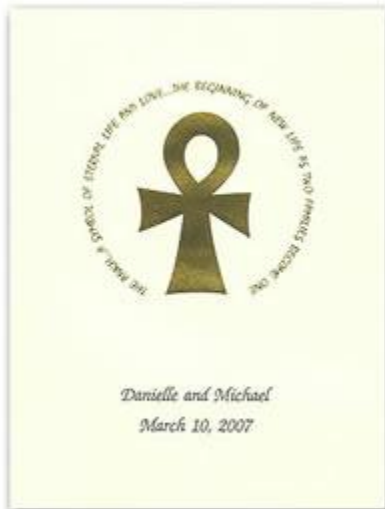


Weddings with Afrocentric Flair

By: Donchell Johnson

If marriage is in your future, why not honor your ancestors and incorporate a bit of heritage along with your traditional wedding ideas. The African American wedding should truly be a celebration of commitment and the joining of families by celebrating the couple's roots.

There are many special touches you can add to your wedding to give it an afrocentric flair. Start off by sending beautiful wedding invitations with African symbols of love. Ask guests to join you and your family in a celebration that embraces the sanctity of marriage, the spirit of family and the pride of ancestry.



This will put guests on notice that they are about to experience an afrocentric event.



At the ceremony, inspiring poems by African American poets like, Maya Angelou can be read. African drums can be played while guests are arriving or you can have a choir sing an African spiritual. Wedding attire can be adored with gold lace, kente cloth, or ethnic fabrics.

Cowrie shells can also be used as ornamentation. These shells symbolize purification, beauty, and power.

Don't forget to "jump the broom!" This is the most popular afrocentric addition to a couple's wedding ceremony. Jumping the broom originated during the time of slavery in America, slaves could not marry legally. As a result, they created their own rituals to honor their unions. The broom is a symbol of sweeping away the old and welcoming a new beginning. The hop the couple takes over the broom represents the leap of faith they take when starting a new life

together. African American couples do this at the conclusion of their wedding ceremony.



There is also a Yoruban ritual where the bride and groom taste four flavors that represent different emotions within a relationship. The four flavors typically used are sour (lemon), bitter (vinegar), hot (cayenne), and sweet (honey). By tasting each of the flavors, the couple symbolically demonstrates that they will be able to get through the hard times in life and enjoy the sweetness of marriage. Include the history of this ritual in your wedding program or having someone read the history during the ceremony.

Regardless of what you decide to incorporate into your wedding, be mindful that this day will manifest the blending of two families. What better way to start your lives together than to include some afrocentric flair!





Product Information: All wedding photos are from the Therez Fleetwood Bridal Collection, <http://www.therezfleetwood.com>. Ankh inspired invitation available at <http://www.invitationconsultants.com>.

About the Author: Donchell Johnson is the Owner of ForBlackWeddings.com, www.forblackweddings.com; and New Jersey Wedding Guide, www.njwedguide.com. Both are online wedding directory and planners.