



Wedding Ceremony Kit

This Marriage Ceremony Kit is intended to be a helpful way of constructing an appropriate service for use in church.

Two copies will be required – one to be mounted on loose leaf cards, colour coded for easy choice and assembly of a personalised ceremony.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY : MULTI-CHOICE FORMULA

Marriage is a most meaningful and personal human relationship, and should not be entered into without deep and careful thought and sincere commitment to the ideal of life-long partnership.

This multi-choice marriage ceremony is designed so that you may choose from the options given to create a service that will be personal and full of meaning for you both. Within a broad framework there is opportunity for maximum flexibility and some sections may be omitted, or re-written, if you wish.

This Ceremony contains four distinguishable parts:

Part I : (Introduction and Prayer)

This consists of two sections, the Introduction and a Prayer. It forms the 'opening' or commencement of the ceremony. If there is to be a hymn or song, then usually it is included here.

Part II : (Declaration, Affirmation, Vows, Giving of the ring and Pronouncement)

This forms the act of marriage as such. The public declaration of intention and an optional statement of support from family (the affirmation) leads into the taking of the vows. You may wish to write your own form or choose from the selection. Following the taking of vows there is normally an exchange of rings, or the giving of one ring. The Act of Marriage concludes with The Pronouncement, some options of which are listed.

Part III : (On Love)

This 'fleshes out' the ceremony by offering a point of reflection, or giving 'context', for the ceremony as a whole. Some readings on the theme of love, are suggested or you may choose a suitable passage of Scripture. If there is to be a second hymn or song it is usually placed here too.

Part IV : (Conclusion, Dismissal and the Blessing)

Finally there is the 'wrapping up' which includes, of course, the signing of the register. There is no need to have something from each of the sections of this part. But just as you need some form of commencement, so you will need some form of conclusion. Make your choice in accordance with what feels right for you.

The Marriage Ceremony is **YOUR** Ceremony, your wedding. Make it yours! By choosing from among the options given, or by rewriting any or all of the sections to suit your own situation, you will have personalised the ceremony. Then, it will be indeed a real act of commitment, an expression of your own inner feelings, hopes and understanding, in language and form that make sense to you.

INTRODUCTION

Celebrant: We have come together to witness the marriage of
..... and

We share with them in their happiness and their hopes for the future.

Marriage is the most important and sacred commitment that two people can make to each other. and are about to make this commitment based on their mutual love and understanding.

In marriage two people become one. Marriage is not the domination of one by the other, but exists for the benefit of both.

Marriage enables two people to share their desires, longings, dreams and memories, and to help each other through their uncertainties. It provides the support and the encouragement to risk more and thus to gain more.

In marriage we learn to give each other reassurance by the complete sharing of ourselves – physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

Key: I/1

INTRODUCTION

Celebrant: Friends and family of and, welcome. We have come to witness and give themselves to each other in marriage.

Marriage is the free association of a man and a woman who love each other, who trust each other's love, and who want to share the future together.

Marriage provides security, stability and interdependence for husband and wife. It provides for a secure and caring environment in which children can grow. It calls for a preparedness to give and take, a willingness to forgive and to be forgiven. Furthermore, marriage signifies a relationship and commitment recognised by society: a relationship of mutual trust and a commitment to family life.

This ceremony marks a starting point, a new beginning in a relationship that has already been established.

..... and are proclaiming to each other, to us who witness, and to society at large, their intentions and commitment to the future of their relationship.

Key: I/2

INTRODUCTION

Celebrant: We are here in the name of Jesus Christ to witness and celebrate the marriage of and
Marriage is a gift of God in creation. Marriage is not self-seeking but self-giving. It is the giving of each one to the other. It is an overcoming of separateness. The two become one.

Marriage is a creative relationship, blessed and sustained by God, who intends that husband and wife should love and strengthen each other in good times and in bad.

A creative marriage has its place in the whole creative purpose of God. In Scripture it is recorded:

“God created human beings, making them to be like Himself. He created them male and female.”

(Genesis 1:27 TEV)

And Mark records these words of Jesus:

“In the beginning, at the time of creation, ‘God made them male and female’, as the Scripture says. ‘And for that reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one’.”

(Mark 10:6-7 TEV)

For Christians marriage is also an invitation to share together a life of adventure and joy in the spirit of Jesus.

In Christian marriage, husband and wife freely undertake to share life together, while respecting each other as persons. It is a relationship through which the grace of God may flow into their lives and into the lives of others. Marriage provides a secure foundation for home and family in which parents and children may grow in love and in the service of God and their fellows.

Marriage is therefore not by any to be undertaken lightly or ill-advisedly, but reverently and seriously.

Marriage involves a serious and lifelong commitment in mutual love and joy to seek each other's good in a union of strength, sympathy and delight.

Marriage involves caring and giving. It involves learning to share one's life with another person; forgiving as Christ forgives; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together. It involves facing together whatever adversity may arise. It is to announce their commitment to this holy, creative relationship that and have come here today.

(To the couple):

..... and We rejoice with you; we are glad to join with you in the celebration of your marriage: to witness your vows, to pray with you, and to wish you joy in your life together.

Key: 1/3

PRAYER

Celebrant: Let us give thanks for this marriage: Let us pray.

Loving God we give thanks for our coming together to share in this joyful yet solemn act.

We rejoice in the relationship of and

We give thanks for the love which has brought them together and which gives direction and purpose to their future.

We pray that in their life together and will come to know the depths of true love, and the blessing of true caring support of each other.

Grant them, we pray, the strength and grace to live and grow in each others love.

Amen.

Key: P/1

PRAYER

Celebrant: Let us give thanks for this marriage: Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of marriage, for all the joys it can bring, for the promises it holds for a life of mutual concern and care.

We thank you that we share in this joyful act today. We thank you for the love which has broughtand..... together and on which they base their commitment to each other.

O God of all truth and love, we ask that you help and guideand..... as they enter their marriage. May they ever be as conscious of your concern and love for them as they are of each other's. May they ever be ready to give, and forgive, one to the other. May your love provide a pattern, and a source of strength, for their love in the years to come.

In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Key: P/2

PRAYER

Celebrant:and..... before you take your vows we want to wish you the richest blessing that marriage can bring. So let us ask for a blessing on this marriage. Let us pray.

Creator of all, we are grateful for all that is important and precious in life. In particular, we are glad thatand..... have decided to commit themselves to one another within the context of the marriage relationship.

Love is of the essence of life, and marriage provides a secure basis for love to develop and grow. We pray that the loveand..... have for each other will never die, but deepen and increase as time goes by. May their love and care for each other last a lifetime. May this act of marriage start them on the lifelong task of honest and open communication, and of deep sharing.

May their example of love be that of Jesus Christ who has shown us the meaning of loving acceptance and self-giving service.

Amen.

Key: P/3

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Celebrant:, do you love and trust....., and want to give yourself to be her husband, to live together sharing all things?

Groom: Yes, I do.

Celebrant: Will you stand by her, respecting her individuality, understanding her needs, accepting her and enjoying her love forever?

Groom: I will.

Celebrant:, do you love and trust, and want to give yourself to be his wife, to live together sharing all things?

Bride: Bride: Yes, I do.

Celebrant: Will you stand by him, respecting his individuality, understanding his needs, accepting him and enjoying his love forever?

Bride: I will.

Key: D/1

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Celebrant:, will you have, to be your wife?
Will you love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in
sickness and in health, remaining faithful to her as long as
you both shall live?

Groom: I will.

Celebrant:, will you have, to be your husband?
Will you love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in
sickness and in health, remaining faithful to him as long as
you both shall live?

Bride: I will.

Key: D/2

THE AFFIRMATION

Celebrant: (Parents/Children/Family members) by their presence are showing their affirmation and support to and

Do you, the (Parents/Children/Family) ofand affirm and support them in their marriage relationship?

Response: We do.

Key: A/1

THE VOWS

Groom: I,, take you, to be my 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, so long as we both shall live.

Bride: I,, take you, to be my 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, so long as we both shall live.

Key: V/1

THE VOWS

Groom: I love you, Today I take you to be my wife, and I give myself to be your husband. I will value the good times we have together and give you help and support in any adversity. I will love and cherish you always.

Bride: I love you, Today I take you to be my husband, and I give myself to be your wife. I will value the good times we have together and give you help and support in any adversity. I will love and cherish you always.

Key: V/2

THE VOWS

Groom: I love you

Today I give myself to be your husband and I take you to be my wife.

Whatever life may bring, I will love you and care for you always.

Bride: I love you

Today I give myself to be your wife and I take you to be my husband.

Whatever life may bring, I will love you and care for you always.

Key: V/3

THE VOWS

Groom:, in the presence of God and before our families and friends, and in accordance with the law of this land, I promise to be your true and faithful husband, to love and care for you always.

Bride:, in the presence of God and before our families and friends, and in accordance with the law of this land, I promise to be your true and faithful wife, to love and care for you always.

Key: V/4

THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Celebrant: Wedding rings serve as a symbol of the vows you have just made. They are the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible love which binds your lives together. As they are of the finest of earth's materials, so your love is of the richest of human values. As rings are without edge or seam, having no beginning and no end, so they symbolise the perfection of love which knows no end.

Groom:this ring I give you, in token of our marriage vow. May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love and of all that we share together.

Bride:this ring I give you, in token of our marriage vow. May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love and of all that we share together.

Key: R/1

THE GIVING OF A RING

**Groom/
Bride:**

I give you this ring in token of the circle of affection and tenderness I will surround you with. Wear it as a symbol of all that we share together.

Key: R/2

THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Celebrant: Let us pray. (Holds rings and says:)

Bless, O Lord, the giving and receiving of these rings.
Mayand.....be ever faithful to each other, and
continue to love so long as they both shall live. Amen

Groom:, I give you this ring in token of the vow made
between us, and as a sign of my love and affection for you.

Bride:, I give you this ring in token of the vow made
between us, and as a sign of my love and affection for you.

Key: R/3

THE GIVING OF A RING

Groom/

Bride:

I give this ring s as a token of my love, and as evidence of
the vow we have made together. May it forever signify the
love we have for each other.

Key: R/4

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Celebrant:and....., you have freely expressed your desire to be united in marriage and have made your vows to each other. Therefore, I pronounce you husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May God bless you and these rings which you have exchanged as a sign of your mutual love.

Key: PM/1

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Celebrant:and....., you have made promises to each other and you have exchanged rings as a symbol of your love. I now pronounce you to be husband and wife.

On behalf of all who are gathered here, I extend to you our interest and good wishes, our friendship and love, in support of the commitment you have made to each other. May your love deepen and grow through all the trials and triumphs that life has to offer you.

Key: PM/3

“ON LOVE”

Celebrant:and.....are now married, but a marriage is never established in a brief moment of time. Rather it is built up over the years as two people grow together. More than that, it has to be worked at by the couple. In the process there are certain qualities to be cultivated that make for an enriching and lasting relationship. These have now been expressed in the Christian tradition by the words of the Apostle Paul.

His thoughts on love provide a sound foundation for the marriage relationship to grow and flourish, listen to what he wrote:

“Love is slow to lose patience – it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive, it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.”

“Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary it is glad ... when truth prevails.”

“Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope: it can outlast anything. It is, in fact the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.”

“In this life we have three great lasting qualities – faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8 & 13 J.B. Phillips trans.)

Key: OL/1

“ON LOVE”

Celebrant:and.....are now married, but this relationship is not established in a brief moment of time. Rather it has to be worked at. It deepens as two people grow together. It is tested by life’s trials and storms. It is strengthened by the conscious cultivation of human spiritual values such as are expressed within the Christian tradition.

From the Old Testament, the book of Ruth, we find these words expressing personal commitment:

Entreat me not to leave you;
Or to return from following you;
For where you go, I will go;
And where you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people;
And your God, my God.

(Ruth 1:16-17. RSV)

From the New Testament, the letter to the Colossians, we find these words of loving advice:

Put on, then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you so you also much forgive, And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony, And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

(Colossians 3: 12-15 RSV)

Key: OL/2

“ON LOVE”

Celebrant:and..... are now married, but a marriage is never established in a brief moment of time. It is a relationship that requires to be worked at. Its foundation and strength is love. Love is the great spiritual quality of human existence. It is the reality that lies at the heart of faith.

Let us reflect on love as we hear these words from the New Testament, from the first letter of St John:

“Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. And God showed His love for us by sending His only Son into the world, so that we might have life through Him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that He loves us and sent His Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and His love is made perfect in us.”

(1 John 4: 7-12 TEV)

Key OL/3

CONCLUSION

Celebrant: Let us Pray.

Eternal God, we give thanks to you for creating men and women so that each may find fulfilment in the other.

We praise you for all the ways in which love comes into our lives, and for all the joys that can come to men and women through marriage.

Today especially we think ofand..... as they begin their new life together. With them we thank you for giving them life and for the love and care of their parents which has guided them to maturity and prepared them for each other. We pray also for their parents, that at this moment of parting they may find new happiness as they share their children's joy.

Giveand..... strength, we pray, to keep the vows they have made, to be loyal and faithful to each other, and to support each other throughout their life. May they bear each other's burdens and share each other's joys. Help them to be honest and patient with each other, to be loving and wise parents of any children they may have, and to welcome both friends and strangers into their home.

In all their future together, may they enjoy each other's lives and grow in each other's love.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Key: C/1

CONCLUSION

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, we pray forand.....who have been joined together in marriage. Give them strength to keep the vows they have made. May they be loyal and faithful to each other, a strength in need, a guide in difficulties, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.

May their lives be an example of your love in this world, so that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and hope triumph over despair.

May they grow in the love that they have expressed today.

Amen.

Key: C/2

CONCLUSION

Celebrant: Let us pray.

O Lord our God, we ask now that your blessing rest uponand..... Grant that they may live together always in unity and love.

May they always have patience in times of trouble and stress, faithful devotion to each other and a tender concern for each other's wants and needs.

May their love never die; rather may it deepen and increase so that they may be forever as they are now: Happily in love, and glad to be married to each other.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Key: C/3

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant:and.....are given to each other.

We rejoice now in the gift.

May the future fulfil the promise of today; and may the richness of your love grow and be shared for ever.

Go now in peace and love.

Key: DM/1

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant:and....., go now in peace, as one.

May your unity last through all your life together, through all the trials and triumphs that lie ahead of you. Go in love; our love goes with you.

Key: DM/2

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant: Let us spend a moment in silence thinking ofand
..... as they go forth in their life together.

We extend to you our interest and our good wishes, our
friendship and our support in the promises you have made to
each other.

May you have long life and every joy together.

Key: DM/3

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant:and....., go now in peace and love, and may
the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the
Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you both for evermore.

Amen.

Key: DM/4

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant: May God's love refresh the lives of all who have gathered
here today. May the vows made byand.....
remind us of our love for others.

May the friendship we have for them grow in depth and
meaning as the years pass.

Key: DM/5

BLESSING

Celebrant: May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Key: B/1

BLESSING

Celebrant: May the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ bless, preserve and keep you.
May He give you light to guide you, courage to support you, and love to unite you, that you may be faithful to the vows you have made this day, and live together in joy and peace till your life's end. Amen.

Key: B/2

BLESSING

Celebrant: The blessing of the God of Sarah and Abraham;
of Jesus, born of the mother, Mary;
of the Spirit who broods over us as a mother over her children;
be with you all.

Key: B/3