

# Getting the Word Out through Clergy Associations

When participant numbers dwindle, teams look for activities to reverse the trend. Inadequate registrations caused the Dubuque, Iowa, team to cancel their spring weekend; team members voiced concern over falling numbers on previous weekends, too. Last summer, the team decided to approach clergy and ministerial associations with information about the ministry. Team member Darla De Witte answers questions for *In Motion* about this effort.

## What gave you the idea to approach ministerial associations?

“Juggling our desire to preserve the ministry and our need to meet financial obligations is a struggle. Adequate participant numbers seems to be the best way to meet both goals. I suggested that priests and pastors could be good referral sources for us *if* they knew more about our ministry, and could see us as partners in their ministry.

## What, exactly, do you do?

“I phone churches to ask about their priests’ or pastors’ participation in this type of activity, locate the group leader,

and request a brief time at a meeting to explain our ministry and how it could enhance theirs. Most are thrilled to find out the *Beginning Experience* program exists. Some ask for printed information beforehand. All have been willing to give us time.

“A divorced and a widowed team member present together. Each gives a

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brief introduction and the circumstances that led her to the weekend. We review registration fees, dates and locations. We do not share things not to be shared, and have found that we need to stress that our weekend does NOT take the place of programs currently in place, but enhances them; that we encourage participants to seek local support following their weekend.

## How do you prepare?

“We have adequate handouts. We decide who will start and what each one will cover. The presentations are casual, sharing what the program has meant for us, and how it can enhance the clergy’s ministry to their congregations. We are well received.

## What do you suggest for teams that want to try this?

“Just do it! Response to our mailed information alone had not been effective. Meeting the clergy in person with the story of our ministry and showing how it can enhance *their* ministry is a win-win situation.

“It costs us nothing but a few brochures and our donated time and mileage. We gain the partnership of our clergy and expect this will result in increased weekend participation, and in healing and renewed hope for those who grieve.”