

BASIC STRUCTURE OF WEDDING SERVICE

Listed below is the basic structure of a basic wedding service. **In truth, the vows are the one thing you must have,** everything else is up to you in terms of what you want and desire in your wedding. The order is also flexible, in that you can put music or readings or prayers etc. wherever in the service.

Prelude
Processional
Welcome
Opening Prayer
Hymn (if desired)
Declaration of Intentions
Scripture Readings / Poem / Special Reading
Special Music/Hymn (if desired)
Meditation
Vows
Exchanging of Rings
Special Music (if desired)
Unity Candle (if desired)
Declaration
Hymn (if desired)
Blessing and Prayer
Benediction
Pronouncement as Husband and Wife (You May Kiss the Bride)
Recessional(s)

Listed below are suggestions for parts of the wedding service. **They are only suggestions.** If you do not like them, you are free to find different ones, or write your own. There are lots of resources that are available for your wedding. There are books on wedding services you can purchase through a bookstore. There are books at your local library. There are a lot of resources on-line. Just type in a variety of key words (ex. "Wedding Vows" "Readings for Weddings" "Wedding Services" etc.).

As your wedding gets closer we will go through what you want in your wedding.

STATEMENTS OF INTENT

Statements of Intent are optional – they contain the traditional "I DO" or "I WILL" statement. They are normally early in the service and may or may not include statements that are also part of the wedding vows.

..... will you take this woman / man / to be your husband / wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage Will you love, comfort, honor and keep him/her and be faithful to him/her in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, in times of work and in times of pleasure, for richer and for poorer, for as long as you both shall live. If so say, I Will

"Will you have this woman/man to be your wedded wife/husband, to live together in the holy estate of marriage? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor, and keep her/him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her so long as you both shall live?" Answer: I will

_____ Is it your intention to take _____ as you wife/husband. Will you be love him/her and be faithful to him/her in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, in times of work and in times of pleasure, for richer and for poorer, for as long as you both shall live. If so say, I Will

VOWS

Vows are the promises you make to one another as you join together as husband and wife. They are the words you put to the covenant that you make to one another. You may write your own vows, you may use one listed below, you may find one from another source, or you may combine parts of the ones below into one vow that speaks what you want to say to each other on your wedding day.

In the name of God, I ... take you ... to be my wife / husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and respond, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

I take you _____ to be my wedded wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live.

_____ (name), I love you with all my heart. You are my one and only, my rock, and my inspiration. It seems like only yesterday that we started our lives together and allowed our love to bloom. I know in my heart that we were meant to be together. My love for you is never ending and I cherish every second we are together. And I will continue to cherish our love forever and never take it for granted. Nothing can, or ever will change these feelings deep inside of me. And I most look forward to growing old with you in the many years to come, till death do us part.

I, (Bride/Groom), take (you/thee) (Groom/Bride), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

I, ... , take you ... to be my wife/husband, my partner in life and my one true love.
I will cherish our friendship and love you today, tomorrow, and forever.
I will trust you and honor you
I will laugh with you and cry with you.
I will love you faithfully
Through the best and the worst,
Through the difficult and the easy.
What may come I will always be there.
As I have given you my hand to hold
So I give you my life to keep
So help me God

I, ... take you, ..., to be my [opt: lawfully wedded] husband/wife, secure in the knowledge that you will be my constant friend, my faithful partner in life, and my one true love. On this special day, I give to you in the presence of God and (all those in attendance/these witnesses) my promise to stay by your side as your [opt: faithful] wife/husband in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, as well as through the good times and the bad. I promise to love you without reservation, comfort you in times of distress, encourage you to achieve all your goals, laugh with you and cry with you, grow with you in mind and spirit, always be open and honest with you, and cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my (husband/wife),
and these things I promise you:
I will be faithful to you and honest with you;
I will respect, truth, help and care for you;
I will share my life with you;
I will forgive you as we have been forgiven;
and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God;
through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live

BLESSING OF RINGS

If you are exchanging rings, there is often a prayer or blessing that accompanies the exchanging of rings. Listed below are just a couple of examples.

Bless, O God, these rings to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other, Amen

... I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and my promise, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

May these rings be blessed as a symbol of your affectionate unity. Your two lives are being joined today in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, may you always return to one another in your togetherness. May you find in one another the love for which your soul yearns. May you grow in understanding and compassion. May the home which you establish together be such a place of wholeness. May these rings, soon to be on your fingers, symbolize the touch of the spirit of love that is in both your hearts.

_____, I give you this ring as a promise of my love and faithfulness, with it I wed you, and give you my body , soul, and heart

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love. It is a seal of the vows [Groom's name] and [Bride's name] have made to one another. Bless O God these rings, that [Bride's name] and [Groom's name], who give them, and who wear them, may ever abide in thy peace. Living together in unity, love and happiness for the rest of their lives

READINGS

If your wedding is inside the church, there are some (not many) restrictions in terms of readings and music. For the most part, we assume that you will not include anything in your wedding service that would seem tasteless or offensive.

If your wedding is not inside the church, you have some freedom in terms of the readings you desire for your wedding service. You may use a selection from the Bible, a favorite poem, writing etc. The choice is really up to you.

Please contact me if you are interested in help in choosing a reading from the Bible. I could give you several that are very appropriate for your wedding.

MUSIC

Music for your wedding is up to you and your tastes and desires. Music is nice but it is not necessary. It is your wedding, and if you choose to incorporate music I would assume that you would choose music that is acceptable. You can have music at the beginning and at the end, you can also include music within the service if you desire. Music can be just instruments. You may want to have a song sung either by one person, a few people, or even by everyone in attendance. It is up to you. You can use music from CD's or other sources as well.

The music and the hiring of musicians is something that you are responsible for. There are a few people at the church who have played for weddings in the past, I could give you their names if you would like. But it is your responsibility to make the necessary arrangements.

UNITY CANDLE and OTHER CEREMONIES

You are more than welcome to include a Unity Candle or other ceremony as part of your wedding service. You are responsible for purchasing any additional supplies needed. If you are having an outside wedding, a unity candle might need to be thought out carefully.

PRAYERS and BLESSINGS

We strongly encourage you to include at least one prayer and one blessing in your wedding service. You have chosen to have a Christian minister perform your marriage. If you do not want God brought into your ceremony, you should contact the county courthouse, as there are many secular people who would also be willing to perform your wedding. Often there is a prayer near the beginning of the ceremony to offer thanks to God, and to affirm God's presence in your life and in the life of your marriage. Blessings are usually near the end of the service. Depending on who will be at your wedding you are free to have the "Lord's Prayer" or another well known prayer said by all in attendance.

While we usually take care of writing and finding the appropriate prayers and blessings, if there is one that you know of that you would like to use, bring it, and we will try to use it in your wedding.

BIBLE READINGS for WEDDINGS

Many people include one or two special readings in their wedding. Often at least one of these is found in the Bible. You may also use readings, poems, sayings etc. from other sources as well.

There are many passages in the Bible that are appropriate for a wedding. Listed below are some that have been used in the past, but by no way are they the only options. If you have another passage or verse that you would like to use – use it.

Genesis 1: 26-28
Genesis 2: 18-24
Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12
Song of Solomon 1:15-2: 4
Mark 10: 6-9
John 2: 1-11
John 15: 9-12
Romans 12: 9-12
I Corinthians 13: 1-13
Philippians 4: 4-9
Colossians 3: 12-17
I John 4: 7-12

You are also free to include as many people in your wedding as you would like. The pastor does not have to do all the readings, though he does not mind doing them either. Feel free to ask a friend or family member to read a reading, to lead a prayer, to offer their own words or thoughts, to be involved in your service in whatever way you would like. It is your wedding day.

As always, please feel free to call me with any questions or comments or concerns. I hope you enjoy planning and working towards your wedding day.

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