

# CIVIL CEREMONY

## WELCOME

Friends and family of the Bride and Groom, what a joy it is to welcome you here, for we have come to celebrate the miracle of love and to witness the union of (Groom's full name) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride's full name) \_\_\_\_\_. Every experience you have ever had, everything you have ever done, everything you have ever learned has brought you to this moment as you now stand before these witnesses to take each other as husband and wife. New experiences lie before you with opportunities to grow deeper in love with each other. As you walk hand in hand into the future, cherish each moment as a gift—a gift given to strengthen the bond between you.

## CONSENT

(Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, as you give your hand to the other, are you both ready to be united as husband and wife? *(Both answer): Yes.*

Who presents (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_ to be married to (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_?

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

*(Bride gives bouquet to Maid of Honor.)*

## ADDRESS AND READINGS

Today, you are taking into your care and trust the happiness of the one person in this world whom you love with all your heart. You are agreeing to share life's deepest and richest experiences. You are adding to your life not only the affection of each other, but also the companionship and blessing of mutual respect. You have invited these guests to share in the celebration of your love, a love that now culminates in your union as husband and wife.

When you enter into marriage, you enter into life's most important relationship. It is a gift, given to bring comfort when there is sorrow, peace when there is unrest, laughter when there is happiness, and love when it is shared. Real love goes far beyond the feelings of romance and bliss. It is caring more about the well-being and happiness of your marriage partner than your own needs and desires. Love makes burdens lighter because you divide them. It makes joys more intense because you share them. It makes you stronger so you can become involved with life in ways you dare not risk alone. Real love says you are stronger together than when you are apart.

A successful marriage is not something that just happens. It takes work and it takes effort. Most importantly, it takes a commitment from both of you. A good marriage must be created. Listen to these words of wisdom on how to create a successful marriage.

*The little things are the big things.  
 It is never being too old to hold hands.  
 It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.  
 It is never going to sleep angry.  
 It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,  
 it should continue through all the years.  
 It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives; it is facing the world together.  
 It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.  
 It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.  
 It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.  
 It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel.  
 It is not looking for perfection in each other.  
 It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.  
 It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.  
 It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.  
 It is finding room for the things of the spirit.  
 It is the common search for the good and the beautiful.  
 It is the establishing of a relationship in which the independence is equal, the dependence is mutual,  
 and the obligation is reciprocal.  
 And finally, it is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.*

## WEDDING VOWS

*(The Officiant shall say):* (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, please repeat after me.

I, (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, take you, (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, / to be my partner in life. / I promise  
 to walk by your side forever / and to love, help, and encourage you / in all that you do. / I will take time  
 to talk with you, / to listen to you, / and to care for you. / I will share your laughter and your tears / as  
 your partner, lover, and best friend. / Everything I am and everything I have is yours / now and  
 forevermore.

*(The Officiant shall say):* (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, please repeat after me.

I, (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, / on this our wedding day. /  
 I will cherish our friendship, / and love you today, tomorrow and forever. / I will trust you and honor  
 you. / I will love you faithfully / through the best and the worst, / through the difficult and the easy. /  
 What may come I will be there always. / As I have given you my hand to hold, / so I give you my life  
 to keep.

## EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love. The ring is a circle which has no end and symbolizes the never-ending love that exists between you. The gold substance of which the ring is composed, is a symbol of the riches that reside in each of you. These rings are also made of precious gems, gems that radiate a quality and a brilliance that set them apart from other ordinary stones. May these rings always reflect the light of your love throughout your life together. Wear them as a sign of the love that exists between you, the love which now your hearts enfold and your words express.

## EXCHANGE OF THE RINGS

*(The Officiant shall say):* May I have the token of (Groom's) \_\_\_\_\_ love for (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_?  
*(Officiant receives ring from Best Man.)*

*(The Officiant shall then say):* (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, please repeat after me.

**I give you this ring. / Wear it with love and joy. / As this ring has no end, / neither shall my love for you. / I choose you to be my wife / this day and forevermore.**

*(The Officiant shall say):* May I have the token of (Bride's) \_\_\_\_\_ love for (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_?  
*(Officiant receives ring from Maid of Honor.)*

*(The Officiant shall then say):* (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, please repeat after me.

**This ring I give you / in token of my love and devotion / and with my heart / I pledge to you all that I am. / With this ring I marry you / and join my life to yours.**

## LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

*(Or Other Optional Wedding Tradition)*

When the flames of two individual candles join together, a single brighter light is created from that union. May the brightness of this light shine throughout your lives, giving you courage and reassurance in the darkness. May its warmth give you shelter from the cold and may its energy fill your spirits with strength and joy. Now as you light this candle, may it symbolize that today you become as one...hand in hand, heart to heart, flesh to flesh, and soul to soul.

## WEDDING BLESSING

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be a shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be a companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place to enter the days of your togetherness. May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years. May happiness be your companion and may your days together be good and long upon the earth. (*Apache Blessing*)

## PRONOUNCEMENT

(Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, because you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage and demonstrated this by exchanging your vows and giving each other rings, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

## KISS

(*The Officiant shall say*): (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, you may kiss your Bride.

(*Bride and groom kiss.*)

## PRESENTATION

(*Bride gets bouquet from Maid of Honor and the Officiant shall say*): Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce to you (Mr. and Mrs.) \_\_\_\_\_.