



I am honored that you have chosen me to perform your wedding ceremony. I understand that your ceremony is deeply personal, yet a public expression of your love. I take it seriously and your input is very important to me!

The following pages are a guide to help you understand and select the right elements for your ceremony. You will see multiple choices in the sections with wording from traditional, to spiritual, to contemporary. Want a more religious ceremony? I can do that! Need an interfaith ceremony to blend your beliefs? I love doing those! The ceremony should reflect you as a couple.

You are free to re-write, re-word, or re-order your ceremony as you wish. You may include other elements such as hand-fasting, readings, scriptures, prayers, or blessing stones. Examples of the language for a sand unity ceremony is included. If you are considering another unity option, I will gladly share some language options with you or incorporate your preferred reading.

If possible, please return your worksheet within 30 days of your ceremony. I will also contact you the week leading up to your ceremony (usually 2-3 days ahead of time) to review and determine if there are any changes.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Keep in mind that I may ad-lib sections and transitions to add some personality and humor to the day. This helps the ceremony flow, gives you instructions during the ceremony (such as when to face each other and hold hands), and makes your wedding feel more personal.

For each section below there are multiple choices. Since your vows are the most important element, there are more choices in this section. Please mark beside the option you prefer. For instance, if you like Option A as it is written, simply place a check mark beside that option. Or, if you like a particular Option but want to customize it or modify it, Select the Option you prefer and then at the bottom of the section, indicate "Changes Attached" (you may attach those via a separate page). Please be sure to indicate whether you want to include some of the optional sections (such as the Blessing of the Hands or Closing Reading).

Be sure to identify if you are using formal or nicknames. You may want to vary it as well, just make sure it is clear in each section.

Client Names: _____ **Wedding Date:** _____

OFFICIANT WELCOME

___(Option A) ___ and ___ (Your names): Welcome to beautiful ____! We are gathered here today at this special location you have chosen to celebrate your love for each other and to join the two of you in marriage. *(If guests attending, this can be amended to add "You may be seated.")*

___(Option B) Welcome to all of the loved ones who have gathered today to share in this celebration with ____ and _____. You have all been a special part of their lives and they are honored to have you witness their commitment to one another. You may be seated.

___(Option C) Family and Friends, you may be seated. We have been invited here today to share with ____ and _____ a very important moment in their lives. In the years they have been together, their love and understanding of each other has grown, and they have decided to live their lives together united in marriage.

___Changes Attached

GIVE AWAY

___Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

___Who presents _____ to be married to _____?

___Does _____ have his/her family's blessing to marry _____?

___Include ___Do Not Include

SCRIPTURE OR OPENING READING

___(Option A) **Scripture:** Marriage is obviously about love. But what is love? In 1st Corinthians, the Bible says that "Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not boast. Love is not proud. Love rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails".

You've probably heard that verse before. But what does it mean? It means that love is not just a feeling – it's not something you can fall into and out of on a whim. Love is a **commitment**. It is a deliberate decision to **do** loving things. It's a *deliberate decision* to be patient and kind. It's a *deliberate decision* not to be envious, proud, or self-seeking. Love is a decision to not be easily angered or to remember past wrongs. Instead, love is a decision to forgive and encourage. Your love is not an accident. It doesn't just happen, and I assure you, it can be hard work. But with your vows today, you are committing to protect, trust, hope, and persevere for each other.

___(Option B) We are not here to mark the start of a relationship; we are here to recognize a bond that already exists. _____ and _____ are embarking on the next part of their journey together. As they now exist as one in their own eyes; so may they exist in yours. Their union began by giving and receiving love and entwining their lives together. Entering into marriage is moving forward, by giving up of one way in search of a greater fulfillment than either can achieve alone, risking what they are for what they might be. _____ and _____ come now to declare their love and commitment in your presence and before God. We ask God's blessing be on _____ and _____, that their marriage may truly be a spiritual union.

___(Option C) In the words of Edmund O'Neill, "Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life. When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

___(Option D) As the tides ebb and flow so too do the fortunes of life. Footprints in the sand are washed away. Driftwood moves on in its endless quest for a peaceful harbor. Only a deep and abiding love can withstand the tides of change in two lives. The love of this couple, _____ and _____, is enduring and profound. We gather here to witness this love and the vows they make to each other.

___Include ___Do Not Include ___Changes Attached

DECLARATION OF INTENT

___(Option A): _____ Will you have _____ to be your (wife/husband/partner)? ("I will")
_____ Will you have _____ to be your (wife/husband/partner)? ("I will")

___(Option B): _____ Do you take _____ to be your lawfully wedded (wife/husband)? ("I do"). _____ Do you take _____ to be your lawfully wedded (wife/husband)? ("I do")

___(Option C): _____, are you ready to enter into marriage with _____, believing the love you share and your faith in each other will endure all things? If so, say, "I am."

_____, are you ready to enter into marriage with _____, believing the love you share and your faith in each other will endure all things? If so, say, "I am."

___ **Changes Attached**

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

(I will have you repeat after me in phrases)

___(Option A): 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, as long as we both shall live.

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, as long as we both shall live.

___(Option B): I, _____, take you, _____, to be my _____, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; to try to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come, as long as we live."

_____, take you, _____, to be my _____, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; to try to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come, as long as we live."

___(Option C): I, _____ take you, _____ as my (wife/husband/partner) to live together in matrimony, to love and honor you, to comfort and care for you, in sickness and in health, to support you in your successes and your failures, and to remain faithful to you, until death parts us.

I, _____ take you, _____ as my (wife/husband/partner) to live together in matrimony, to love and honor you, to comfort and care for you, in sickness and in health, to support you in your successes and your failures, and to remain faithful to you, until death parts us.

___ (Option D): I _____, choose you, _____ to be my partner in life. I give you my love and my trust. I accept you now for who you are and I give you all that I am. I want to grow with you through the changes of life. Together we will endure whatever life may bring us. This is my promise to you.

I _____, choose you, _____ to be my partner in life. I give you my love and my trust. I accept you now for who you are and I give you all that I am. I want to grow with you through the changes of life. Together we will endure whatever life may bring us. This is my promise to you.

___ (Option E): _____, I choose you. To stand by your side as we face the world. To share your dreams. To be joy for your heart and food for your soul. To learn with you and grow with you, even as time and life change us both. I promise to work with you to build our future and be a source of strength in times of struggle. I promise to respect you and appreciate you as an individual, a partner, and an equal. May we have a lifetime of adventures together.

_____, I choose you. To stand by your side as we face the world. To share your dreams. To be joy for your heart and food for your soul. To learn with you and grow with you, even as time and life change us both. I promise to work with you to build our future and be a source of strength in times of struggle. I promise to respect you and appreciate you as an individual, a partner, and an equal. May we have a lifetime of adventures together.

___(Option F): _____ and _____ have personal vows they will now share with each other.

___ **Changes Attached**

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

_____ and _____ throughout history, the ring has been the symbol for eternity. The ring has no beginning and no end. Your wedding rings represent the commitment you are making today. Please repeat after me as you exchange rings.

_____ **(Option A):** I give you this ring /as a token and pledge/of our constant faith and abiding love.

_____ **(Option B):** I give you this ring in God's name, as a symbol of all that we have promised and all that we shall share.

_____ **(Option C):** I give you this ring to wear with love and joy. As a ring has no end, neither shall my love for you. I choose you to be my (husband/wife/partner) this day and forevermore.

_____ **(Option D):** With this ring, I marry you today and bind my life to yours. It is a symbol of my eternal love, and my everlasting friendship, and the promise of all of my tomorrows.

___ **Changes Attached**

BLESSING OF THE HANDS

(Optional): ___ **Include** ___ **Do Not Include**

_____ and _____, your hands are forever changed. As you continue holding hands, reflect on what they mean to you as we ask this blessing upon you.

- These are the hands that will love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness;
- These are the hands that will wipe the tears from your eyes: both tears of sorrow and tears of joy.
- These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as you build your future.
- These are the hands that will comfort you when you are sick, or console you when you are grieving.
- These are the hands that will hold you through difficult times, and support you as you chase your dreams.
- These are the hands of your soul mate and best friend. You are stronger together than apart.

SAND UNITY CEREMONY

(Optional): ___ **Include** ___ **Do Not Include**

Please note, if you'd like to include a unity sand ceremony, you will need to provide a small table, the sand and the vessels. If you prefer, I can bring a table and provide the sand, pouring vessels and a keepsake bottle for an additional \$25. Please let me know as soon as possible if you'd like me to provide these. Other options for unity ceremonies are: Hand-fasting, Nautical Knot Tying, or Candle Lighting (not for beach weddings). If you choose an option other than sand, please plan to provide your own items.

Option A: For Couples

_____ and _____, these containers of sand symbolize you as individuals, each having traveled your own paths which led you to each other. As you pour the colors of sand into the unity vessel, you are working together to achieve a common goal, the perfect metaphor for a successful marriage – your cooperation results in a more beautiful creation than either can achieve alone. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated –your lives are united from this day forward.

Option B: To Include Your Shared Child(ren) in the Ceremony

_____ and _____, As a symbol of your commitment to each other and to your family, you have chosen to honor and include your child(ren) in the unity sand ceremony. We ask that you now gather as a family around the table, each taking a vessel of sand. Please note that the individual colors represent your lives at this moment. Each is beautiful on their own, but as they are combined with those around it, the colors of sand are enhanced. As you take turns pouring your sand, you affirm that your marriage is not just the uniting of your lives, but the union of your family. Just as each layer of sand depends upon the one above and below for its shape and foundation, so does each member of your family. Your union is the foundation for the future of your family.

Option C: For Blended or Step-Families, Including Your Children in the Ceremony

_____ and _____, today you are committing to share the rest of your lives and blend your individual families together. You've chosen to include your child(ren) in the unity ceremony, to symbolize that this union is not only of two hearts, but of two families. As you gather around the table, each of you will take a vessel of sand, the individual colors represent your lives at this moment. As you pour your separate containers of sand, please note that it symbolizes how you must work together to accomplish your goals.

This marriage will have a deep influence on each of you. In order for your marriage to be successful, there must be love and understanding between each family member. Communication and cooperation are key to a happy future for all of you. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated, your families are united from this day forward.

CLOSING READING

(Optional): **Include** **Do Not Include**

Option A: Words of Wisdom

So, as you continue your journey together, I encourage you to remember these simple words of advice:

- Let your love be stronger than your anger,
- Learn the wisdom of compromise - it is far better to bend than to break.
- Confide in each other; do not keep secrets
- Ask for help when you need it, two are better than one
- *Always* be best friends, friendship nourishes love
- *Never* take each other for granted, and most importantly
- Remember to do loving things every day.

Option B: As we affirm your marriage, listen to these words from “The Promise” by Heather Berry

“Within this blessed union of souls where two hearts intertwine to become one, there lies a promise. Perfectly born, divinely created, and intimately shared, it is a place where the hope and majesty of beginnings reside. Where all things are made possible by the astounding love shared by two spirits. As you hold each other’s hands in this promise, and eagerly look into the future in each other’s eyes, may your unconditional love and devotion take you to places where you’ve both only dreamed. Where you’ll dwell for a lifetime of happiness, sheltered in the warmth of each other’s arms.”

Option C: “Gift from the Sea” by Anne Morrow Lindbergh

“When you love someone, you do not love them all the time in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love and of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in the terror of the ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity, when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity, in freedom.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, not forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now.

Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits—islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides of life.”

PRONOUNCEMENT

(Join Hands): _____ and _____, insomuch as you have declared your intent to be legally married and have exchanged vows and rings symbolizing your commitment, it is my honor and privilege by the authority vested in me under the laws of the State of Florida, to now pronounce you (husband & wife) or (married). You may now kiss (the bride)!

Congratulations and let me be the first to introduce _____.

Leave As-Is **Changes Attached**

Please note any special instructions or requests below or in a separate attachment.