

ALL IN THE FAMILY

WELCOME

On behalf of (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____, I would like to thank all of you for being here to share in their special day. This moment in time is truly a cause for joyous celebration, for we are here to witness not only the beginning of a new marriage, but also the beginning of a new family. Today, (Groom's full name) _____ and (Bride's full name) _____ will be united in marriage, and (children involved) _____ will be entering this new family to make it complete.

CONSENT

(The Officiant addresses the Groom, Bride and children): With that in mind, are you ready to make a commitment to this marriage and family today?

(Groom, Bride and children answer): Yes.

(Bride gives bouquet to Maid of Honor.)

ADDRESS AND READINGS

Today, a new chapter is being written in your lives. We could call the title of this chapter, "New Beginnings." You are beginning new relationships to your family, to your friends, and to each other. You are beginning a new life together; you are beginning a new family; you are beginning a new home. As you build this new home together, remember there are three important ingredients you need to add to the recipe we call marriage and family.

The first ingredient is TIME. It is going to take time for your home to be everything you want it to be. It will not happen overnight. Allow time to do its work. It will take time to make the necessary adjustments as you turn your house into a home. See this new family as a beautiful rainbow with each individual person having a distinct color, each one providing a different shade to make the rainbow complete. But remember, it takes both the sun and the rain to make a rainbow, and so it will be in your relationships with one another. The rains may come and dampen things from time to time, but rain is necessary to make things grow. Soon the sun will shine upon you and bring forth the many different-colored facets of your lives. In time you will begin to see what a precious gift you have in each other...what a beautiful rainbow this family will become. Time is on your side, so let it be your ally. Let TIME take its time.

The second ingredient is TALK. Communication is vitally important in your relationship as a family. We live in an age of telecommunication with pagers, cell phones, fax machines, the Internet, filling our lives with "better ways" to communicate. Yet, with all this incredible technology, one of the greatest needs of a family is just simply to talk and to listen. Each day, set aside some uninterrupted time with the television turned off and the phones unplugged. Just sit around the table and talk. Talk about your interests, your needs, your problems, your solutions, your hopes and your dreams. By talking and listening, you will communicate something far more important than mere words. You will communicate you care about each other. So take time to talk and take time to listen, not only to each other, but to God as well...for it has been said "the family that prays together, stays together." The first ingredient is TIME. The second ingredient is TALK.

The third ingredient is TEAMWORK. Do things together. Work together, play together, eat together, laugh together, cry together, struggle together and pray together. You are in this together. No one person is more or less important than the other. You are a team and everyone needs to participate in the game of life. Yes, there will be some strikeouts and a few foul balls now and then. That's part of the game. But there also will be some hits, a few home runs, and maybe even a grand slam or two. These things only happen when *everyone* plays 100 percent. In a baseball game, whenever a runner gets on base, the whole purpose is to bring him around to home plate. That is what you are doing. You are bringing each other home because you are a team.

TIME...TALK...TEAMWORK... If you mix these three ingredients into the daily recipe of life, then your marriage and your family will truly blend into all you want it to be.

WEDDING VOWS

(The Officiant shall say): (Groom) _____ would like to share his vows with (Bride) _____.

I love you (Bride) _____, and I love (Children) _____ [as my very own.] Today, as we become husband and wife, we also will become a family and begin a new life together. I promise to be a faithful husband and father, and I will be there for you and for the children always. No matter what circumstances life may bring, with God's help, we will face them together as a family. I commit myself to all of you from this day forward and forevermore.

(The Officiant shall say): (Bride) _____ would like to share her vows with (Groom) _____.

I love you (Groom) _____, and I love (Children) _____ [as my very own.] Today, as we become husband and wife, we also will become a family and begin a new life together. I promise to be a faithful wife and mother, and I will be there for you and for the children always. No matter what circumstances life may bring, with God's help, we will face them together as a family. I commit myself to all of you from this day forward and forevermore.

**NOTE: These wedding vows are best if read rather than repeated.*

EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS

Each of you is about to present a ring to the other. The wedding ring, a complete circle, is a symbol of the completeness a husband and wife find in a marriage relationship. The ring has no beginning and no end, just as true love is never-ending. The ring also is made of precious metals and precious gems, just as true love is a precious treasure. As you place the wedding ring on each other's hand, may it not only remind you of the endless love you possess for one another, but may it also be a reminder of the precious gift God has given you to make you complete.

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) _____, as I place this ring on your finger, / may it always remind you of my never-ending love, / and may it always remind me / of the precious treasure I have in you. / Wear this ring with joy, / for your love has made me complete.

(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) _____, as I place this ring on your finger, / may it always remind you of my never-ending love, / and may it always remind me / of the precious treasure I have in you. / Wear this ring with joy, / for your love has made me complete.

CELEBRATION OF THE NEW FAMILY

When a couple marries, it isn't just the joining of two lives together, it is the coming together of families, as well. This is especially true today. For as (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____ become husband and wife, they also are joined now by (the children involved) _____ to become a family. At this time, we recognize these children and acknowledge their significance on this wedding day.

COMMITMENT TO THE CHILDREN

(The children shall come forward and form a circle with the Bride and Groom. The Bride and Groom shall simultaneously read the following vows to the children):

Today as we become husband and wife, we welcome you into our new family. We recognize you are a precious gift from God. We promise to be there for you always, to comfort you and care for you, to protect you and provide for you, to guide you and listen to you, and most of all, to love you with all our hearts all the days of our lives.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

Just as (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____ gave each other rings as symbols of their love and commitment to one another, so too, they would like to present [each of] you with a gift as a symbol of their love and commitment to you. *(At this time the Groom and Bride present their gifts, such as pins or rings, medals or medallions, and give each child a hug and kiss.)*

If the gift is the Family Medallion, the Officiant will explain the significance of its three conjoined circles by saying):
This Medallion is made up of three intertwining circles, two of which symbolize the union of this man and woman in marriage. The third circle represents the joining of children to this union, making it complete as we celebrate the new family created here today.

LIGHTING OF THE FAMILY UNITY CANDLE

(Optional)

(You will need candles for the Bride, Groom, and each child represented, in addition to the Unity Candle.)

OPTION A

(The Groom's children jointly light the Groom's candle and the Bride's children jointly light the Bride's candle. Then the Bride and Groom take their respective candles and jointly light the Unity Candle.)

OPTION B

(The Bride and Groom light the Unity Candle first with their individual candles, then take the Unity Candle and together light each child's candle from that flame.)

OPTION C

(The Bride and Groom light each child's candle with their individual candles and together they all light the Unity Candle as a family.)

The lighting of the Family Unity Candle symbolizes the blending together of two homes into one home, two families into one family, (number of family members) _____ hearts into one heart, and many colors into one rainbow. Just as you light your candles together, so may your love for each other light up your lives, both individually and together as a family.

WEDDING BLESSING

May God bless your marriage and family as you create a new home together. A family is a circle of strength and love. With every birth and every union the circle grows. May every joy shared also add love to the circle, and may every crisis faced together make the circle even stronger. May your family become like a beautiful rainbow as each color of your lives is carefully blended together with both the showers and the sunshine of God's love.

PRONOUNCEMENT

(Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____, because you have committed yourselves to each other and to these children, and because you have proclaimed your love for each other and for these children by the giving and receiving of rings and these gifts, I now pronounce you husband and wife and family.

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.) _____ and family.

— OR —

It is my pleasure to present to you (Groom) _____ and (Bride) _____ in their new relationship as husband and wife, and their son / daughter / children _____.

— OR —

May I present to you the _____ family.