



February 7-14
National Marriage Week USA
Let's Strengthen Marriage

www.NationalMarriageWeekUSA.org

*Financial Stability
Better Health
Less Troubled Kids
Greater Happiness*

EAT, TALK, and PLAY!

For National Marriage Week USA

Take the couples' challenge to Eat, Talk, and Play together!



In our busy lives today, all too often we don't make time for the most basic of social functions – eating together! So this National Marriage Week USA, why not make the time to sit down together and share a meal for two?? If you can make the time, why not share the preparation – and the clearing up! If you haven't got time to cook, how about a take-away, or a romantic meal at a local restaurant. Take time to savour the sights, smells and flavours of a great meal together.



What does your daily communication as a couple consist of? Organizing the family and home, questions about the kids, what needs to go on the shopping list? Or perhaps some of the big decisions of life – whether to move house, what new car to buy, your health or ailments? When was the last time you sat down and just talked about “you” – the challenges of life, what's motivating you, what's dragging you down, how it feels to be you – or perhaps your hopes and dreams for your future together? Make some time this week to sit down together just to “talk”!



When we first fall in love life always seems to be full of fun – but as the years go by, sometimes we forget to play together! This week, why not make some time to do something together you both enjoy. It could be as simple as going for a walk, watching a movie together, or spending an evening in your local pub. Or of course you could do something adventurous – go para-gliding or bungee jumping! Or perhaps, you could just curl up together in front of a fire, and read stories to each other. Whatever it is, try and find something you can both take part in, and which will remind you of the fun times in your relationship!



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Still short of ideas – see the guide to creating fun-filled dates on the following pages.

Fun and Friendship for Over-Worked Couples

When both of you live busy lives, it's hard to find the time to do special things together as a couple. But one of the best ways to safeguard your marriage is to make sure you're both having fun together.

Even though you're busy you can still take the time to rediscover each other as friends and playmates!

Turn off the TV and talk, share your dreams and hopes, and help each other to make those dreams come true. Laugh together about the funny things that happen each day, share a joke, read funny stories from the Internet together, or watch a good sitcom. Laughter is healing and refreshing and helps to carry us through the irritations and hurts of life.

With a little time and thought you can begin to put some of the fun of dating back into your marriage.



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For evenings in:

- Choose a menu together and cook a meal for two at home. Why not cook an Indian meal, and serve it wearing an improvised sari, or a Japanese meal, to eat sitting on floor cushions around a low table. Find some music to suit the culture, and enjoy the evening. If cooking's too much for you, order a takeaway.
- Compile a list of videos you'd both like to see together, so you know which ones to hire when you have the opportunity. Don't forget the popcorn!
- Play your favorite childhood board-games.
- Write love notes to each other and leave them around your home for each other to discover
- Surf the net together, for ideas for your next outing, or holiday.
- Find or buy some crayons and cartridge paper and have a go at drawing each other's portrait. Or buy some child's modelling clay and try to sculpt a model of each other's head.
- Find an old piece of furniture that needs a face-lift and re model it together, or buy some unfinished wood furniture and give it a personalized touch together. Sign and date your creation.
- Share five special memories you each have about your relationship and five special hopes or plans for the future.
- Borrow a book about massage from the library and learn how to give each other a massage with some of the fragrant aromatherapy oils you can buy.
- Make a "love-making pact" with each other, committing you to making love with each other every night for the week – and watch the impact on the rest of the year!
- Buy a book (or DVD) on strengthening your marriage and read (or watch) it together this week.
- Find a modern Bible and read the Song of Solomon to each other. You may be surprised at what you find!





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Ideas for creative dates:

- Pick up a book of local walks and choose a walk where you've never been before.
- Take a day course together and learn how to make stained glass, watercolor paintings, willow baskets, fix car engines, or whatever.
- Allow each person the same budget to find a wearable outfit from charity/goodwill shops. Wear your new outfits when you go out to lunch together, choosing a restaurant appropriate to your clothes.
- Eat each course of a meal in a different café or restaurant.
- Meet in a park, with a packed lunch to share, and pretend you've never met before. Feed the ducks together and sit on the swings.
- Visit a Cathedral together and ask for the children's guide to the building. These often give you lots of interesting details to look out for, and unusual facts about the building. Stay for evensong, for a peaceful and ethereal experience. Often you can have a meal in the Cathedral café, or close by.
- Go to a place where there are street entertainers and enjoy watching their antics.
- Try a new kind of restaurant that you've never tried before such as Thai, Cantonese, Tuscany, Vegetarian, etc.
- Go to a spa and enjoy having a sauna and Jacuzzi together.
- Visit a card shop and read the funny cards together, then each choose a card you'd like to give the other person. You can read them in the shop and leave them there, or buy them and take them home.
- Find a boat to hire for an hour or two, and take a picnic with you and a book of love poetry, or a humorous book about marriage.
- Learn to ice-skate together, try go-karting, or buy a simple kite and try flying it together.
- Find a free concert to attend, or special evenings at museums.



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Planning Fun Together:

- Think about the things you did together for fun before you were married.
- Think about the things that you always wanted to do, but never had the time or the opportunity to try.
- Each write a list of ten places you'd like to go, or things you'd like to do on a date together. Swap lists and see what you've each written. Take it in turns to choose a date from your spouse's list. Keep adding new ideas to the lists.
- Do all you can to make the occasion enjoyable, even if it's not the sort of thing you'd normally do. Focus on your spouse's enjoyment and find little ways to add delight and surprises to the experience, such as secretly buying them a special souvenir that they said they liked, or finding a new place to eat lunch, or meeting them with a bunch of flowers.
- At the end of each date, make sure you know when and where the next date will be. Looking forward to something is half the fun!
- Have a list of fun things to do at home too, for those times when you don't feel like going out, or when you can't get a babysitter.
- Keep your ideas for fun times together written in a note-book so that you're never short of new ways to have fun!



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