

## Wedding Ceremony

Welcome loved ones. We are gathered here today to witness and share this sacred moment with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Today we signify their new life together as they unite in marriage. Marriage is a profound and joyous covenant, which these two people enter with reverence. It is a promise that they make to one another of companionship, help and comfort, in times of prosperity and adversity. It is into such a covenant that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ now freely choose to enter, with God and all of you as their witnesses.

Thank you to each of you here. You have shown them support and friendship, and you have expanded their capacity to love. Their marriage has called us together because this union touches each one of us. A new family is established in our midst, and we celebrate and honor this precious bond. I invite you to affirm and encourage them as they make their commitment to one another. Will you, the assembled here, offer them your hope and encouragement that their life together may bring them happiness and abundance and that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ may find in one another a lifelong friend? If you are so moved to affirm this marriage, please say, "Yes".

As partners in life, may you guide one another, lend strength to one another, and meet the challenges and triumphs of life with grace, fortified by love. And may you expand the love that surrounds you now, into the world in need of it.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are grateful for the love and support of their families. They are overjoyed to be bringing these two families together and expanding their circle of kinship. They would like at this time to especially honor their mothers, for the enduring and sustaining love they have provided. Each of you has been dearly loved into the person you are in this moment, able to dedicate your lives to one another.

Fire is believed by many to represent passion and purity. It is also associated with the security of home and family. Your parents will now each light a candle that represents your unique spirits, the light of which will remain bright even after they combine to ignite the flame of your marriage.

Now in the time honored way I ask you to declare your intentions - one to the other. In presenting yourselves here today, you are formally announcing your desire to pledge your love to one another for life. Your faith in this commitment should grow and mature and endure. No other human ties are more tender; no other vows more sacred than those you now assume. To this interpretation of marriage, do you now give assent? (Response: 'We do.')

[Reading by groom's mother]

*Do not urge me to leave you,  
To turn back and not follow you,  
For wherever you go, I will go;  
Wherever you lodge, I will lodge;  
Your people shall be my people,  
And your God shall be my God.  
Where you die, I will die,  
There I will be buried.  
Thus and more may the Lord do to me  
If anything but death parts me from you.*

When two people make such a pledge in marriage, they create a partnership unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, which takes a lifetime to fulfill. Love is not static, but rather a continuous challenge to work together. A successful marriage depends on a willingness to give as well as receive, and to create out of separate hopes and ideals, a shared love and trust.

You now embark upon what we hope will be a long, loving and joyful life together. Your relationship will need constant tending to flourish. A strong marriage is one that fosters respect, devotion, and a willingness to make sacrifices for each other, while remaining authentically true to your own selves. Your life together will help you each to be your best version of you. You have supported each other as you've studied and developed in your work. You have cherished the gifts you bring to the world. You have held each other close through various challenges. All of these, you will continue to experience, and more.

Symbolically you have been brought together as one, yet you are still two separate beings with unique ideas, talents and ways of being. Respect and value those differences. Seek to build one another up from your own inner strength and your relationship will continue to flourish.

Please turn to each other, take each other's hands and look into each other's eyes. Be fully present to one another in this sacred moment of covenant.

[exchange of vows]

[exchange of rings]

May these rings symbolize the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end, no separate giver and receiver. You are each the giver and each the receiver. May your rings always call to mind the freedom and the power of this love. Your lives are now joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, may you always return to one another. May you grow in understanding and in compassion. And may your home be such a place of love that many will find there a friend. May these rings on your hands symbolize the love in your hearts.

*“With this ring, I thee wed. Accept it as a sign of my love and fidelity.”*

[Unity Candle]

The candles lit by your parents represent your individual lives passed on to each of you by their loving hands. Now, together, you will light the unity candle as a symbol of your married life begun today. (Light the unity candle together). Just as your individual candles remain lit, so each of you remain two individual people, made stronger and brighter through the covenant of your marriage.

[Hand ceremony]

Please face each other and, once again, take each other’s hands, as you honor the gift of care you are to one another and the joy of your new family.

These are the hands of your best friend, full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other now and forever.

These are the hands that will work alongside yours as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief temporarily comes your way.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold and nurture your children.

These are the hands that will give you support and encouragement to chase down your dreams.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

And these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness and care.

You have declared your purpose and love before this gathering and have made your promises to one another. And so I ask you now: Do you know yourselves to be married? (RESPONSE: 'We do.')

And I ask you, the family and friends of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, do you also know them to be married? (RESPONSE: 'We do.')

And I also recognize you as married and so pronounce you husband and wife. May the spirit of love that lives in and around us all, fill your hearts and bless your lives.

You may now seal your vows with a kiss

Awed by the many meanings of this hour and overjoyed by its promises, we hope that the spirit of trust, understanding, and love may be with you through all the years that lie ahead. Whatever trials and test may come, may you trust each other wholly, understand each other fully, and love one another truly.

As \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ build together a new life and a new family, may their home be bright with the laughter of their children and of many friends; may it be a haven from the tensions of our time and a wellspring of strength; and in all the world may it be the one place they most want to be.

Please rise in body or spirit as I joyfully introduce \_\_\_\_\_. Let this celebration of love be a reminder of love's power to transform our lives.