

# CONTEMPORARY CEREMONY

## WELCOME

We welcome all of you here today to witness the marriage of (Groom's full name) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride's full name) \_\_\_\_\_. As family and friends of this couple, our lives have been touched by them in a special way. We are here to share in their joy and celebrate the commitment of their love, a love that this man and this woman now desire to express in the estate of holy matrimony. So this is not only a joyous occasion, but a holy one as well. May you see that your love for each other is truly a gift from God. It is our prayer that your hearts will be molded together this day with God's seal of approval. May your marriage be such that all will know that you not only have a deep and abiding love for each other, but for God, your Creator, as well.

## CONSENT

And so, (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, do you take (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wedded wife? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor and respect her, and be faithful to her all the days of your life?

*(The Groom shall say): I do.*

And (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, do you take (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wedded husband? Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and respect him, and be faithful to him all the days of your life?

*(The Bride shall say): I do.*

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 is the beginning of an exciting new life together for the two of you, (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_. It marks the commencement of new relationships to your families, your friends and certainly to each other. God knew your needs when He brought you together. He knew exactly what you needed to make you complete. Now He wants you to commit yourselves to accept each other as the one He has chosen to complete you. Here are five pearls of wisdom I want to share with you as you begin this new journey together.

First, **LISTEN**. Listen to each other. Try to hear what your mate is really saying. The Scripture says: *"Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger."* What you say and how you say it is the foundation upon which to build your marriage. Say things that will encourage and support your partner. Take the words you hear from each other into your heart and let them become building blocks for a solid marriage...stepping stones to happiness. Communication is very important in marriage. Take the time to talk with each other. But more importantly, take the time to listen.

Second, **LEARN**. Learn from each other. Both of you are different in many ways. You each bring certain abilities and specific gifts into this relationship. But do not become threatened by your partner's strengths or talents. Join forces. Accept their strengths and combine them with yours because you both have so much to give to this marriage. Every day will be an adventure as you learn and understand something new about your mate. In fact, the Bible says, *"Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way."* So (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, your lifelong assignment is to try to understand this woman and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, your lifelong assignment is to make sure he understands you. What makes you "tick"? What makes you happy? What makes you sad? What makes you secure? What makes you respond? What an assignment! If you learn from each other, not only will you be a better person, but also a better couple. Your marriage will grow stronger because of your desire to understand your partner. So learn all you can about each other.

Listen, Learn, and third, **LABOR**...or work. Be willing to work on your relationship. Someone once said, *"Anything worth having in this life is worth working for."* Make every effort to make this the very best marriage on God's earth. You don't find precious gems just lying around on top of the ground. You have to dig and work hard to get to them. But once you find them, it is worth every bit of effort that was made. So too, if you work on your relationship, it will be like finding those precious gems, and you'll "strike it rich" because of all your labor.

Listen, Learn, Labor, and fourth, **LAUGH**. Learn to laugh. Laugh at yourself and laugh at each other. The Bible says that *"laughter is good medicine."* Getting married is a serious step, and it should be taken seriously. But I also am serious when I say that having fun and being able to laugh at our mistakes and shortcomings goes a long way in solidifying the mortar of this institution we call marriage. Studies show that laughter has a profound and positive effect on the body. Laughter is the best medicine for a long and happy life. He who laughs...lasts. So the best way to make your marriage work is to make it play.

Listen, Learn, Labor, Laugh, and finally, **LOVE**. What is love? Who am I to talk to you about love? We can see it in your eyes. Countless songs have been written about it. Poems too many to number have been penned describing it. Books as numerous as the stars in the sky have been authored by both men and women to tell us all about it. But the one Book that rises above them all, the Bible, says this about love: *"Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way nor is it irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. This kind of love knows no boundaries to its tolerance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, no limit to its endurance. It can outlast anything. Love is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has failed."* So you can see, love is not just something you feel, it is something you do. (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, it has been said, "If you treat your wife like a queen, she will treat you like a king." Or to put it another way, "If you treat her like a thoroughbred, she'll never turn into an old nag." ☺

And so...**LISTEN, LEARN, LABOR, LAUGH and LOVE**. Practice these five principles and, with God's guidance, your marriage will blossom and grow into a lifelong partnership that will endure the challenges of life and withstand the tests of time.

## WEDDING VOWS

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

(Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, I thank God He has given us to each other / to share one life, one love, one heart. / With God's help, / I will try to be everything He wants me to be for you / so I may meet your needs / and fulfill your dreams. / I will love you with an unconditional love / just as Christ loves us. / In love I will lead you, / protect and provide for you, / nurture and care for you, / and honor and respect you. / I promise to stay by your side / no matter what circumstances life may bring / and I vow to be faithful and true / to you alone. / May my love give you strength all the days of our lives.

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

(Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, as we become husband and wife today, / I promise to love you with an unending love. / I give myself in all things to your care / as unto the Lord. / As God has prepared me / to be your helpmate and companion in this life, / I commit myself to stand by you / whatever comes our way. / I will be with you in sickness and in health, / whether we are rich or poor, / and during times of happiness / as well as times of sorrow. / I will honor and respect you, / encourage and support you, / and devote myself to you. / I promise to be faithful and true / to you alone. / May my love bring you joy all the days of our lives.

## EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS

You are about to give to each other a ring. The wedding ring is a symbol of many things. It is made of precious metals that symbolize a love that is pure and enduring. It is made of rare gems that symbolize a love that is priceless and irreplaceable. It is made in a perfect circle that symbolizes a love that is permanent and everlasting. Whenever you look at this ring, may it forever remind you of the promises you have made this day to keep your love pure, priceless and permanent.

## 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.

(Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring / as a symbol of my love and faithfulness, / and as I place it on your finger, / I commit my very heart and soul to you. / I ask you to wear this ring / as a reminder of the vows we have spoken / on this, our wedding day.

*(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.

(Groom) \_\_\_\_\_, I also give you this ring / as a sign of my commitment / and the desire of my heart. / May it always be a reminder / that I have chosen you above all others / and from this day forward / we shall be united as husband and wife.

## LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

*(Or Other Optional Wedding Tradition)*

Lighting the Unity Candle is a symbol of the union created by a man and a woman who enter into marriage. They are no longer two but one. The Bible says, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Today, we see two people uniting themselves as one...as one in the flesh and as one in the spirit. These candles symbolize that union. The two outer candles represent the individual lives of (Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_ and the families from which they came. The lighting of this Unity Candle not only symbolizes the coming together of these two individuals, but the joining together of their families as well. May you all recognize your continuing importance in each other's lives by sharing with each other the light of your love.

## WEDDING PRAYER OF BLESSING

Dear Lord, we pray that You will bless this man and this woman as they begin their new journey together. In all the experiences of life, may they always stay close to You and to each other as they share the joys and blessings as well as the trials and heartaches. Help them to honor and keep the promises made here today, and remind them daily of Your great love for them so they, in turn, may reach out in love to others. Give them such love and devotion that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, a counselor in difficulty, and a companion in joy. Amen.

## PRONOUNCEMENT

(Groom) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Bride) \_\_\_\_\_, we have witnessed today the joining of your two lives in holy wedlock. You have exchanged your vows, and given and received these rings in token of your love and commitment to each other. And so, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

## KISS

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

*(Bride and Groom kiss.)*

## PRESENTATION

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