

# Sample Wedding Ceremony



## **The Procession** (with processional music)

This is the part where the wedding party walks down the aisle and takes their places for the ceremony. Traditionally, the bride is escorted by a relative, while the groom waits for her at the front. For same sex weddings, both parties could process down the aisle together, or you may arrive separately, symbolising the fact that you're coming from different backgrounds but joining together in a shared future.

Often, a bride will be “presented” to her partner by the person who accompanies her down the aisle. In this case your officiant will simply ask “Who presents this woman to be married...” to which the reply is “I do.” Alternatively both parties may be presented to each other, in which case the response is “We do”.

## **The Officiant's Opening Remarks**

This is the iconic setting of the scene with words such as "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today..." or "Friends and family...etc". These are introductory and welcoming words from the officiant to put everyone at ease and set the tone for the ceremony. Special mentions can also be made regarding persons perhaps unable to attend on the day, but whom we still wish to acknowledge and remember during the ceremony.

## The Declaration

After the opening remarks, you would normally be asked to make your public declarations, also known as “The I Do’s”. As such your officiant will ask each of you in turn the following questions:

*“[Groom/Bride], do you take [Bride/Groom] to be your wedded [wife/husband]?”*

Response: **“I do.”**

*“Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honour and care for him/her - and forsaking all others be faithful only to him/her as long you both shall live?”*

Response: **“I Will.”**

## First “Feature/Reading”

Completely optional, but after the declarations is a good opportunity for a reading, hymn, soloist performance or even a brief slideshow. Readings may be religious or non-religious.

## The Address

After the first feature or reading, your officiant may take this moment to emphasise the significance of the vows you're about to exchange. You will then be invited to turn and face each other as you prepare to take your marriage vows.

## The Exchange of Marriage Vows

After you say “I do”, you traditionally make your Marriage Vows to each other. These are essentially a set of promises that you make to one another. The classic vows are as follows:

*“I, \_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_, to be my lawfully wedded wife/husband.  
To have and to hold from this day forward; for better or for worse, for richer  
or for poorer, in sickness and in health - as long as we both shall live.”*

Of course you are absolutely welcome to use alternative vows or even to write your own vows if you wish.

## The Ring Vows

Following the Marriage Vows comes “The Ring Vows”. The best man (or other person) hands the rings to the officiant, who passes them in turn to the bride and groom. As you exchange rings, you typically repeat after the officiant with words such as these:

*“I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness. As I place it on your hand, I commit my heart and soul to you. I ask you to wear this ring as a reminder of the vows we have spoken today.”*

## The Pronouncement of Marriage

After the exchanging of rings, the officiant makes it official with words such as:

*“Throughout this ceremony, [Bride/Groom] and [Bride/Groom] have vowed, in our presence, to be loyal and loving towards each other. They have solemnised the existence of a bond between them with words spoken, and with the giving and receiving of rings ... It therefore gives me great pleasure to officially pronounce that they are now married.”*

This moment is normally followed by “The First Kiss”.

## The First Kiss

The moment everyone's been waiting for *“...you may now share your first kiss as a married couple!”*

## Signing of the register (usually with music/soloist in background)

At this point, the newly married couple move over to the table to sign the Marriage document accompanied by their two chosen witnesses. The document is signed by both parties to be married, two witnesses and the by the officiant. It's a good idea to have some background music whilst this is taking place.

## Second “Feature”

This is another good opportunity for a reading, hymn, soloist performance or even some brief words from a family member or close friend. This can be followed by the optional “lighting of the unity candle” feature. (see below for details)

## Closing Remarks

Your officiant wraps things up with a few last words and, for a religious wedding, a final prayer or blessing if desired.

## The Recessional (with processional music)

Basically the reverse of the processional, you exit the ceremony together as newlyweds, followed by the wedding party. Sometimes groomsmen and bridesmaids pair up for the recessional, but this is optional. Check with the venue if confetti is allowed!





### “Lighting of the Unity Candle” option

At the beginning of the ceremony, or just after the wedding vows, the parents of the couple are invited forward (or other family members, children etc) and light a candle to represent each family. Then the Bride and Groom light the center candle from these two outside candles. The Unity candle symbolises the joining of their families, the merging of two individuals, the creation of a blended family etc.

The officiant will guide participants through the ritual, while explaining the significance of each step to those in attendance. It’s a good idea to have some soft background music during this mini-ritual.



**PS Have you thought about “Warming the Rings”?** Believed to be an Irish wedding ceremony tradition, the warming of the rings takes place when the couple’s wedding bands are passed around by guests during the ceremony.

Each person is asked to briefly hold the rings in their hands to 'warm' them while making a silent wish for the couple. The rings are returned to the couple with blessings and positive vibes for a long, happy marriage.

Alternatively, instead of passing the rings around you could do something like this:



This is all meant only as a guide to get you going. Feel free to explore any other traditions or options that you would like included in the ceremony!

May I leave you with this extract from "Gifts From The Sea" by Anne Morrow:

"When you love someone; you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity — in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern. The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits — islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides."