

## Specialty Showers

Sometimes a unique wedding situation calls for a unique shower. For instance, what do you do if this is the bride's second wedding? Or her third? What are the shower 'rules' for that? How do you work it if the bride lives in London/Hawaii/clear across the country and won't be returning home until a few days before the wedding...and then she and her groom will be flying back to their faraway home after the honeymoon? How would they ship all of her gifts there, and what would *that* cost them? What do you do about a pregnant bride, or the bride's six year-old daughter who really has her heart set on hosting a Barbie-themed party? If you've stepped into rather unconventional circumstances, you'll just have to arrange a rather unconventional shower! In this chapter, you'll learn about some of the 'specialty showers' that bend the old, starchy etiquette rules and still give the bride and groom the shower they'll love. If true love can overcome distance and limits and precedent, so too can this celebration!

### *When It's Not the Bride's First Time*

Forget the old-world concerns that holding a shower for a bride who's been married before is just a shameless plea for presents, or that a shower for a second-time bride 'just isn't done.' It sure is, and in grand style! The second-time bride can have any type of wedding she wants. She can wear white if she wants to. So why shouldn't she have a great bridal shower to celebrate her new marriage journey? Why should she, in

effect, be ‘punished’ for getting married too young or to some rat-weasel the first time, getting divorced (even amicably), or even being widowed? Thankfully the old stigmas are gone, and anyone who has a problem with it just doesn’t have to come to the party. Period. And they’ll miss a great time.

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You don’t have to play it down or be sedate about the party for this experienced bride. In fact, you can plan the shower like it’s her first. Because to her, this new life she’s creating with the partner she’s found is a whole new beginning to her, according to the person she’s grown and evolved into since the first time she walked down the aisle. Now, with her true love, she’s enjoying all of the firsts that matter to her.

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The encore bride isn’t the only bride who already has a house full of the usual ‘setting up your home’ appliances and gadgets that are usually bestowed at a shower. After all, today’s first-time bride may wait longer to get married, experiences career success and travel in her earlier days, and she too might have the entire collection of plates, utensils, martini glasses and kitchen ‘toys’ from Crate and Barrel already stocked in her cabinets. There’s no difference. So just toss the idea of ‘setting up a first home’ right out the window. It doesn’t apply all the time anymore, so it’s not a big, enormous deal for the second-time bride’s shower.

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Registering for gifts is important for any bride, but it can be moreso for the encore bride. Guests question what the couple really wants and needs, and they really do depend heavily on the items listed in a registry. They don’t want to make gift-mistakes and get a

duplicate item or something the couple would have to return. So, as hostess of the bridal shower, be sure to ask the second-time bride where she and her fiancé are registering.

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Here's where it gets interesting. Some encore marriage couples say, "We have everything we need, so we're not registering." Their reasons may vary. It may be that they do indeed have one or two of everything their home can hold, and they don't want or need any extra stuff. They also may not want to come across as asking for gifts. Or, as in the case of some couples, they think that if they don't register for gifts, their guests will give them checks and cash as their shower and wedding gifts. Whatever their intentions, it's a bad move. I know you can't tell the bride what to do, but you can encourage her to register *somewhere* to give their guests a way to select a gift. Just a suggestion might be in order, since the bride may not be aware of just which kinds of registries are out there, and that you can register for far more than china, silverware, and espresso machines. A simple mention that guests are asking about her registry might lead her to make a better choice all around.

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If the bride isn't fully aware of the kinds of registries out there, and of the wide variety of items available at the stores and catalogs out there, show her the list in the Resources of this book. She might check out some sites and decide to sign up for something unusual, something she'll be excited to have discovered now.

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Showers for the second-time bride can run the gamut from ultra-traditional to wacky, fun theme parties that are just perfectly *her*. In fact, many showers for second-

time brides do go the theme route, in a way that many second-timers enjoy more fully because they may have already done the traditional thing the first time. Now, they may enjoy their etiquette-bending freedom a bit more than a younger bride might, and they may even shudder at the idea of a traditional shower this time around. So, it's onto the theme shower section in Chapter 13 for you!

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It may be in the back of your mind that the bride will want a shower that's different from her first, and that thought may indeed be in the back of the bride's mind. It might be something she just doesn't want to talk about, especially if her first marriage ended in heartbreak or anger. Your intentions are pure gold, but I advise you *not to voice this particular concern* to the bride herself. You can't read her mind, obviously, even if you have good evidence that she's comparing somewhere in her subconscious. But too many brides and shower hostesses have written me with horror stories of upsetting the bride, her mother, the groom or the guests with any mention of, jokes about or reference to her first marriage. So just pretend it never happened. The bride may be doing the same. You can make the shower different than the first just in the planning. You don't need to call unnecessary attention to the ex-husband or bring her experience with him into the picture at all.

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Even if there are no hard feelings about the bride's first marriage – they may still be great friends right now! – and the bride herself is over it, blissfully well-adjusted and even likely to make good-natured jokes about it, it's still not a great idea to make that

first husband or that experience a part of the day. This shower is about the bride and her new husband-to-be. The day should be simply about them and their future.

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If you do wish to make the shower vastly different than the first, you can do that through a great theme, a unique location for the party, the menu style, the guest list, and the fun factor.

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A big trend in showers for the second-time bride is making them co-ed. That may be all the ‘difference’ you need, and it’s also a terrific way to include the groom and his buddies in the celebration. This opens up a whole new world of showers and makes the experience truly unique and appropriate.

### *Showers in a Box*

You would definitely throw a great shower for the bride...if she could only attend! Some brides are global, traveling all the time, living overseas, or living clear across the country. One shower hostess wrote to tell me about the bride who’s on a sailing expedition in Antarctica for a research grant! For whatever reason, she’s just not going to be in the area at all, or perhaps she’s coming into town just a few days before the wedding...and every available moment is already booked with fittings and last-minute sessions with her coordinator. In some instances, you just can’t pull off a party for the bride. So what do you do? Just forget about it? No way! It’s time for a Shower in a Box!

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The Shower in a Box is a party that comes to the bride, often as a surprise, and in the form of one giant parcel or a collection of cartons that contain all of the fun and exciting trappings of her shower. What's in the box is up to you and the bride's loved ones. In this section, you'll find lots of ideas for what to put in the box so that the bride receives the most unforgettable shipment of her life.

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It all starts off with a decision on how you'll put this together. Talk to the other bridesmaids and closest family members and friends of the bride to discuss this idea. See how everyone feels about it, and invite their suggestions.

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Don't be surprised if one or more people express concern over this idea. Many people are still tied to that old 'it's just a plea for gifts!' concept, and some might have a problem with the idea of telling guests to send a gift, but they themselves won't get any drinks or cake out of the deal. It's a valid point, but it's up to you and the bride's nearest and dearest to decide what's appropriate. It may be that just her closest family members and bridal party members will participate, so that the vast array of aunts, cousins, and family friends won't have to decide if this arrangement works for them.

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If you do decide to open the Shower in a Box 'invitation' to the general guest list that you *would* have had at a party, then send out an announcement that explains the deal. It might sound something like this...

*It's Bridal Shower time!*

*But Kelly is off in California earning her Masters degree  
And she'll barely make it home in time for her own wedding!*

*(Go get 'em, Kelly!)*

*So instead of planning a party she can't attend,*

*We're bringing the party to her...In a Box!*

*We're sending Kelly her own Bridal Shower*

*Via Fed Ex!*

*Balloons, streamers, an 'I'm the Bride' t-shirt...*

*It's all going right out to her as a big surprise from us!*

*If you'd like us to enclose a card, gift, or video greeting  
from you, we'll be happy to enclose it with our own collection.*

*We know Kelly's going to be surprised, touched, and elated!*

*Please contact Anne at (555) 428-7890 with your decision,*

*Or send anything you wish to give Kelly to this address...*

*(provide address)*

*If you'd like to send a non-fragile gift, Kelly is registered at Target*

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Look carefully at the announcement above. Notice I said '*if you'd like*' to participate. That gives the guests the option of sending or not sending a present.

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Notice I mentioned the options of sending a card or a video greeting. That too gives the recipient the option of just sending out a greeting card or a video 'hello' from

themselves or from an entire group of the bride's friends or colleagues. This too releases you from any accusations of making a shameless plea for gifts.

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The entire announcement is worded in such a way that it's all about doing something nice for the bride, and gives the recipients complete freedom in their decisions. So you've just conquered the issue of questionable tactics and still managed to organize a great bridal shower in a box.

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Another important message to mention: be sure to highlight, bold, or italic – or all three -- 'Non-Fragile' for any of the guests' potential gift choices. The collection boxes will be shipped quite some distance, so those Lalique candlesticks might not be the best choice.

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One word on the announcement you send...this kind is easy to print up yourself on your home computer, using party-themed stationery paper found at an office or paper supply store. For \$10-\$20, you can get the fun paper to print on, *plus* matching envelopes.

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Or...e-mail this announcement to everyone on the 'shower' invitation list. A great move is to provide a computer hyperlink to the bride's registry as well so that the guests can click right over to her gift wish-list.

[michelle: smaller sub-head for this?] *What Goes Into the Box?*

Imagine the bride's surprise when she opens her mystery arrival to find dozens of wrapped gifts, cards, and other party paraphernalia within her 'Shower in a Box.'

Imagine that great, big grin of hers as she enjoys the 'shower' she didn't think she'd ever have. You can make the gesture all the better (and maybe even start off the bride's tears of joy) by including in the box some or all of the following suggestions:

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Make it a special arrival. Decorate the outside of the shipping cartons with a printed 'Your Bridal Shower-in-a-Box!' or 'We Brought the Party to You!' Add some stickers, color the box, make it fun and playful so it's a real eye-catcher when the UPS guy drops it off at her place.

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Top off the box with a video message from you and the other shower hostesses and special friends of the bride, lifting your glasses in a toast to her, and explaining what the shower in a box is. Tell her you wish you could all celebrate together, but for now you've put together this little special something just for her. You'll take her out when you see her again.

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Have fun with this initial greeting video. Gather her friends and family to take part, or bring your camera along as you and the girls go out for a night on the town. Tape your message from the dance floor, have complete strangers toast her as well (including that *very* attractive bartender) and let a few of the most attractive men in the room tell her they're sorry they're not going to get a chance to know her.

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Or, get the girls together and sing a favorite song to the bride. You know the one....that song you all sing in the car on a road trip, or a reminder of the bride's big night at the karaoke club. Jenni from Oakland said that her bridesmaids re-enacted her slightly tipsy version of 'Sledgehammer,' completely off-key and just a bit off the tempo, just the way she did it, mimicking her very enthusiastic hand motions, also just the way she did it. It was hysterical, and Jenni loved the video intro to her shower in a box. She popped the tab on the tape and will keep it forever. "Oh yeah, I'm keeping this tape! As blackmail for when *they* run for political office," smiles Jenni.

\*

If the bride is far away on her own and hasn't seen the groom in a few weeks, let *him* be the one to say hello first (or last) on the videotape.

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If you know someone who can edit videotaped footage on his or her computer, adding titles and subtitles or musical backgrounds, special effects like black and white footage or sepia tones, then by all means ask for a little help making the video special. The tape will be a riot to the bride with the addition of humorous subtitles underneath the faces of the people sending her their best wishes.

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One couple's shower-in-a-box introduction tape included an hilarious segment where the videotape editor inserted 'thought bubbles' like on VH1's Pop-Up Video, showing the bride what each person was really thinking. The videotape creator knew the women well, so she was able to insert great thought bubbles about the groom, the wedding itself, and of course that very cute bartender making the daiquiris. She put in a

lot of inside jokes, some of them loaded with innuendo, and it made for the perfectly personalized and perfectly entertaining start to the bride's shower in a box.

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Another fun game for this video: have the bride's loved ones talk about their memories of the bride and groom's first date, how the bride acted before and after it, what her comments were. Guests can imitate the bride...or the groom, if they wish.

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Beyond the introductory videotape, be sure to include some party music CDs, to give the bride some theme-specific tunes to enjoy. You can get a variety of fun, party-themed music CDs right at a party supply store, or burn your own CDs filled with the bride's favorite songs. One CD might be songs that remind her of 'the girls,' and another might be songs about love, marriage, and 'her songs' with the groom.

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Be sure to enclose a throwaway camera (with a flash!) so the bride can have someone snap pictures of her enjoying her shower in a box!

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Give her some decorations right at the top of the box. Give her specific printed instructions that she can't dig deeper into the box until she hangs up the banner, blows up the balloons and throws some of those streamers around.

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Dress her up right. The next layer of the box might present her with an 'I'm the Bride' t-shirt, or a shirt, hat or ribbon with a fun and festive saying on it. Or, she might open a box that contains a very sparkly (or very cheesy) tiara, press-on sparkle earring

stickers (find these in the kids' accessories aisle at a department store or even at a card store), even stickers to apply to her cheek. One generous bridesmaid threw in a purple boa she once used as a Halloween costume and now 'donated' to the bride's dressup session.

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Instructions at the bottom of this layer might say, "You're on the honor system, sweetie! Breaking the rules could mean bad luck for your marriage. Before venturing deeper, you must have someone take your picture wearing all of the accessories we've packed here for you."

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The bride-to-be, standing there in her purple boa, twinkling tiara, and 'Kiss Me, I'm the Bride' t-shirt just might need a drink right about now, so you can either instruct her to pour herself a glass of wine, *or* you can send her a drink yourselves! Pack a plastic martini glass along with a flavored drink mix packet (just add alcohol and ice cubes!) and let the bride make herself a treat.

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Snacks, anyone? Throw in a few plastic containers of the bride's favorite junk foods, maybe some of her mom's homemade brownies, any food that's not perishable and won't leak all over the rest of the box contents. She's going to need her energy for all that unwrapping!

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Now we're getting somewhere...The next layer of the box might include fun party gag gifts, like bridal joke books, bumper stickers, the hysterical stuff you'll find at the party supply store.

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Right after the gag gifts, you might choose to include a packet of index cards on which the shower 'guests,' the bride's loved ones have written their advice for a happy marriage, their favorite memories with the bride and groom, or even their favorite recipes. If you go the recipes route, mix up this traditional shower element by asking guests for their favorite *dessert* recipe or drink recipe, even a recipe from their own heritage to please the internationally-minded bride and groom.

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Next might come the greeting cards from guests who didn't send gifts, those sentimental Hallmark moments that will warm the bride's heart and remind her of just how loved she is.

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Before the gifts come into play, set out a notepad on which she can record who gave which gift to her. That kind of record comes in very handy for the thank you notes later on. Attach a Post-It to the pad to let the bride know what it's for, and tape a fun pencil or pen from the party store onto it for her use.

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Now, she's onto her gifts, which you've hopefully packed very well and are all in great condition upon arrival. If there's a notable gift you want her to open first or last, attach a big, fluorescent label onto it with those exact instructions.

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If you wish, you can have a final layer at the bottom of the last box in your numbered shipment. There, you might include an oversized photo album filled with pictures of the bride and groom, or the bride herself, complete with captions, notes from her friends and family, mementos like concert ticket stubs and the brochure from that resort you all stayed at in Antigua for spring break, all those little special somethings that will warm her heart.

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Or, weeks before you send the shipment, give each of the bride's loved ones a single photo album page to fill as she wishes with pictures, notes, captions, comics, anything she'd like to create as a tribute to the bride. Call it a photo album 'quilt' with each person responsible for her 'square.' If the groom's a 'guest of honor' for the shower in a box as well, distribute pages to his loved ones as well.

### *Packing It all In and Shipping It Safely*

A box full of broken gifts is not the surprise you had in mind. So take care to carefully package the items in your Shower-in-a-Box for their safe arrival.

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Use plenty of packing materials, either recycling those foam peanuts from products you've ordered through the mail, using air-filled packing pouches you can buy at the post office, or with any type of padding you can arrange.

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Experiment with the gift boxes, packing them in the best arrangement possible to keep them from shifting and squashing other presents.

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Or, pay a little extra and bring the entire collection to one of those shipping centers that will expertly pack all of your contents with their own packing materials and expertise. I've used Mail Boxes Etc. to ship a set of china across country, and every piece got there fine. Investigate the shipping centers near you and see if their pricing makes it worth the investment...and the peace of mind.

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Be sure you have the bride's correct address, a street address rather than a P.O. Box (which many reputable shipping companies won't ship to.)

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Send the parcels insured and trackable, so that you can trace and confirm their delivery, and protect the value of the items inside.

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If the shipping company you choose offers Saturday delivery, be sure to mark that box if the timing of delivery is crucial. You don't want those great packages sitting out in the rain, or sitting in a warehouse until the bride can find time to come claim them.

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Request delivery confirmation, which can tell you exactly what time she (or whoever was home) signed for receipt of the boxes. Again, these aren't exactly the kind of things you want left on her doorstep for hours.

### *Showers Thrown By Children*

The children of the bride and/or groom may want to play a part in hosting the shower as well. And that's a wonderful touch to the meaning of the day, as well as a great way to let the child feel like she's a big part of the plans. Depending on the child's age, it's up to you to determine how they'll play their part.

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Another benefit: allowing soon-to-be-stepsisters work together on any of the shower details is a great way for them to bond and to take a first, fun step into their unity as a family.

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Be sure the child *wants* to be a part of the plans first, though! Sometimes, a well-meaning grandmother will tell you to include the child, but she's at that age where she'd rather do anything but help set up a party for adults. Talk with the child, see what she wants to do or is able to do, and go from there.

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Make age-appropriate suggestions for what the child can do to help out. A teenager might be thrilled about filling out invitations or making favors, while a five year-old can put the sprinkles on the dessert cupcakes.

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An older child can help out in a greater way, perhaps helping to choose a fun theme that everyone will enjoy, planning the menu, shopping for party supplies, helping to set up, and choosing a great gift for the bride and groom.

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As mentioned earlier, the child can be the ‘surprise’ lure, saying that she has a birthday party to go to and that Moms are encouraged to stop in as well. Then, the mom finds out the shower is for her!

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Even if the child is very young and isn’t able to help out in a grand capacity, it’s still a great idea to list her name among the other hosts. It’s the child’s all-important enthusiasm and the smallest of efforts that counts!

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If you’re truly open-minded, you can let the child choose the theme of the party. I’ve heard from many soon-to-be-brides who say that they thought their eight year-old’s Barbie-themed party was great for the child as well as a blast for all of the guests...who, incidentally enjoyed Barbies in their own childhood days. “We couldn’t believe the new types of Barbies, accessories, houses, cars, and clothing that’s out there now!” says one happy bride whose daughter Samantha brought out her every Barbie toy for the guests to play with. “The other hosts were nervous at first, but it was hysterical to see my aunts doing the Barbie workout and everyone wearing Sammie’s Barbie gear. It really was a return to girlhood, and it made for a great shower. Sammie was on top of the world!”

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Kids can play a part in a less childlike theme as well. Perhaps they can accompany you to the beach to pick up seashells and starfish for a beach theme party, or collect pinecones and pumpkins for an autumn theme. Keep the tasks simple and fun, and you may just have more of a willing assistant.

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One highlight of a child-hosted shower is that the child might add her own performance to the party. She might perform a hula dance at your luau, or do her big dancing school number for the crowd. Kids, of course, love the spotlight, so it's a great idea to allow her one or two numbers and then get on with the rest of the show.

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Keep in mind, though, that kids are fickle and may not follow through with the tasks they've promised to help with. Stagefright can hit the little ones, and some children change their minds like the wind. The only answer to this is for you to be flexible, expect that the child *might* pull out of her hearty agreement to do the favors, wrap the gift, fill out nametags, etc. When the big day approaches and the guests are filing into the party room, that child – depending on her age – might just freeze and second-guess her own abilities to do a good job. So as hostess, you can defuse the situation by allowing her an easy out, or giving her a less-pressure job to fulfill.

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One great idea for the child-hosted shower is to display wonderful pictures of the bride with her child or children, perhaps as a centerpiece at an entryway table, or by the cake. This gesture is a wonderful tribute to the bride as mom, spotlights the kids, and just shows their wonderful bond as a group.

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Allowing the bride and groom's kids to play a part in the shower is actually an important rite of passage. The shower is the big kickoff to the wedding countdown, and this party, and its shared spotlight on the bride and groom's children, is a great way to

introduce the kids as the couple's children way before the bigtime pressure of the wedding day. At this informal, more relaxing social event, step-children can get just a little bit closer and even be reassured that they're equally part of a loving extended family.

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If it's a co-ed party, then let the couple's sons play a part too. One couple from New Jersey wrote to tell me how their three grade-school boys acted as sports activity directors for the earlier hours of the party, leading everyone outside to either play or watch them play in a game of kickball. Most guests got involved, the boys were having fun, and it was a great addition to the late-fall party to start the evening off with a quick kid-led activity, followed by a barbecue they also enjoyed.

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Even if the kids aren't playing a big part in the plans, be sure that the games and the menu are child-appropriate. As a successful shower host, you'll need to make sure that *all* of your guests will have fun.

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Still want to play those adults-only games or tribute videotapes, even with kids on the guest list? Here's a simple solution: plan to have the kids go into another room to watch a child-appropriate movie or enjoy a supervised activity halfway through the shower. Once the little ones eagerly clear out to watch *Harry Potter*, the adult guests can get on with the more mature portions of the party. This option works well for the gift-opening session of the shower, as little ones might be bored (if not jealous) during that process.

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Or...if you'd rather not send the kids out of the room, thinking the party just wouldn't be complete without them, let the kids help unwrap the gifts! If you have one or two little ones on the guest list, they can rip through that wrapping paper faster than anyone else! Which can be a great thing for the guests, as it speeds up that often very long gift-opening session.

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As a 'reward' for their help with opening the gifts, the children themselves might get a sizeable gift of their own at the end of the process. Imagine their surprise when they open yet another box and find the toy they've always wanted!

### *A Shower for the Pregnant Bride*

The bride may be glowing for another reason other than being the center of attention at her bridal shower. If the bride is expecting, then you may *or may not* be hosting a specialty shower with the pregnancy itself playing a part. I say 'may or may not' simply because you don't have to make the bride's impending motherhood a part of this particular shower. You can host this as a straight-out bridal shower, and then leave the baby shower for another day! This is a completely individual choice, made by yourself or as a group with the bride's mother and other loved ones. Decide what's best for the situation and for the bride's schedule (and due date!) to decide if you want to add the specialty angle to this party.

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The bride might appreciate having the shower be all about her upcoming wedding – the *other* blessed event! – and take a little break from Baby World and the accompanying nerves and pressures of motherhood.

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If it wouldn't seem right to leave the baby angle out of the mix, or if time constraints mean that one party would be better than the bride having to attend two separate ones, then you can *split the party*. The first half is the bridal shower, with full bridal theme and gifts...and the second half serves as a baby shower with a game or two, some cake, and then the baby-focused gifts opened at the end of the party. It's unusual, but many hosts say it's a great time- and money-saver and it gives the bride twice the celebration with all her loved ones having to make only one trip!

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Of course, you or the bride and groom might be sensitive to the idea of requiring *two* gifts from the shower guests – one for the bridal part and one for the baby part – so consider giving guests the *option* of bringing either a baby or a bridal gift...or both. On the invitation or through word of mouth, you can list the bride and groom's bridal registries (like Williams Sonoma), and then any baby boutiques or toy stores the couple might sign up with (like Toys R Us, for instance). It's all in how you word the invitation that gives guests their freedom to choose.

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Keep the bride's health in mind. Of course, all smoking should take place outside and alcohol and coffee might be best left off the menu completely...especially if the bride is really struggling with not being able to have caffeine!

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When choosing the menu for this party, check to see what the bride's favorite foods are and – more importantly – what she can't stand the sight or smell of. Some brides have an extreme sensory reaction to some foods, spices, or scents, so be sure that she won't turn green when she walks near the buffet table.

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Don't forget that baby-theme soundtrack to play during the baby portion of the party. "Be My Baby," "Baby Love," "Having My Baby"....these songs are great tributes for both the wedding portion *and* the parenthood portion of the bride's new life! The theme can work for both!

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Instead of a Wishing Well gift, ask the shower guests to bring a pack of diapers with a bow on it.

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In advance of the party, you might send all the shower guests an index card with a baby-themed sticker on one side and a bridal-themed sticker on the other side, asking the guests to record their best marriage *and* parenting advice where appropriate. These little advice cards will be a terrific extra-gift for the bride and groom.

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Here's a fun gift theme for the baby/bridal shower. Encourage guests to give both baby-proof items and divorce-proof items as their presents. By this, I mean the baby-proofing item could be a baby gate, plastic blockers for electrical outlets, protection clips for oven knobs, etc. For the divorce-proofing items, the gifts might be books on romantic

gestures, packs of 'I Love You' greeting cards, post-it notes with sweet sentiments stamped on them, gift certificates for dinner, sets of aromatherapy massage oils, pre-paid phone cards for those 'thinking about you' calls while out of town...investments in the couple's romance and relationship.

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As one of the bridal/baby shower games, you might choose to read out loud to the entire gathering notable and inspirational quotes on marriage or parenting every half hour. Or place a quote under one plate on each table...and then at game time, the guests look to see who's gotten the quote and has to read it to all. Consult a great quote book or quotes Web site for inspiration, or get fabulous greeting cards with just the right sentiments on them and use those instead!

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Of course, top the cake with a cute toy version of a bride, groom, and baby...or babies if it's going to be twins or triplets!!

*Sharon Naylor is the author of **The Ultimate Bridal Shower Idea Book, coming out in April of 2003***