



UK National Marriage - Evening for Couples

Suggested days for the event: As it's designed to be a special evening for couples to forget about the busyness of the week and focus on each other, we'd suggest the Friday or the Saturday of Marriage Week. However, it can be held on any evening during the week.

Purpose: An evening for couples to spend time with each other to invest in their relationship.

Format: Members of the church or community group to provide a meal for couples attending and encourage them to engage with the theme of UK National Marriage Week. Please see the website for specific content for married and unmarried couples.

Who: All couples from the community group/church and those that are connected through affiliated groups such as parent and toddler groups, youth and children's clubs, homework clubs, CAP, Foodbank etc. Both married and unmarried couples who want to invest in their relationship to be invited (as described in the format). By inviting everyone, the church or community group has an opportunity to demonstrate the value they place on investing in others in the same way that couples are being invited to invest in their own relationship.

To do list:

1. With plenty of notice prior to the evening, ensure you have sent out invitations to couples and promoted the event at the various church/community groups offered to all in the local community. This would need to be a ticketed event so that you know how many you are catering for.
2. Decide where you will hold the event and how many people you are able to cater for. Ask for volunteers to help organise the evening.
3. You will need a team of people within your church or group to provide food. This can either be cooked/prepared by church/group members, or you can arrange for catering. This can be as simple as buffet or a sit-down meal.
4. Arrange the room that allows the best opportunity for each couple to talk comfortably with each other. If you have shared tables, you can remind couples that they will be focussing on their partners and not the whole table!
5. Provide information about this year's theme.

Arrival:

- Couples are greeted and offered a drink – this could be a relaxed start with couples mingling together before they sit down at their tables.
- Once everyone has arrived, a short introduction from the facilitator about the evening, this year's Marriage Week theme and the importance of caring for your relationship.
- Suggested additional activity: Prearrange for a married couple to share a story about their personal experience of marriage. Have fun with this but also use stories of overcoming and dealing with challenges within their marriage to give a sense of reality and encourage couples. Demonstrate the value of a committed marriage and encourage listening couples to keep caring for their own relationship.
- Food is then served, either a buffet or food is brought to the tables.
- Encourage couples to use this year's web resources – provide an information card with links to the key resources to be accessed using a mobile phone. For those without phones, print some of the resources, blogs and key messages and encourage couples to celebrate what is going well and to consider how they might grow as a couple. This is intended to be a relaxed atmosphere which fosters openness and celebration.
- At the end of the evening, if you currently run any pre-marriage/marriage and relationship courses, you can let couples know about them or direct them to the ones on our website. Remind couples that these courses are for all couples who want to improve their relationship – whether the relationship is going brilliantly or when there are issues.
- Social media opportunity: Ask couples with social media accounts to join in with the social media campaign by taking selfies of themselves and sharing on a social media platform and using #marriageweek #foreverconversation. As a church, please also share pictures from the evening on social media using #marriageweek and any other hashtags relevant to the theme.
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N.B. For Churches: If you have been running the prayer room with prayer stations at your church (see other Marriage Week resources), you could encourage couples to visit before the end of the evening and invite them to the Sunday community 'wedding feast' which is for families and people of all ages to join in with.