



UK National Marriage Week

Community meal: Wedding feast

Suggested days/times for the meal:

1. Sunday lunchtime of Marriage Week. For churches, we suggest this could follow your Sunday morning service.
2. On the Saturday of Marriage Week, a breakfast, lunch or early evening meal.
3. A mid-week early meal to coincide with a community club or activity that is already taking place within your church or community group.

Purpose: To be inclusive of all within your community and acknowledging that marriage and family are important to us all. Specific to churches, this wedding feast is an opportunity to celebrate that the church is the bride of Christ and all are invited to his banquet and to reflect on the value of marriage for the entire community. To have fun together!

Format: Members of the church/community group to provide a celebratory 'wedding feast' for all in their community. This can be done as a stand-alone event or to follow on from the Marriage Week prayer stations event (see separate resource).

Who: Church families, local families, those that attend church and community groups such as parent and toddler groups, youth and children's clubs, homework clubs, CAP, Foodbank etc.

To do list:

1. Gather together a team of volunteers to organise the event.
2. With plenty of notice prior to the event, ensure you have invited the church congregation/all members of your community group (reminding them that this is for everyone to take part) and have invited the local families, individuals, widowed etc., that you're church or community group are in contact with to share in the Wedding Feast during Marriage Week.
3. Decide where you will hold the event, ensuring it's large enough for your Wedding Feast.

4. Ask your 'wedding guests' to sign-up to come so you know roughly how many you're catering for. You'll inevitably get some extras but somehow, there's always enough food on a buffet table!
5. You will need a team of people within your church/community group to organise the catering. We would suggest that you make this a bring-and-share meal or a buffet style meal that is cooked/prepared by a team of church/group members.
6. Don't forget to provide drinks too. You might wish to provide additional drinks for a 'Wedding Toast'.
7. You may also wish to provide a 'Wedding Cake'. This doesn't have to be an expensive cake, instead some homemade cakes that can be enjoyed as part of the celebration.
8. Ensure you have enough tables and chairs for the event.
9. There is a selection of resources for download or to order on our website to make your 'wedding feast' an exciting, party atmosphere and celebration.

Arrival:

- Have a welcome team ready at the door when people arrive. Have some toys, games etc., available to engage the children.
- Before your 'wedding guests' eat, we suggest a short welcome, explaining briefly why Marriage Week is important for all in the community. Please remember that you'll have guests of all ages. We suggest you reflect on the marriage week theme and the importance of belonging within your community. This should be a short welcome talk as everyone is bound to be thinking about lunch!
- Open the buffet.
- During the meal: Wedding speeches and a wedding toast! Ask people to share a story about their experience of the prayer stations or other events that have taken place during the week. Then follow this with Wedding Cake (as described above). Wedding cakes are a great photo opportunity and we'd love you to share some pictures on Social media (see below).
- At the end of the meal, depending on the time of day, your Wedding Feast activities could include music and dancing for a party atmosphere!
- Social media opportunity. Ask those with social media accounts to join in with the social media campaign by taking selfies of themselves (see downloadable resources for a selfie frame) and sharing on a social media platform using #marriageweek and the relevant hashtags for this year's theme. As a church, please also share pictures from the event on social media using #marriageweek

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 this space before the end of the feast.