

Why Pay the Earth for Your Wedding?



£14,000 is said to be the average cost of a wedding and honeymoon!

No wonder some families get into debt problems as a result. Other couples make the mistake of beginning to live together without getting to know each other well, until they have saved up enough. Research has shown that it is best not to live together until marriage.

However, a wedding need not be anything like so expensive. One couple wanted to invite as many people as possible, so they decided to take on the challenge of seeing how many costs could be cut, to show that it is possible.

They began by circulating their friends with a list of things they needed for the wedding, reception and honeymoon. They asked if people would give, lend or make items to save them having to spend money on them.

Here is their list of how they cut the cost:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Solution</i>
Engagement ring	<i>Used rings already in the family</i>
Wedding rings	<i>Used rings already in the family</i>
Engagement party	<i>Fun with friends & family at low cost</i>
Wedding dress	<i>Borrowed from a friend</i>
Headdress, veil & shoes	<i>Borrowed from a friend</i>
Wedding cake	<i>Made by two friends</i>
Reception catering	<i>Organised "bring & share" meal</i>
Reception venue	<i>Church hall, gave donation to church</i>
Evening wedding party	<i>Friend called Scottish dancing, others provided food</i>
Drinks	<i>Friends provided</i>
Flowers	<i>Friends donated from gardens</i>
Going away outfit	<i>Used what she already had</i>
Lingerie	<i>Used what she already had</i>
Bridesmaid/pageboy outfits	<i>Wore what they already had</i>
Groom's attire	<i>Used his "interview suit"</i>
Photographs	<i>Taken by friends</i>
Video	<i>Taken by a friend</i>

Honeymoon	<i>Family offered house while away</i>
Make-up and skincare	<i>Didn't use any</i>
Invitations/stationery	<i>Produced their own</i>
Other	<i>There were a few unavoidable expenses but they only amounted to a few hundred pounds.</i>

Another couple had a happy reception with just a cake and glasses of sparkling wine or perry, which can be a tenth of the cost of champagne. Yet another served their guests with top class fish and chips.

Finding an empty home in a scenic area for the honeymoon could be one of the harder things to achieve. If necessary the home could be found first and then the wedding date fixed. But the first couple above had four offers!

Because it was all done with warmth and a sense of humour, many of their guests commented on what a unique and special occasion the wedding was. One said, "Usually I don't really enjoy weddings as they are all the same but this one was really different". Another wrote, "It's been a day we'll remember and talk about for a very long time". The most frequent comment was, "It's the best wedding I've ever been to!"

With thanks to David and Debbie Hawker for permission to tell their story and reproduce their list, and to Susan Cuthbert, a freelance writer, who first wrote it up for the "Christian Herald".

Preparing for marriage is even more important than preparing for the wedding. It has been said that if couples took as long preparing for marriage as they take preparing for the wedding day, there would be many more happy marriages! How can you prepare for marriage? Read on.....

Doing a **pre-marriage questionnaire** can really help you learn about each other. This can be arranged cheaply through PREPARE, see their website: www.prepare-enrich.co.uk They will put you in touch with somebody near you, with whom you could do a questionnaire and learn more about each other, about each other's expectations and hopes for the future. Do not miss the opportunity, however well you think you know each other already.

Another good way of preparing is to use the Holy Trinity Brompton Marriage Preparation Course, which includes its own questionnaire. Further details are on their website www.relationshipcentral.org/marriage-preparation-course Both PREPARE and The Marriage Preparation Course are a great investment for a lifelong marriage, and cost much less than the flowers at the average wedding!