

# **The A-Z of Marriage Ideas**

## **Putting the Tingle back into Togetherness!**

The more effort you put into your marriage, the better it will become. God wants the best for your marriage. He wants you both to be happy and enjoy the gift of marriage He's given you.

No one in the whole world has been given the task of loving your partner more than you have. What can you do to show them how much God loves them through you.

### **A – Acceptance**

Accept your husband or wife just as they are. Acceptance is one of the most important gifts you can give your spouse. List their good qualities and verbally appreciate your spouse for those characteristics. Let them know how much you appreciate the many things they do for you, often things you may have taken for granted.

### **B – Books**

Choose a Christian book that will enhance your marriage from the ABC, or the relationships section of a Christian bookshop. Buy two copies and read each chapter separately, then meet up and share what you found most helpful in the chapter. When you've finished the books, pass them onto another couple!

### **C – Create**

Create something together. Buy a kit you can work on together, even if it's just flat-pack furniture that needs assembling and painting, or a second hand table that needs some attention. Plant a flower garden, or cook a meal together. There's a wonderful bond in working on a project together.

### **D – Dreams**

What are your dreams and hopes for your relationship, or for the future? What would you really like to do if only you could? Where would you like to go? Share your dreams, then ask yourself what you can do towards making your spouse's dreams come true?

### **E – Explore**

Explore the Bible together. Read a passage together and talk about it. Share your ideas and inspirations. Keep a notebook and write down your discoveries as you study together.

### **F – Fun**

Do you remember when you last had fun together? Each of you writes down ten fun or crazy things you would like to do, and then you both swap lists. Take it in turns to choose one thing from your spouse's list and having fun together. It doesn't have to cost! Remember how much fun it was kicking leaves in the autumn, or go to a card shop and choose a funny card for each other to read, and put back on the shelf! Why not plan a secret surprise by baking cakes or buying groceries for a needy family, leaving them on the doorstep and running away before they see you!

### G – Goals

Have goals for your marriage. Together, choose two goals for the month, two goals for the next six months and two more goals to be achieved by the end of the year. The goals could be about praying together more often, attending a marriage enrichment event once a year, or having one special evening out together each month.

### H – Hugs

Hug each other! Psychologists suggest that we need ten hugs a day for good emotional health! Make sure your spouse says healthy!

### I – Ice cream

Share your favourite ice cream together, or an exotic fruit treat. Eat it slowly and see how long you can make it last. Or feed each other!

### J – Joy

Put the Joy back into your life together! Celebrate the good things God's done for you both individually and as a couple. Tell each other the happiest moment of your day. Share funny stories, cartoons and jokes. Look for humorous books in the Christian bookshop, and read them together. Or read the Proverbs together, especially in a modern translation!

### K – Kites

Fly a kite together – choose an easy style and find a breezy hill with no trees or overhead cables!

### L – Listen

One of the most important things a couple can do is to learn how to listen to each other. Learn to concentrate on what your spouse is saying, and then check with them that you've heard correctly, by reflecting back to them their ideas.

### M – Memories

Make a scrapbook of your favourite memories together. Pressed flowers from country walks, tickets from concerts, menus and cards from restaurants, love notes, photos, etc and create a lovely book together.

### N – Notes

Send little notes to each other, especially when you're both busy. Leave messages on answer-phones, text each other with an encouraging Bible text, write a message on a mirror with a wipe-off pen, or tuck a note into a lunchbox, briefcase, or car.

### O – Oil

Spend half an hour together and give each other a back rub with some fragrant aromatherapy massage oil.

### P – Picnic

Go on a picnic together. Choose foods that are a treat, or just pick up a take-away meal and find a park bench. If it's too cold, lay out a rug in your living room and picnic at home!

#### R – Read

Read the Song of Solomon to each other. Let the lovers' physical enthusiasm light your God-given passion for each other's bodies!

#### S – Stars

Wrap up warmly and step outside to watch the stars for a few minutes together. Choose a star or constellation and make it your own, as a couple. Let it remind you of the greatness of God and His love for you both.

#### T – Thanks

Choose an attractive 'thank you' card and send it to your spouse. List twenty things they do for you for which you are truly grateful, but perhaps never had the chance to say so properly.

#### U – Unusual

Find unusual ways to say 'I love you.' Hunt out tiny and unusual gifts in card-shops, sales, car-boots and antique shops. Or make your own unique gift! One husband carved a heart out of olive wood for his wife.

#### V – Volunteer

Volunteer time together in a ministry, such as helping with a soup kitchen, baby-sitting for single-parents, visiting the housebound, or running a marriage support group for couples in your home.

#### W – Work

Find a way to let your spouse know how much you love them when they're at work! Hide a card in their briefcase, phone them, fax them, e-mail them, or send a bouquet of flowers to their workplace! Verbally appreciate the contribution they make to support the family by working – even if the wages are not great.

#### X – Kiss

Try having one ten-second kiss each day! Maybe a kiss a day helps you work, rest and play!

#### Y – You

You are the best person in the world to show your spouse how much God loves them! Make sure they're never in any doubt about your love or God's!

#### Z – ZZZZZzzzzzzzzzz

Make sure you both get plenty of sleep! Tiredness and stress leads to irritability. Lie in from time to time, and don't feel guilty. Commit to helping each other get to bed at a reasonable time, by asking each other how you can help them each evening.

Karen and Bernie Holford.