybody has spoken, explain about sharing on endeavours. One of the purposes of the sharing is to exchange ideas, experiences - success or failure - encourage us and strengthen our resolve to persevere in our efforts.

## Study Topic

There is usually too little time left for a discussion at the first meeting: however, it is as well to mention it and explain that it is an exchange of views, not an argument, on a given topic. It is an opportunity for couples to deepen their faith together and their understanding of the topic.

Use the leaflet "The Endeavours and their place in our lives and at the team meeting" for preparation to explain what endeavours are. Give this leaflet to each couple at the end of the meeting (so as not to be a distraction).

When discussing family prayer be sensitive to the fact that there may be childless couples or mixed marriages in the room.



Keep an eye on the time and ensure you finish at the agreed time. Give the couples the leaflet for Meeting 2 and go briefly through it with them. Give them the 2 endeavours leaflets (see above). Ask them to have a go at the 2 endeavours discussed during the coming month. Thank the host (if it is not you) and everyone for coming. Encourage them to come to the next meeting even if they found this one a little strange and nerve-wracking. If for any reason they cannot come to the next meeting, remind them to ring you.

End the meeting by praying the Magnificat and advising that part of Teams life is to say the Magnificat together daily. (This is a good way for inexperienced couples to begin praying together.)

## **After Meeting 1**

After the first meeting, hold a 'post mortem' as soon as possible. Sometimes things will have not gone as smoothly as you would have liked. This is normal! Keep notes of what went wrong or how, in hindsight, you would have done things differently. (A month is a long time!) This will help your planning for the next meeting. You may also want to send a thank you (or blank Teams icon) card to the host couple.

If the team does not yet have a spiritual counsellor, do your best to try and find one even if they have missed part of the piloting process.

## **Before Meeting 2**

At least a week before the meeting, ring the host couple and confirm arrangements. If you have not already organized food, work out who will bring what. Ensure that couples are not always bringing the same item. Ring each couple and the spiritual counsellor to remind them of the date, time and venue and tell them to bring their diary, meeting leaflet, team meeting card and food. If people arrived late last time, mention that you will start on time at the next meeting to ensure that you can fit everything into the evening. Have a brief chat with each, as this teaches the caring role of the RC. In your planning ensure that you lead a different part of the meeting to last time. Even as an experienced teams couple, you are likely to do things slightly differently and this brings depth to the piloting process. Use your notes from last meeting.

## **MEETING 2**

Take spare meeting 2 leaflets and team meeting cards with you, as inevitably some people will forget to bring them. Arrive early and start the meal on time even if everyone is not present. People will soon get the message that promptness is required. Gently remind the team of the correct way of doing things, if things went wrong at the last meeting. Explain that you are going to be quite disciplined but that is an important part of Teams life to ensure that all 4 parts of the meeting are covered and that it does not turn into a dinner party.

Experience shows that most teams do not seem to remember a lot of what was explained in the first meeting. So be prepared to remind them of the 4 parts of the meeting, the 'rules' about only one person talking during the meal and to only top up food and drink between couples sharing. If there is a confident couple, ask them to say grace. If eating on laps, encourage people to fill their plates up fully to avoid getting up and down frequently.

## **Meal**

Keep an eye on time. Again start the sharing yourselves, reminding people that it is not about listing events in their lives, but sharing on whatever has been important to them in the last month, however trivial or serious. Mention confidentiality and the importance of listening again. At the end of the meal, ask if the type of food that you have suggested over the past 2 months is suitable for everyone. If they suggest changes, remind them of the need for simplicity but be open to what would suit them as a team and their lifestyles. Avoid a lengthy discussion on this. Arrange a date and venue for the next meeting and remind couples to let you know in advance if they cannot come.



## **Prayer**

Ask people to get their meeting 2 leaflets out and provide copies for those who have forgotten. Again you will need to fully explain the pattern of Teams prayer both before and during the prayer. It may take several months before they become familiar with it. Stress the difference between bidding prayers and shared prayer in response to the scripture text. The latter is an expression of their thoughts and feelings on the text in the form of a prayer, not an exchange of views or a discussion. This is usually the bit which people find difficult to grasp. If few people joined in the shared prayer on the theme of the text, try passing round an icon or bible. Encourage everyone to say a prayer themselves. Impress on everyone that they don't have to be brilliant at making up prayers.

You could try using a few minutes of meditative music as a lead in to the meditation to create a prayerful atmosphere.

You could write out on small sheets of paper five or six very short, simple prayers that people can just recite. This can be a good way of easing people into praying out loud in a group if the team is struggling with prayer.

## **Endeavours**

Before introducing the new endeavour, ask the team to share on how they got on with the 2 endeavours they have tried to tackle in the past month – couple (and where appropriate, family) prayer and personal prayer. This gets them used to the concept of sharing on endeavours.

Then introduce the 3rd endeavour – the Word of God. Use the endeavour booklet "Word of God" in your preparation for this. Invite people to share on what place reading the word of God has in their life, either now or as a child. The pilot couple should not share themselves, unless the team are hesitant and need a 'kick start'.

## **Study Topic**

Explain that the study topic is an exchange of views on a given subject. These are provided during the piloting process but after piloting, the team can choose its own study topics. It is an opportunity for couples to deepen their faith together and their understanding of the topic. However, there are no right or wrong answers and no need for a definite conclusion. Respecting each other's opinions is important. Couples should usually read and prepare the topic prior to coming to a meeting. Try and encourage everyone to express their views without 'putting people on the spot'. There is often not much time for a discussion at this point, but if possible try and fit it in, even if it is brief.

If there is no spiritual counsellor, explain the benefits of having one and ask the team if they know anyone who would consider the role. It could be a priest, deacon or a member of a religious community.

Hand out the leaflets for meeting 3 and Word of God endeavour leaflet. Encourage them to read them and prepare for the next meeting. Remind them to try to incorporate the 3 endeavours discussed so far, into their lives. Thank the hosts and end with the Magnificat.

## **After Meeting 2**

You may also want to send a thank you (or blank Teams icon) card to the host couple.

## **Before Meeting 3**

At least a week before the meeting, ring the host couple and confirm arrangements. Ring each couple and the spiritual counsellor to remind them of the date, time and venue and to bring their diary, meeting leaflet, team meeting card and food. If people arrived late last time, mention that you will start on time at the next meeting to ensure that you can fit everything into the evening.

## **MEETING 3**

Take spare meeting 3 leaflets and start the meeting on time regardless of whether all are present. If any parts of the meeting did not go smoothly last month, remind the team of the correct way of doing it,



at the start of the meeting (e.g. not handing food round while people are sharing). Ensure one of the couples say grace, rather than you say it. Gently encourage those who have little to share to say more. Sharing is not about listing events in our life, but about sharing what has been/is important to us in our life, however trivial that may seem to others. After the sharing, fix a date and venue for the next meeting and agree who will bring what food. If there are any sector or regional events coming up, tell the team about them and encourage them to attend. Be careful not to overload them with Teams jargon.

When someone shares something very heavy and/or painful (e.g. a death) it is often difficult for the next couple to follow, particularly if the latter have had a good month. Acknowledge and thank them for sharing this with the team and suggest a minute's quiet prayer for the couple, while still at the table.

## **Prayer**

Go through the sequence again reminding couples of the difference between bidding prayers and shared prayer in response to the scripture text. Respond to the shared prayer with 'Amen' and to the bidding prayers with 'Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us' or similar.

If there are people that have not yet joined in praying out loud, explain that Teams recognize that everyone is at a different point on their faith journey and accepts that some people are much better than others at praying out aloud. No one should feel under pressure but encourage everyone to join in the prayers. Also remind them that it does not matter if prayers are duplicated.

## **Endeavours**

Before introducing the new endeavour, ask the team to share on how they got on with the 3 endeavours they have tried to tackle in the past month – couple/family prayer, personal prayer and reading the word of God. This gets them used to the concept of sharing on endeavours. Remind them that even experienced teams couples often find endeavours hard and be encouraging to those that are struggling.

Then introduce the 4th endeavour – the Sit down. Use the endeavour booklet – 'The Sit Down' - in your preparation for this and hand the couples this leaflet at the end of the meeting. Ask all the couples to attempt a sit down before next meeting, but explain that they will not be asked to share what they discussed.

## **Study Topic**

Mention that from next meeting onwards, a couple will be asked to lead the discussion on the study topic and then each couple will take it in turn at subsequent meetings. The role of the leader is not to give a talk on the topic. They should draw people out, ensure everyone gets a chance to talk and to keep to the subject. Ask for a volunteer to take on this role at the next meeting. Encourage everyone to have read the study topic and given it some thought before coming to the next meeting.

Hand out meeting 4 and Sit Down endeavour leaflets, thank the host couple and end with the Magnificat.

## **After Meeting 3**

You may also want to send a thank you (or blank Teams icon) card to the host couple.

## **Before Meeting 4**

At least a week before the meeting, ring the host couple and confirm arrangements. Ring each couple and the spiritual counsellor to remind them of the date, time and venue and to bring their diary, meeting leaflet, team meeting card and food. Remind the couple who volunteered, that they will lead the Study Topic.

## **MEETING 4**

From now onwards you should be playing a slightly lesser role and talking less, but still being encouraging and ensuring that all parts of the meeting are covered and that teams 'rules' and etiquette are adhered to. By now, hopefully couples will be feeling a little more relaxed and becoming more familiar with the structure of a Teams meeting. Don't be afraid to tackle any problems that have arisen e.g. persistent latecomers, people who talk too much or too little. Review the start and finish times of



the meeting if you are having trouble fitting everything in, but be sensitive to peoples needs e.g. getting children settled in bed, returning for babysitters or needing to get up for work early the next morning. It is essential to ensure that the basics of running the meeting are conveyed during piloting, so that they keep on track once you have left.

Let one of the couples say grace, then go through the meal, sharing and prayer as described previously. Bring to the team's attention any forthcoming sector events and encourage them to attend. Stress that this is as much part of team life as attending the monthly team meeting. The relaxed, friendly atmosphere of these events can often encourage people to commit to Teams.

Arrange a date, venue and food for the next meeting and remind couples to let you know in advance if they cannot come.

### **Pooling**

Explain that over time, close and trusting relationships will hopefully develop between team members. Pooling is a time set apart when a team member can talk to the team about something very important to them and be sure of attentive and sympathetic listening. It is different to the normal sharing during the meal, as it occurs very rarely and the sharing may take much longer. The sharing may be about for example a crisis in that person's life or a great sorrow. Also it differs in that the person sharing can ask for advice or views from team members so that it may become a 2 way discussion. As pooling occurs infrequently, it may be that when it does occur, timings for the rest of the meeting may need to be adjusted.

### **The Teams Movement**

You need to start introducing the wider movement and giving other information about Teams at every remaining meeting. Explain a little about the history of Teams. Refer to [www.equipes-notre-dame.com](http://www.equipes-notre-dame.com). It began in 1939 by Fr Caffarel in the parish of Notre Dame in Paris. It became known as Equipes Notre Dame. The movement's founding document 'The Charter' was written in 1947 (handout copies). Teams has been recognized by successive Popes and in 2002 received its final decree of recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity. In 2008 there were over 10,000 Teams spread throughout over 50 countries worldwide.

### **Endeavours**

Remind the team that endeavours are not tasks to be accomplished, but inner attitudes to be awakened and absorbed. They are a way of helping couples apply the Gospel in their daily life and therefore opportunities for spiritual growth.

Sharing on endeavours should always be viewed in a positive way. Our good intentions may fail, but we find the resolve to begin again and spiritual growth will come gradually. In Teams we journey at the pace of the slowest.

Before introducing the new endeavour, ask the team to share on how they got on with the 4 endeavours they have tried to tackle in the past month – couple/family prayer, personal prayer, reading the word of God and the sit down. For the latter, remind them that they are not expected to share what they discussed during their sit down.

Then introduce the 5th endeavour – the rule of life. Use the endeavour booklet – 'The Rule of Life' - in your preparation for this and hand the couples this leaflet at the end of the meeting. Provide some of your own examples.

Ask all the couples to choose and work on a rule of life before next meeting, but explain that they will not have to share what they have chosen as their rule of life, if they don't want to.

From experience, there is usually one meeting during piloting when the pilot couple comes away feeling the meeting has gone badly. Be assured that this is normal and can be a sign that the team are feeling more confident about expressing their thoughts and feelings more openly.

Different teams need different ways of being piloted. Try an alternative approach if one isn't working and remember to be flexible.



## **Study Topic**

Explain that a couple other than you, is leading the discussion on the study topic. Remind them that the role of the leader is not to give a talk on the topic. They should draw people out; ensure everyone gets a chance to talk and to keep to the subject. Ask for a volunteer to lead the discussion next meeting. Encourage everyone to have read the study topic and given it some thought before coming to the next meeting.

Remind them to try to incorporate the endeavours discussed so far, into their lives.

Hand out meeting 5 and Rule of Life endeavour leaflets, thank the host couple and end with the Magnificat.

## **After Meeting 4**

You may also want to send a thank you (or blank Teams icon) card to the host couple.

## **Before Meeting 5**

At least a week before the meeting, ring the host couple and confirm arrangements. Ring each couple and the spiritual counsellor to remind them of the date, time and venue and to bring their diary, meeting leaflet, team meeting card and food. Remind the couple who volunteered, that they will lead the Study Topic.

## **MEETING 5**

After welcoming the team, eating and sharing, advise them that you will only be with the team for a further 2 meetings. After that, the team will be led by what is known as 'a responsible couple' (RC), chosen from among the couples in the team. Explain briefly the role of the RC, stressing that it is both a caring and administrative role. It is a role of service rather than ruling. The RC is elected annually and it is important that every couple takes their turn in the role. Everyone will bring their own special gift to the job. Use the leaflet 'The Role of the Responsible Couple' for further guidance.

Inform the team about quarterly newsletters and the importance of reading them. Explain that whoever is nominated to receive them, will need to distribute them promptly to the other team members. This is a good time to briefly mention annual contributions, (as part of these are used to pay for the newsletters) which should represent a days pay but are anonymous. They can be paid by monthly standing orders if preferred and can be gift aided, as Teams is a charity. Advise the team that they might also like to start their own team fund, with each couple paying £1 or £2 each month. This money is then used to send the RC to the annual regional (or super regional) gathering.

**Prayer** – as previously described.

## **Endeavours**

Before introducing the new endeavour, ask the team to share on how they got on with the previous endeavour, the rule of life, which they should have tried to tackle in the past month. As the team have learned about nearly all the endeavours now, it may be best to focus on just 1 other endeavour, such as the sit down, if there is time. Remind them that they are not expected to share what they discussed during their sit down nor do they need to share on what they have chosen as their rule of life.

Then introduce the 6th and final endeavour – the retreat. Use the endeavour booklet – 'The Team Retreat' - in your preparation for this and hand the couples this leaflet at the end of the meeting. Discuss if anyone has any experience of going on a retreat.

## **Study topic**

This should be led by one of the couples as previously agreed.

End the meeting with the Magnificat and hand out the meeting 6 and Team Retreat leaflets and choose a couple to lead the study topic at the next meeting. Ensure a different couple does this each time.



## MEETING 6

After welcoming the team, ask if a couple would like to commence the sharing, rather than start yourself. After the meal, advise them that you will be only with the team for one further meeting. After that, the team will be led by 'a responsible couple' (RC). Remind the team of the role of the RC again and explain it is not onerous and the liaison couple (often the pilot couple) and the sector couple will support the RC. The RC is elected annually and it is important that every couple takes their turn in the role. Now get the team to elect their first RC. This can be done by secret ballot with each member voting for one couple. However, for some teams it is more appropriate to have an open discussion to choose the RC. Use your discretion to choose which method to use for the RC election. Arrange with the RC to meet up with them on their own before the next meeting. Pass the new RC name onto the sector couple.

This is a good time to explain the structure of Teams:

ERI (Equipe Responsible International = International Leading Team) – Super Region – Region – Sector – Team

Explain the common Teams events: e.g. birthday Mass on December 8th, sector picnic, mixed teams, regional gatherings etc and stress the importance of attending these. The RC is expected to attend the regional gathering or find a replacement couple if they are unable to go. It is much harder to keep going as a team without the support of the wider movement and these events are usually relaxed and friendly. Explain that they will not only be part of a Team, but also part of the wider Team's movement. It is Teams ethos to offer hospitality to others. For example, if couples are travelling a long way to a regional gathering or other Teams event, local couples would be encouraged to offer overnight hospitality. This may sound initially very daunting, but experience shows that it can be so rewarding and many life long friendships have been established as a result.

It is useful to teach the team that at the start of every meeting, once piloting has finished, they should ask whether anybody would particularly like to start or finish sharing. This ensures that if anybody has anything very important to share, they can choose when to share it. For example, if a team member has been made redundant or a family member has recently died, it may be hard for them to listen to other people's sharing, which may appear trivial, and wait to share their own news.

**Prayer** – as previously described

### Endeavours

Remind the Team of the 6 endeavours, which have been introduced over the past 5 meetings.

- Couple/family prayer
- Personal prayer
- Word of God
- Sit down
- Rule of Life
- Retreat

Reinforce that they are not tasks to accomplish but opportunities that can help us on our spiritual and marriage journey. This section of the meeting in future will be used to share on how teams members are progressing with their endeavours and to encourage each other and/or learn tips on how to achieve those we struggle with. Try and encourage the team to share positively on endeavours. Now ask each couple to share on one endeavour of their choice.

### Study topic

This should be led by one of the couples.

Explain that there will be no study topic at the next meeting. Instead there is a review of the piloting process. Hand out the meeting 7 leaflets and ask them during the next month to discuss the questions as a couple and to ring you or send their answers to you.

End the meeting with the Magnificat.



## **Before meeting 7**

Ensure you have all the answers from each couple and the Spiritual Counsellor to the piloting review. If necessary, phone team members and discuss the questions by phone. This ensures you can prepare for the final meeting, knowing which parts of the meeting are not clear and need further explanation at meeting 7.

Go and meet the new RC taking the booklet 'The Role of the Responsible Couple'. It is also useful to prepare a team file for them with the following:

- example of a timetable for a team meeting (should be 2 1/2 – 3 hours long)
- material and ideas for future study topics
- contact details for sector couple and liaison couple
- a copy of the Charter
- some expansion leaflets
- a full set of the endeavour leaflets
- a suggested format for the annual review
- the quarterly newsletter

Discuss the role of the RC in more detail, giving re-assurance that it is not onerous and that you (or the liaison couple if that is not you) will keep in touch. Ask the RC to lead the sharing during the meal and the prayer part of the next meeting.

Get sufficient copies of the current Regional Newsletter for each couple and the Spiritual Counsellor.

## **MEETING 7**

After welcoming everyone, explain that this is your last meeting and the new RC will lead part of this meeting. Let the RC lead the sharing over the meal and the 'business'. This should include date of next meeting, food, who will undertake which jobs at the next meeting, and choice of study topic for the next meeting. Then let the RC lead the prayers.

### **Endeavours**

Ask the team to share on how team members are progressing with their endeavours. Try and encourage the team to share positively on endeavours. Discuss briefly how they will share in future e.g. would they prefer for everyone to concentrate on one endeavour each month?

### **Review**

Go through the questions in the review one by one, bringing in people's comments (anonymously) that you have received prior to the meeting. Some people may not be comfortable saying their thoughts in front of the others. Explain any points that have not been clearly understood during piloting and give re-assurance. Do not take any criticism personally!

After the review, hand out the quarterly newsletter to each couple and spiritual counsellor. Encourage the team to talk about Teams to other people. The most successful method of expansion is by word of mouth. Give everyone a couple of expansion leaflets and inform them the RC has a further supply. End with goodbyes and the Magnificat.

## **6. After Piloting**

After the final meeting, give the sector couple the contact details for each member of the team. If you are able to become the liaison couple (which is the ideal situation), keep in regular contact with the RC by phone. Ask how the meetings are going and check that all parts of the meeting are being covered. Personally invite the team to any sector and regional events. After 9 months or so, invite yourself back to the team meeting. This is an opportunity to keep them in touch with the wider movement, to answer any



questions or tackle any problems that have arisen. You may also need to gently nudge them in the right direction if any 'bad habits' have arisen.

### Finally

Keep the Team in your prayers.

If a team does not make it to the end of piloting, please remember it is not your fault. Sometimes it is just not meant to be. Likewise, remember that whatever happens to the team in the long run, whether it works well, just survives or falls apart...it is not your fault. Don't take it personally. The experience will always have been of spiritual value to yourselves and the other couples.



"Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no results at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you do this you will concentrate more not on the results, but the value and the truth of the work itself."  
From Thomas Merton's 'Letter to a young activist'

