

Wedding Ceremony

Processional

The bride and the wedding party walk up the aisle to the altar accompanied by music.

Welcoming

Friends, we have been invited here today to share with BRIDE and GROOM a very important moment in their lives. In the years they have been together, their love and understanding of each other has grown and matured, and now they have decided to live their lives together as husband and wife.

Who presents this woman to be wedded to this man? (*Father of the bride is to reply, "Her mother and I do."*)

Foundation

Marriage is a supreme sharing, perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure in the most intimate of human relationships. It is the joyful uniting of a man and a woman whose care and affection and understanding have flowered into a deep and abiding love. Those who take its sacred vows have their lives blended together into one, as the waters of two rivers are joined when they come together to form an even greater one.

A true spiritual marriage is an act of metamorphosis, a profound mystery of creation and rebirth, as two become one. It is not a giving up or loss of oneself, but rather a giving over of oneself to something greater--a transformation of self in which each one can say, "I am no longer only I, but also we." It is a process in which each can be challenged to discover new possibilities in themselves and each other.

In such a marriage, the wedding ceremony is the gateway into this mystery. For the lives the two of you have lived up until this moment are, in some sense, now truly completed and over. Together you now live within the creation of something wholly new and transcendent, something which has never existed before--your miraculous marriage--an expression that is at once public and private, precious, sacred, and truly unique to the two of you. In this act, you open yourselves to a fuller experience and expression of the great, vast miracle of love.

No ceremony can create your marriage. Only you can do that--through love, patience, dedication, perseverance--through talking and listening and trying to understand--through helping and supporting and believing in each other--through learning to forgive, learning to respect and appreciate your differences, and learning to make the important things matter and to let go of the rest. What this ceremony can do is to witness and affirm the choice you have made to begin a new life today as husband and wife.

Parental Honoring

BRIDE and GROOM want to acknowledge their parents on this occasion.

They offer their profound gratitude to their parents for all the love and care they showed in raising them. The unconditional gifts of love and support that you have

continually offered have inspired them to become who they are today, and they thank you, from the bottom of their hearts, for guiding them to this celebration of love here today. Without you, this day would not be possible.

(Pause – present flowers to mothers, lots of hugs)

The Hands Ceremony

BRIDE and GROOM, please face each other and take each other's hands, so that you may see the gift that they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever.

These are the hands that will work along side yours as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief temporarily comes your way.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children.

These are the hands that will give you support and encouragement to chase down your dreams.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

These are the hands that will lift your chin and brush your cheek as they raise your face to look into eyes that are filled with overwhelming love for you.

And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

Questions/Ring Ceremony Combined

Do you have your rings? *(They respond, "Yes")*

Let the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love. Your wedding rings are most special because they say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bonded, to allow the presence of another human being to enhance who you are. Your rings carry a potent double message: We are individuals and yet we belong; we are not alone. As you wear them through time, they will reflect not only who you are but also the glorious union that you are now creating.

GROOM as you place this ring on BRIDE's hand, I now ask you: Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife? Do you promise BRIDE and all of us here that from this point forward, your arms may be her shelter and your heart may be her guide? Do you promise to support her and nourish her and to love and respect and honor her for the rest of your days on earth? If so please answer "I do."

BRIDE as you place this ring on GROOM's hand, I now ask you: Do you take this man to be your lawful wedded husband? Do you promise GROOM and all of us here that from this point forward, your arms may be his shelter and your heart may be his guide? Do you promise to support him and nourish him and to love and respect and honor him for the rest of your days on earth? If so please answer "I do."

The Rose Ceremony

(Minister gives bride and groom a rose) Your gift to each other for your wedding today has been your wedding rings - which shall always be an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect; and a public showing of your commitment to each other. You now have what remains the most honorable title, which may exist between a man and a woman - the title of "husband" and "wife." For your first gift as husband and wife, that gift will be a single rose.

(Rev. takes rose presented by Best Man and Maid of Honor and hands them to Bride and Groom.)

In the past, the rose was considered a symbol of love and a single rose always meant only one thing - it meant the words "I love you." So it is appropriate that for your first gift - as husband and wife - that gift would be a single rose. Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife. *(Couple exchanges roses)*

In some ways it seems like you have not done anything at all. Just a moment ago you were holding one small rose - and now you are holding one small rose. In some ways, a marriage ceremony is like this. In some ways, tomorrow is going to seem no different than yesterday. But in fact today, just now, you both have given and received one of the most valuable and precious gifts of life - one I hope you always remember - the gift of true and abiding love within the devotion of marriage.

BRIDE and GROOM, I would ask that where ever you make your home in the future - whether it be a large and elegant home - or a small and graceful one - that you both pick one very special location for roses; so that on each anniversary of this truly wonderful occasion you both may take a rose to that spot both as a recommitment to your marriage - and a recommitment that THIS will be a marriage based upon love.

In every marriage there are times where it is difficult to find the right words. It is easiest to hurt those who we most love. It is easiest to be hurt by those who we most love. It might be difficult some times to be able to express the words "I am sorry" or "I forgive you" or "I need you" or "I am hurting". If this should happen, if you simply can not find these words, leave a rose at that spot which both of you have selected - for that rose than says what matters most of all and should overpower all other things and all other words.

That rose says the words: "I still love you." The other should accept this rose for the words that cannot be found, and remember the love and hope that you both share today.

BRIDE and GROOM, if there is anything you remember of this marriage ceremony, it is that it was love that brought you here today, it is only love that can make it a glorious union, and it is by love that your marriage shall endure.

Pronouncement

Forasmuch as you, GROOM and BRIDE, have openly declared your wishes to be united in marriage, and in the presence of these witnesses have pledged love to each other, and have confirmed the same by joining hands, exchanging rings and declaring your vows, I as a minister and legally authorized to do pronounce that you are now husband and wife.

You may now kiss the bride.

Conclusion

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present to you for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. GROOM...