

Traditional Ceremony

(Religious)

Approximate Time: 16-19 minutes

With music, entrance, and exit: 26-34 minutes

TRADITIONAL CEREMONY

WELCOME

We welcome all of you here today as we have gathered together in the presence of God and these witnesses to join (Groom's full name) _____ and (Bride's full name) _____ in holy matrimony. Marriage is a gift, a gift from God, given to us so that we might experience the joys of unconditional love with a life-long partner. God designed marriage to be an intimate relationship between a man and a woman—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Just as the two of you make vows to one another today, God also made vows to you and me that show how much He loves and cares for each one of us. Listen to these vows God made that are recorded for us in His Word: "I will betroth you to myself forever in lawful wedlock with unfailing devotion and love; I will commit myself to you, to have and to hold, and you shall know the Lord." (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____, because your deep love for each other comes from God above, this is a sacred moment, and it is with great reverence that I now ask you to declare your intent.

CONSENT

(Groom) _____, do you take (Bride) _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, remain faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

(The Groom shall say): I do.

And (Bride) _____, do you take (Groom) _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, remain faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

(The Bride shall say): I do.

Who gives (Bride) _____ to be married to (Groom) _____?

(The Escort shall say): Her Mother and I or I do or We do or Her family or other.

(Bride gives bouquet to Maid of Honor.)

ADDRESS AND READINGS

Today is the beginning of a new life together for you. It marks the commencement of new relationships to your families, your friends, and certainly to each other. You have invited these special guests to share in one of life's greatest moments as they give recognition to the worth and beauty of your love and add their best wishes to the words that shall unite you today as husband and wife. God knew your needs when He brought you together. He knew exactly what you needed to make you complete. And now, He wants you to commit yourselves to accept each other as the one He has chosen to complete you.

God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." And so...

The Creation of Woman from the Rib of Man

The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep;
and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs,
and then closed up the place with flesh.

Then the Lord God formed a woman
from the rib He had taken out of the man,
and brought her to him.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman, for she was taken out of Man."
Genesis 2: 21-23

Woman was made of a rib out of the side of Man.

She was not created from Man's head to rule over him,
nor from his feet to be trampled upon by him.

Instead, Woman was taken from his side, to be equal with him;
under his arm, to be protected;
and near his heart, to be loved. (Reading #3)

(Groom) _____, God's Word tells us what kind of husband a man should be for his wife.

"And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the church when He died for her. That is how husbands should be toward their wives, loving them in the same kind of way. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favor and loving himself when he loves his wife! No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it just as Christ cares for His body, the church, of which we are all parts. Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, giving them respect, and treating them with honor since they are heirs together with you in the grace of life."
(Reading #11)

(Bride) _____, the qualities that make a woman truly beautiful have been written in the book of Proverbs.

"If you can find a truly good wife, she is worth more than precious gems! Her husband can trust her, and she will richly satisfy his needs. She will not hinder him, but help him all her life. She is a woman of strength and dignity, and has no fear of old age. When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule of everything she says. She watches carefully all that goes on throughout her household, and is never lazy. Her children stand and bless her; so does her husband. He praises her with these words: 'There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!' Charm can be deceptive and beauty doesn't last, but a woman who fears and reverences God shall be greatly praised."
(Reading #11)

Through the ages, man has tried to define "love." Poems, songs, and books all have been written trying to describe this little four letter word. But the best description I have found comes from God Himself, since He is the Author of love. In His Word, there is a chapter commonly known as the "Love Chapter"—1 Corinthians 13. It describes the kind of love that must characterize your lives if you are to live in joy and harmony and honor with each other, and also before God and your fellow man. Listen to what it says:

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. So faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

(Reading #12, Version 1—Traditional)

(Groom) _____, I believe you are saying to all of us today that you are committing yourself to this woman only, moving toward her in a more open and intimate way, giving yourself to care for her, and promising to love her as she needs to be loved. And (Bride) _____, I believe you are saying to us that you are committing yourself to this man only, moving toward him with increasing openness, tenderness, and respect, giving yourself to him, and trusting him as the head of your home, and, through him, listening to God's plan for your life together.

And so, (Groom) _____, if you will love (Bride) _____ as Christ loves the church, and (Bride) _____, if you will respond to (Groom) _____ as unto the Lord, your companionship as husband and wife will blossom into a physical, emotional, and spiritual closeness beyond which nothing can compare.

WEDDING VOWS

(The Officiant shall say): (Groom) _____, please repeat after me.

I, (Groom) _____, take thee, (Bride) _____, / to be my wedded wife, / to have and to hold / from this day forward, / for better, for worse, / for richer, for poorer, / in sickness and in health, / to love and to cherish, / till death do us part. / This is my solemn vow. *(Wedding Vow #12)*

(The Officiant shall say): (Bride) _____, please repeat after me.

I, (Bride) _____, take thee, (Groom) _____, / to be my wedded husband, / to have and to hold / from this day forward, / for better, for worse, / for richer, for poorer, / in sickness and in health, / to love and to cherish, / till death do us part. / This is my solemn vow. *(Wedding Vow #12)*

EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS

The wedding ring serves as a symbol of the promise you have just spoken. It is the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible love that binds your hearts together. The wedding ring also is a symbol of what God is. He is without beginning and without end—He is eternal. As you can see, the ring is without beginning and without end. So I believe this exchange of rings not only reminds us of the unending love you have for each other, but also reflects the eternal love God has for each of you.

RING EXCHANGE VOWS

(The Officiant shall say): May I have the token of (Groom's) _____ love for (Bride) _____?
(Officiant receives ring from Best Man. Groom places ring on Bride's finger.)

(The Officiant shall then say): (Groom) _____, please repeat after me.

This ring I give in token and pledge / as a sign of my love and devotion. / With this ring, I thee wed.
(Ring Vow #10)

(The Officiant shall say): May I have the token of (Bride's) _____ love for (Groom) _____?
(Officiant receives ring from Maid of Honor. Bride places ring on Groom's finger.)

The Officiant shall then say): (Bride) _____, please repeat after me.

This ring I give in token and pledge / as a sign of my love and devotion. / With this ring, I thee wed.
(Ring Vow #10)

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

(Or Other Optional Wedding Tradition)

The Unity Candle is a symbol of the union that exists between a man and a woman who enter the holy estate of matrimony. They are no longer two, but one. The Holy Bible says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." In a marriage relationship, a man and a woman leave one home to establish another. These two candles represent the individual homes in which (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____ grew up. The center candle represents the new home they are establishing today with Christ as the heart of that home. As (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____ join together in lighting this Unity Candle, may we all reflect on the union made here this day between God, this woman, and this man.

WEDDING PRAYER/BLESSING

Our Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing upon these two lives and the home they are establishing today. May the love they have for each other grow deeper and stronger because of their love for You. Lord, You guided them to each other, now guide them in this new journey as husband and wife. As they walk down this path, light their way so they may keep their eyes focused on Your will, their hands holding fast to Your truth, their feet firmly planted in Your Word, and their hearts bound together by Your love. This we pray in Your name. Amen. *(Prayer #7)*

PRONOUNCEMENT

(Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____, since you have consented together in holy matrimony, and have pledged yourselves to each other by your solemn vows and by the giving of rings, and have declared your commitment of love before God and these witnesses, I now pronounce you husband and wife in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together, let no man separate.



KISS

(The Officiant shall say): (Groom) _____, you may kiss your Bride.

(Bride and Groom kiss.)

(Bride receives bouquet from Maid of Honor.)

PRESENTATION

(The Officiant shall say): Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce to you for the very first time,
(Mr. and Mrs.) _____.