

Do-It-Yourself Marriage Retreat

A Do-It-Yourself Marriage Retreat

General Idea

A time to survey our marriage. The purpose of these questions is a "check-in" with each other to see how our marriage is doing.

When and How?

There are really two ways in which you can get the questions answered:

1. Set 1-2 days aside to get away with your wife, have fun, relax, enjoy one another and reflect on the past blessings and health of your relationship. The goal is to relax, rest, relate, plan, and pray.
2. When a weekend away is not possible, have a series of dinner dates to go through a few questions at a time. You spread out the retreat over time and develop a good habit of asking each other heart-probing questions.

What would a 1-2 day retreat look like?

You get away from your house, children, job and other responsibilities for at least an overnight retreat.

After Breakfast

After your breakfast and quiet time, go off on your own and reflect for an hour on the questions related to Section 1. Come back and discuss your answers.

Take a break for lunch.

After Lunch

After lunch, discuss Section 2.

Take a break (run, enjoy each other).

Over Dinner

Discuss Section 3 together.

For Each Section

Praying before and after each section is a great idea to invite the spirit as you discuss the different topics.

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If you find that you are getting "stuck" on one subject, make note of the problem area and plan to come back to this subject later. If you find that you can't resolve a particular issue, take some time to pray about it and then revisit the section.

Session 1: The Past and our Heavenly Father of Providence

Remember the past year

- Note any highlights (chronological and social), including high points and low points. Where you can, be sure to connect events directly or indirectly to your marriage (i.e., "I graduated law school in December. I know that this has created more free time for me to spend with you and the kids.")
- Reflect on what the events of the past year have taught you about Heavenly Father, yourself, your spouse, etc.
- Reflect on and list at least three ways you can give thanks to Heavenly Father for blessings of the past year.

Session 2: Personal Discipleship and Relationship with one another

Personal Discipleship, Spiritual Life, and Spousal Roles

- In general, how are you doing spiritually?
- How has your love for Heavenly Father grown?
- Has your love for others grown? If so, how?
- How is your scripture study and prayer time going?
- What are you reading and learning in your quiet times right now?
- What do you want to accomplish in your spiritual life in this upcoming year?
- Has your life been direct by the scriptures?
- Is there an area of spiritual growth that you would like to develop? (fasting, scripture memorization, etc.)
- What can I do to help you grow spiritually?
- Any sins you are still grieving over?
- Name one sin that you continue to struggle with.
 - What could I do to help you with this struggle?
 - Name one sin you see that I continue to struggle with.
 - What would you encourage me to do to deal with struggle?
 - Is there some way that you can help me with this struggle?
- What would indicate to you that I really desire to be more Christ-like?
- Name one way that my leadership has strengthened our marriage.
- What could I do to lead better in our marriage?
- Name one way that we could make our marriage more Christ-like.
- Do we want to do anything together spiritually (e.g., read scripture, pray together, read a book, memorize scripture together, etc.)?

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- In ten years where do you hope to be spiritually?
- In ten years where do you think I should be spiritually?

Communication

- In general, how are we doing with our communication?
- Do we communicate as directed by the scriptures?
 - Have we been quick to listen and slow to speak (Jas 1:19)?
 - Have we cultivated the habit of giving and receiving Christ-like encouragement (Eph 4:29) and Christ-like criticism (Pr 24:26)?
 - Do we use a gracious and loving tone when we speak to each other (Prov 15:1)?
 - Are we quick to forgive each other (Eph 4:32; Isa 43:25)?
- What communication habits do we have that intentionally push each other's buttons?
- Do either of us tend to:
 - Interrupt our spouse (Prov 18:13)?
 - Not pay attention when our spouse speaks to us (Prov 18:2)?
 - Judge our spouse (1 Cor 4:5)?
 - Make sweeping generalizations (Eph 4:25)?
 - Shift blame (Gen 3:12)?
 - Be passive about communicating (Eccl 3:7)?
 - Blow up in the middle of a conversation (Ps 4:4)?
 - Dig up past problems as a way to hurt our spouse (1 Cor 13:5)?
 - Speak harshly, scold, or put-down our spouse (Jas 4:11)?

Emotional Support

- How are you doing emotionally?
- Do you feel more like a wife than a mother or anything else? (vice versa for husband)
- Name one way I serve you that brings you great joy.
- Are there specific ways that I can serve that I am not already doing?
- What could I do to cause you to feel more loved?
- What could I do to cause you to feel more respected?
- What could I do to cause you to feel more understood?
- What could I do to cause you to feel more secure?
- Is there anything else we can do together to ensure that we are relating to each another?

Sexual & Physical

- How's our sex life?
- Are we having sex regularly?
- Is there anything you want to encourage, discourage, change, adapt, or keep the same in our sex life?
- Have I acted selfishly in our sexual life?
- Physically, what do we want to commit to in terms of health and exercise?
- Are we happy with the way we're eating?

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- What foods/drinks do we want to encourage and discourage in our house?

Session 3: Work/Family/Church Balance

Work

- Are we happy with my current work schedule?
- How are things going at home?
- How does the wife feel about her responsibilities as a homemaker?
 - Overwhelmed?
 - Frustrated?
 - Content?
 - Organized?
 - Somewhere in-between?
- How can we adjust things to make our home-life run more smoothly?
- How can I (the husband) serve and support you (the wife) in our home?
- Do we want to make a schedule to manage tasks and responsibilities?

Children

- Name one thing about each of our children that brings you joy.
- What is each of our kids struggling with? What can we do to help them through these struggles?
- Are we prepared for the next stage of development? (For example, if our son is almost done learning the alphabet, are we already thinking about how to teach him phonics?)
- In general, how are we doing raising our children?
- What can we do to improve our parenting?
- What do we want to keep the same and what do we want to change in order to guide our kids spiritually?
- What are our specific objectives/goals for the next 6 months or year?
- What are our long-term goals for our children?
- The husband asks the wife: Have I shown Christ-like leadership in the area of parenting? Or, have I fallen short on my leadership in this area?
- Is the father getting to spend enough time with each of the children?
- In what ways is mother discouraged and encouraged about the children?
- Do we have a good roster of babysitters that we trust?
 - What do we want them to do with the children when they are babysitting?
- How do we portray church to our children?
 - Do we speak positively or negatively about the church in front of the kids?

Family

- How has your love for our family grown?
- How are we as a family?

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- Are we happy with family nights and family time together?
- How are we doing with our family scripture study and prayer?
- What can we do to improve our time in scripture study and prayer?
- How can we use Sunday afternoons and evenings?
- How do we want to think about date night?
 - When should it be?
 - What types of things would we like to talk about to ensure that we are growing together?
- Is there something new we might do together that would bring greater joy to our marriage or family?

Friendships and Extended Family

- What specific relationships would you like to intentionally to cultivate?
- Any friendships you want to cultivate?
- How is our relationship with our families?
 - Grandparents?
 - Siblings?
 - Nieces & Nephews?
 - In-laws?
- What stressors does our extended family bring upon us?
 - Are we coping with these stressors in a Christ-like way?
 - Are we planning any trips to see extended family this year?
- How can we bring do missionary work with our family?

Gospel and Church

- What missionary did you participate in this past year?
- How can I be more supportive of your missionary work?
- How can we share the gospel as a couple?
- What should be our missionary goals for this upcoming year?
- Do you enjoy being involved with missionary work?
 - If so, name one thing about missionary work that currently makes your happy.
- Name one thing that would increase your enjoyment of church?
- How can we support our church leaders?

Finances

- What are our debts?
- What are our monthly liabilities?
- What is our income?
- Where and to whom do we want to give our money?
 - Church?
 - Missionaries?
 - Charities?

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- What is our budget (i.e., spending priorities and goals for the year)?
- What are our savings goals and what do we need to do to implement them?
- How do we want to manage our finances on an ongoing basis?
 - How should we manage money together?
 - What software should we use?

Fun & Recreation

- Are there any hobbies you want to cultivate?
- Are there cultural outings and events you would like to do this year?
- When/where do we want to take a family vacation(s)?
- Do we want to plan any day trips away this year?
 - Where?
- What about any one-nighters just the two of us?

Future

- The husband asks the wife: Name one thing I can do that would cause you to feel more confident in our future direction.
- What are our goals for the next year?
 - As parents?
 - As husband and wife?
 - Financially?
 - Spiritually?

Wrap-Up

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate our marriage?
- Keeping in mind on everything we have talked about, how can we make our marriage a 10?
- Is there anything else that we should discuss?