

O Magnify the Lord

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Special. That's what every bride wants her wedding to be. A special day following a special time of anticipation and signifying the beginning of a special new life. Amid parties, showers, and festivities that may or may not be taking place, friends can do something for a bride to make her engagement and wedding even more special by planning a special presentation of the Bible for the bride-to-be and her fiancé. This can be an occasion for friends to show support of the couple as they establish their Christian home as well as challenge the couple to find ways for their marriage to be an active witness for Christ.

But such an expression of love and interest will take planning. Here are some guidelines:

Talk with the couple to find a convenient time and place for a simple presentation ceremony. You may prefer to do it in connection with a meeting in your home or at church, or you may be able to schedule it during a Sunday or Wednesday night worship service.

Extend a special invitation to family and friends of the couple. Feel free to also invite anyone else you would like to come, including your pastor.

Buy a Bible for the couple. If you follow the suggestions on these pages, you will be asking the couple to give the Bible away to a non-Christian who visits them some day. Keep this in mind as you purchase a Bible. Baptist Book Stores as well as other Christian bookstores usually have large selections of Bibles.

Consider getting a *Good News Bible*, Today's English Version. You may want to order this from the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

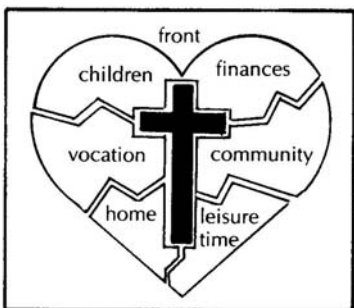
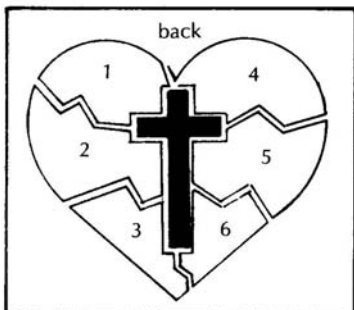
You may want to make simple printed programs. If so, include the names of the bride and groom, names of their immediate family members, the order of service, and words to the hymn, "To God Be the Glory." On the cover draw or paint the Christogram, the sign of marriage in Christ shown on this page. The ancient Greek letters, *chi* (ki) and *rho* (ro) which symbolize Christ, have been formed into a cross. The intertwined wedding rings, symbolizing never-ending love,

complete the sign of marriage in Christ. Include an explanation of the meaning of the Christogram in the program.



Place a table at the front of the room. Use tablecloth, flowers, and candles to make an attractive arrangement. Place the Bible to be given to the couple on the table.

Before the occasion, make a heart puzzle which people with speaking parts will put together as they take their turns. Draw a large heart, 24 to 30 inches across, on a piece of white poster board. Cut it out. You may want to cover it with white felt or other fabric. Draw a large cross in the center, then divide the remainder of the heart into six pieces. See examples for guidance. Cut the pieces apart, and number them on the backs. Label the fronts of the pieces with these words: (1) *home*, (2) *community*, (3) *leisure time*, (4) *finances*, (5) *vocation*, (6) *children*. Do not write anything on the cross-shaped piece. Cover it with a different color material so it will show up.



On another piece of poster board, trace the heart pieces lightly. Stand this poster board on an easel near the focal table. Lay the puzzle pieces nearby, face down, with tape on the backs, so each speaker can place her piece on the board when her turn comes.

Ask someone to sing "Make Us One" from *Sing 'n' Celebrate II*.^{*} Assign the nine speaking parts.

Program

Leader: What a beautiful time when the Lord leads two people to join their lives together. How glorious to realize He has placed them in the same circle of activity and then has nurtured that relationship to maturity.

Today we share the joy of (bride) and (groom). This song is for them.

Soloist: (*Sing "Make Us One."*)

Leader: We read in Psalm 34:3 (KJV), "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Magnify the Lord together is a special privilege for Christian married couples. Let's look at some of the opportunities you, (bride) and (groom), will encounter in which you will be able to say to one another, "O magnify the Lord with me."

Woman 1: (*Attach first puzzle piece.*) You will be able to say, "O magnify the Lord with me," in life at home. No matter how much time is spent away from home, every person needs a place to call home. You will need to work together to make home a happy, comfortable place to be. Harmony will come as you allow your partner to be himself or herself. Offer understanding and patience. Home is the place for sharing troubles; it is also the place for dreaming dreams and rejoicing in success. At home, you have time to be friends.

The Christian home is a place where guests will see Christ. Occasions for entertaining can be occasions for ministering. Et the Lord make you aware of these opportunities as you magnify Him in your home.

Woman 2: (*Attach second puzzle piece.*) Many opportunities will come to say, "O magnify the Lord with me," in your community. Wherever your new life takes you, you may rest in the calming knowledge that your Lord goes with you. Through meeting your neighbors and participating in community activities, multiple opportunities for ministry will emerge. You join together in letting your home be a warm spot in the neighborhood, where all are welcome.

Woman 3: (*Attach third puzzle piece.*) You will also be able to say, "O magnify the Lord with me," in your leisure time. Jesus recognized the value of leisure time. When the disciples were so busy with the crowds that they didn't even have time to eat, Jesus said, "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while" (Mark 6:31 TEV).

When vacation time comes, how will you choose to spend it? What about your weekends and days off, and holidays? You have the privilege of using your leisure time wisely to meet the needs both of you will have. Find a quiet escape with time to just be together, or mingle with people you know. Get away from familiar surroundings, or spend valuable time at home. Rest and relax, or catch up on those things you've been wanting to do. Investigate various short-term or ongoing ministries through your church or one of the mission boards.

Woman 4: (*Attach fourth puzzle piece.*) How uncomplicated things become when you say, "O magnify the Lord with me, in handling finances. James 1:17 (TEV) tells us, "Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God."

When Christian standards determine values, spending is less a problem and more a witness. It's a joy to give God the first tenth of your money and then follow His leadership in spending the remaining nine-tenths.

Woman 5: (*Attach fifth puzzle piece.*) You will be able to encourage each other as you say, "O magnify the Lord with me," through your vocations. Everyone works. Some do it inside the home and some people do it outside the home. (Bride), you will be happy in taking an interest in (groom's) work. And (groom), you can have the same level of interest in (bride's) vocation. We encourage you to get to know one another's associates. Invite them into your home. Encourage each other as you magnify the Lord in your on-the-job witness.

Woman 6: (*Attach sixth puzzle piece.*) In the future you may say, "O magnify the Lord with me," as you raise children. What a precious privilege to have children entrusted to you. They will learn attitudes from you, meet their Heavenly Father through you, and follow your example in trusting and loving that Heavenly Father.

As you ask God for the wisdom and insight so necessary to help children grow, He will give it to you and will help you raise your children.

Leader: Now the heart is complete-except for one very important thing. (Place cross in center of heart.) Just as this cross is at the very center of this heart, so Christ wants to be at the center of your hearts and lives. Christ is what makes the Christian marriage Christian. Let the cross touch all these other areas of your new life, and see how orderly it will be. Spend time with the Lord each day, both individually and together. Keep your church membership current, and take an

active part. As Proverbs 3:6 (KJV) says, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Woman 7: We want to present you, (bride and groom), with this copy of God's Word. It contains truths and hopes that will help direct your path. We pledge ourselves to pray for you, that you will lean on the Father's strong hand. We pray you will trust His guidance in making decisions and draw on His wealth of resources for meeting your needs.

Woman 8: This Bible has another special purpose. We give it to you to keep until the day when someone comes to your home who needs Christ's love and saving grace. We would like for you to give this Bible to that person then. You may give it boldly and prayerfully, with a pledge to continue to encourage and pray for its new owner. As you do this, you will magnify the Lord.

Pastor: *(Lead in prayer for the couple.)*

Everyone present: *(Sing "To God Be the Glory.")*

*Available through Baptist Book Store.