

Your Wedding

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR COMPOSING YOUR WEDDING SERVICE

The enclosed pages contain selections for each segment of the wedding service. Options for each section are printed alternately: below is an example of how the choices or alternate texts appear:

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Psalm 127:1 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:6

Our help is in the name of the Lord. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. I John 4:16

Normally you will want one option for each segment. My hope is that you both will read each option, then on the accompanying sheet, mark your choice under each section. If you want the wording changed in your preferred option, feel free to make the changes.

You have chosen to be married by a minister. Therefore, certain segments must be included. Obviously, the EXCHANGE OF VOWS must be included, and you may wish to include prayers, scripture readings, and a Meditation or Reflection- which is not more than 10 minutes long. Although everything else is determined by what you want in your wedding, I, as the officiating minister, reserve the privilege of having the final say.

Upon completing this work, please return the document to me. I need to create your wedding service from this. I look forward to planning your wedding with you, and to celebrating your love on your wedding day.

WEDDING WORKSHEET

WEDDING SERVICE

for

GROOM'S FULL NAME

BRIDE'S FULL NAME

How would you like to be addressed in the wedding service?

Wedding Date:

Rehearsal Date:

Time:

Time:

Place of the wedding: _____

Below, write in the selection number for each category. For example, for Opening Statement, you might choose the third selection, so write in the number 3.

PROCESSIONAL

MUSIC

Selection _____

CALL TO WORSHIP

Selection _____

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

Selection _____

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Selection _____

QUESTIONS OF INTENT

Selection _____

LEAVE-TAKING

Selection _____

SCRIPTURES

Selections _____

AN AFFIRMATION

Alternative

Reading: _____

THE VOWS

Selection _____

Alternative wording:

THE RING EXCHANGE

Selection _____

Alternative Wording

SAND or ROSE CEREMONY

Selection _____

THE MARRIAGE PRAYER

Selection _____

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

Selection _____

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

Selection _____

MUSIC

Selection _____

BENEDICTION

Selection _____

SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

THE PRESENTATION

Mr. & Mrs. Groom's First, Groom's Last

Groom's First & Bride's First and Groom's Last

OR

RECESSIONAL

PROCESSIONAL

Men are gathered at front, Bride's attendants enter, followed by Bride.

MUSIC

Optional: Solo, Duet, or Congregational hymn

CALL TO WORSHIP

1. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Psalm 127:1 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:6
2. *Our help is in the name of the Lord. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*
3. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. I John 4:16
4. *Grace and peace be yours in full measure, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:2)*
5. We, as a community of friends are gathered here in God's presence to witness the marriage of "Groom" and "Bride", and to ask God to bless them. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good and his mercy endures for ever. God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.
6. *Dearly beloved: we meet together in God's sight and in the presence of these witness to join together "Groom", and "Bride" in the bonds of holy marriage according to the ordinance of God, the custom of the Christian church, and the law of this land, and to implore on their behalf the blessing of God. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Psalm 127:1*
7. We welcome all of you on this joyful day as we join together in this worship service celebrating the marriage of "Groom" and "Bride". We invite you to come to this service not only with joy but also with seriousness as we affirm and bless the commitment that is being proclaimed before God and all of us gathered here. Our help is in the name of the Lord. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.
8. *Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of God to join together "Bride" and "Groom" in holy matrimony; which is an honourable relationship, ordained of God unto the fulfilling and perfecting of the love of man and woman in mutual honour and forbearance; and therefore it is not by any to be taken in hand lightly, or thoughtlessly, but reverently, discreetly, soberly and in the fear of God. Into which holy relationship these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any one can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now speak, or else hereafter forever hold their peace.*
9. Friends, we are gathered here in God's presence and the fellowship of this Christian community to join together "Bride" and "Groom" in Christian marriage. Christian marriage is a covenant of faith and trust between a man and woman, established within their shared commitment in the covenant of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Therefore, it requires of both man and woman:
 - openness of life and thought, freedom of from doubt and suspicion, and
 - commitment to speak the truth in love, as they grow into Christ who is the head of the church.Christian marriage, furthermore, is a covenant of hope that endures all things and in which both husband and wife commit themselves to interpret each other's behaviour with understanding and compassion, never giving up trying to communicate with each other.
Christian marriage, therefore, is a covenant of love in which both husband and wife empty themselves of their own concerns and take upon themselves the concerns of each other in loving each other as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.
Therefore, this covenant is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly and in awe of God. Into this holy union these two persons come now to be joined.

STATEMENT ON THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE

1. Marriage is an honourable and holy relationship instituted by God, sanctioned by Christ's presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and likened by St. Paul to the mystical union which exists between Christ and His church. It was ordained of God as the foundation and bond of family life, for the mutual help and comfort of husband and wife, and for the welfare of the state. Marriage is therefore not to be entered upon by any lightly or thoughtlessly, but thoughtfully, reverently and in the fear of God. Into this holy relationship these two persons now desire to enter; Therefore, if any person can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now declare it, or forever keep silent. Moreover, I charge you both, before God, the Searcher of all hearts, that if either of you know of any impediment why you may not lawfully be united in marriage, you do now confess it. For be assured that so many as are joined together otherwise than God's word allows are not united in the Lord; neither is their marriage blessed.
2. *We are gathered here in God's presence to witness the marriage of "Bride" and "Groom", and to ask God to bless them. By our presence we accept responsibility for supporting them in the new relationship into which they are about to enter. We are called to rejoice in their happiness, to be patient when they make mistakes, to help them in times of trouble, and to remember them in our prayers. God established marriage that man and woman might have life-long companionship, that natural instincts and affections might be fulfilled in mutual love, that children might have the benefit of family life, and that society might rest on a firm foundation. The apostle Paul compares married love to that of Christ for his Church. Thus he gives us a new vision of what marriage ought to be, a life of self-giving love.*
3. "Groom", and "Bride" you have signified your desire to enter into the holy relationship of marriage, and no one has shown just cause why you may not. If either of you know any lawful impediment why you may not be married, I charge you before God, the searcher of all hearts, to declare it. (If no impediment be stated, a prayer will follow).
4. *We are gathered in the presence of God to give thanks for the gift of marriage, to witness the joining together of "Bride" and "Groom", to surround them with our prayers and to ask God's blessing upon them, so that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in their love for God. God creates us male and female, and gives us marriage so that husband and wife may help and comfort each other, live faithfully together in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, throughout all their days. God gives us marriage for the full expression of the love between a man and a woman. In marriage a woman and a man belong to each other, and with affection and tenderness freely give themselves to each other. God gives us marriage for the well-being of human society, for the ordering of family life, and for the birth and nurture of children. God gives us marriage as a holy mystery in which a man and a woman are joined together, and become one, just as Christ is one with the church. In marriage, husband and wife are called to a new way of life, created, ordered and blessed by God. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly and prayerfully. We rejoice that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honour among all.*
5. Your marriage joins you for life in a relationship so intimate that it profoundly affects your whole being. It offers you the promise of a love that is true and mature. Such a love requires that you commit your lives to one another freely and without reserve, for the sake of a deeper and wider life together. Seek to become one in mind and heart as well as one in body. Trust in the living Christ, and he will guide and support you on your way.
6. *In marriage, husband and wife are called to a new way of life, created, ordered and blessed by God. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly, and prayerfully. We rejoice that marriage is given God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honour among all.*
7. I require and charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, before whom the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, that, having duly considered the holy covenant you are about to make, you do now declare before this people your pledge of faith, each to the other. Be well assured that if these solemn vows are kept unbroken, as

God's Word demands, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of the living God, He will bless your marriage, will grant you fulfillment in it, and will establish peace in your home.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Let us pray for "Bride" and "Groom" as they make their marriage vows.

1. Almighty God, who, from the beginning, made man and woman for each other: let thy Holy Spirit rest upon these thy servants, as in thy name they pledge themselves to one another in vows of love and faithfulness. Let thy love be upon them, as their hope is in thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.
2. *Almighty and everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being: grant unto us purity of heart and strength of purpose, so that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing thy will, and no weakness from doing it; that in thy light we may see light, and in thy service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*
3. O God, you are the creator of all things; you made us, and you sustain us; we depend on you. For the gift of life, we praise You. For Jesus who reveals life's meaning and purpose we thank you. In the world without, and in our lives within, there is much that is confusing and contradictory. Many voices counsel us; many forces pressure us; many things tempt us. We need your light to lead us, your hand to hold us, and your love to complete us. In Jesus' name we ask now for your blessing. AMEN.
4. *Eternal Father, apart from you no promise or vow is sure. We ask for you to bless and guide "Bride" and "Groom" on their journey into marriage. Keep them ever mindful of the promises they will make to each other today. Fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home where no one is a stranger. And teach them through your word to serve you and fellow people through all the days of their lives. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour AMEN.*
5. Most holy and merciful God, at once the God of nature and grace, Creator, Preserver and Redeemer, whose presence alone can sweeten and sanctify every relationship of life, we give You thanks for all your benefits and especially at this time for marriage. We thank you, O God, that in your providence you have led these your people into mutual affection and confidence. Look down upon them and satisfy their hearts with mutual love, strengthened by your loving kindness and tender mercy. Guide and bless them by your Spirit, and grant them a profound sense of the spiritual obligations of the vows they are about to make. May they enter into this sacred relationship in humble dependence upon your enabling grace. And may it please you, without whose benediction nothing can prosper, to grant us now the joy and blessing of your presence. Grant this, O God, with the forgiveness of our sins, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.
6. *Our Father, as "Groom" and "Bride" pledge themselves to each other, help them and bless them, that their love may be pure, and their vows may be true, through Jesus Christ our Lord AMEN.*
7. Gracious God, you are always faithful in your love for us. Look mercifully upon "Bride" and "Groom", who have come seeking your blessing. Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them so that with steadfast love they may honour the promises they make this day, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. AMEN.
8. *Living God, Lord of heaven and earth, we praise you for your goodness and your many gifts. Your power created us, your Son redeemed us, your Spirit sets us free to love. For the richness and variety of life; for the providence which guides us and directs our paths; and for the happiness of intimate relationships with one another, we give thanks to you. Especially today we bless you for the gift of marriage, by which human love is hallowed and made perfect. For the joy that "Bride" and "Groom" find in one another, and for the love and trust with which they enter this covenant of marriage, we give thanks to you, Lord God. Give them your Spirit that the vows they make to each other in your presence may be the beginning of a true and lifelong union. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord of life. Amen.*

QUESTIONS OF INTENT

(THE MINISTER MAY ASK THE PEOPLE TO STAND; AND SAY)

each of the following is repeated for the Bride.

1. "Groom", ("Bride") will you have this woman (man) to be your wife (husband)? I WILL.
2. ***"Groom", ("Bride") Will you have this woman (man) to be your wedded wife (husband), to live together after God's ordinance in the holy relationship of marriage? Will you love her (him), comfort her (him), honour and keep her (him) in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep you only to her (him) so long as you both shall live? I WILL***
3. "Groom", and "Bride" you have made it known that you want to be joined in Christian marriage, and no one has shown any valid reason why you may not. If either of you know any lawful impediment why you should not be married, you are now to declare it.
4. ***"Groom",("Bride") will you have "Bride" ("Groom") to be your wife? I WILL.***
5. "Bride" ("Groom"), having heard how God has created, ordered, and blessed the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter this covenant? I DO.
6. ***"Bride", having heard how God honours the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter this covenant? I DO.***
7. "Bride", do you take "Groom" to be your husband, and do you commit yourself to him, to be responsible in the marriage relationship, to give yourself to him in love and work, to invite him fully into your being so that he can know who you are, to cherish him above all others and respect his individuality, encouraging him to be himself as he grows into all that God intends? YES, I DO.

LEAVE-TAKING/DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

Optional

1. Who gives this woman to be married to this man? (The father or whoever takes his place shall answer,) I do (We do, or Her mother and I do.)
2. ***(names of family members), do you give your blessing to "Bride" and "Groom", and promise to do everything in your power to uphold them in their marriage? RESPONSE: We (I) give our (my) blessing and promise our (my) loving support. or WE (I) DO.***
3. Who will support, encourage and stand with "Groom" and "Bride" in their marriage relationship? (Parents, grandparents, and friends may say:) We will.
4. ***To family members of both bride and groom: Will you receive "Groom" and "Bride" into your family and uphold them with your love as they establish themselves as a family within your own? WE WILL.***
5. To the Congregation: Will you witness this covenant between "Bride" and "Groom", respect their marriage, and sustain them with your friendship and care? If so, please say, "WE WILL".
6. ***Will all of you witnessing these vows, do everything in your power to uphold "Bride" and "Groom" in their marriage? RESPONSE: We will.***

SCRIPTURES

1. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only resounding gong or clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. I Corinthians 13:1-7

2. ***Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.” Ruth 1:16–17***
3. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner person, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:14–19
4. ***Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God. Everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God, but the unloving know nothing of God. For God is love; and his love was disclosed to us in this, that he sent his only Son into the world to bring us life. The love I speak of is not our love for God, but the love he showed to us in sending his Son as the remedy for the defilement of our sins.***
5. If God thus loved us, dear friends, we in turn are bound to love one another. Though God has never been seen by any man, God himself dwells in us if we love one another; his love is brought to perfection within us. Here is the proof that we dwell in him and he dwells in us: he has imparted his Spirit to us. I John 4:4–13
6. ***(The people may sing or say one of the following Psalms) Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100***
7. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved, he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore. Psalm 121 (at the end of the Psalm, Glory be the Father may be sung or said.)
8. ***Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:9–12***
9. Jesus said, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one’? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” Matthew 19:4–6
10. ***Hear now what the scriptures, written for our help and guidance, teach as touching the duty of God’s children to the Lord and to one another. Christ said, “As God has loved me, so have I loved you: continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.” St. John says, “Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God. Any one who loves not knows not God; for God is love.” St. Paul said, “Love suffers long, and is kind; Love seeks not her own. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”***
11. In unison: Praise God everywhere! Praise God in churches, in heaven and earth, for God’s mighty deeds and marvelous greatness! Praise God with trumpets, harps, lyres, drums, dancing, flutes, cymbals, and all things that express joy. Let everything that breathes praise God. Praise be to God! (Psalm 150, adapted).

MEDITATION

(Suitable readings which speak of the love between a man and a woman may be read.)

The following prayer may be made:

God of mercy, you have never broken covenant with us, and you free us to live together in the power of your faithful love. Amid all the changing words of our generation, may we hear your eternal Word that does not change. Then may we respond to your gracious promises with faithful and obedient lives; through our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

An Affirmation *Optional*

We believe in love.
We believe in families.
We believe that one of the best structures for love is the family.
We believe that family begins
As a man and a woman leave their parents
And forge a new bond together.
We believe that family does not end
Until it encompasses the whole earth.
We believe in love.
We dedicate ourselves to be love's ambassadors for the whole world. AMEN

THE VOWS

(The man and woman shall join their right hands, the man saying after the minister.)

1. I, "Groom", take you, "Bride", 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; in joy and in sorrow; to love and to cherish and to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live. (The woman shall repeat for the man)
2. ***Take "Bride" by the right hand and say to her: "Bride" I take you to be my wife; to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live. (Repeat for woman)***
3. I, "Groom", choose you, "Bride", above all others to share my life. In doing this I choose to share with you all my times, the bad ones as well as the good. I will cherish you and care for you no matter what happens. I will join with you in directing our lives outward in concern for the whole world family. I make this pledge without time limits and in utter seriousness from this day forward.
4. ***Join your right hands, and let the groom say after me: I, "Groom", now take you, "Bride", to be my wife, according to God's holy ordinance; to have and to keep from this day forward, whether better or worse, whether richer or poorer, in sickness and in health to love and to cherish, until separated by death; and now, to you and to God, I make this solemn vow and promise. (Repeated for bride)***
5. "Bride" and "Groom", since it is your intention to marry, join your right hands, and with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife. (The groom says:) I, "Groom", take you, "Bride", to be my wife; and I promise before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live. (Repeated for Bride)
6. ***(The groom says:) Before God and these witnesses, I, "Groom", take you, "Bride", to be my wife, and I promise to love you, and to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live. (Repeated for Bride)***
7. On this day, I "Bride" come to you, "groom" to take your hand in the everlasting dance. It will take us through an adventure and a brand new journey that will bring us laughter and tears. Close together or far apart, you will be my lawful wedded husband (wife) in love, in sickness and in health; at home or at sea, my love will always protect you from trouble and my eyes will reflect my love that will never die. (written by a member of the Cdn Armed Forces, Navy)
8. ***I take you, "Bride", to be wife from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.***

9. “Bride”, I give myself to you in marriage and vow to be your husband all the days of our lives. I give you my hands and take your hands in mine as a symbol and pledge of our uniting in one spirit.

THE RING EXCHANGE

What do you bring as the sign of your promise? (When the rings are presented the minister may pray:)

By your blessing O God, may these rings be to “Bride” and “Groom” symbols of unending love and faithfulness, reminding them of the covenant they have made this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

1. *The man shall place the ring on the third finger of the woman’s left hand, and say after the minister, I give you this ring that you may wear it as a symbol of the vows we have made this day.*
2. *(When one ring is used:), The minister says “Groom”, Do you give this ring in token that you will keep this covenant and perform these vows? I DO. “Bride”, Do you receive this ring in token that you will keep this covenant and perform these vows? I DO.*
3. *When two rings are used; the best man and the maid of honour will give the rings to the minister who shall say: Do you give and receive these rings in token that you will keep this covenant and perform these vows? Both shall say I DO.*
4. “Bride”, I give you this ring that you may wear it as a symbol of our marriage. (repeated for bride.)
5. ***“Bride” I give you this ring as a sign of our covenant, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***
6. *You will now place a ring on the third finger of “Bride” left hand, and holding the ring there, say after me: I give you this ring as the symbol and pledge of the covenant now made between us. (repeated for bride.)*
7. *(As each ring is given, the one giving the ring says:) This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (The one receiving the ring says:) I receive this ring as a sign of our covenant in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*
8. Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. I ask that you take it and wear it that all may know that you are touched by my love.
9. ***In token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love, I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***
10. **Groom says:** Bride, as an equal partner, I Groom give myself to you. I accept you as you are. I will not seek to change you to my own desire. I pledge you my love, my laughter and my tears and I give you this ring as a symbol of that pledge. (repeated by Bride)

A BENEDICTION

(The man and woman shall join their left hands:)

Let these rings continue to you both a symbol of the value, the purity, the constancy of true wedded love, and a seal of the vows you have now made.

SAND OR ROSE CEREMONY

OPTIONAL

Two vessels of sand are poured together either into a third keepsake vessel, or into the wind to represent the coming together of your lives. For more samples see

<http://www.officiantguy.com/sandceremony.html>

_____ and _____, today you join your separate lives together. The two separate bottles of sand symbolize your separate lives, separate families and separate sets of friends. They represent all that you are and all that you'll ever be as an individual. They also represent your lives before today. As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage be.

For a Rose Ceremony see <http://www.allseasonsweddings.com/ceremonies.php?ceremony=rose>

UNITY CANDLE

FAMILY UNITY CANDLE CEREMONY:

1. **Groom** and **Bride** have chosen to affirm their love by the lighting of a Unity Candle. They have also asked their families to participate in the lighting ceremony. In so doing, they signal their desire to not only join as one in their union, but to unite two families together as one. (*Parents of Maurice and Darlene walk up the aisle together, light their respective candles, and return to their seats together*)

The two outside candles have been lighted to represent Maurice's and Darlene's lives to this moment. These lights represent the faith, wisdom, and love they have received from their parents helping them to grow into the people they are today. They are distinct, each burning alone. **Groom** and **Bride** will light the center candle, symbolizing the union of their lives. (**Groom** and **Bride** light the center candle)

As this one candle cannot be divided, neither shall their lives be divided. And as they extinguish the outside candles, the center candle symbolizes the union of their lives and families. Their plans shall be mutual, their joys and sorrows shared alike. May the radiance of this one light guide them on their journey, and be testament to their unity.

2. Introduction: Just before the wedding vows, the parents of the couple come forward (or other family members, children etc.) and light a candle for each. Then the Bride and Groom light the center candle from these two outside candles. The Unity candle symbolizes the joining of their families, the merging of two individuals, the creation of a blended family etc

Officiant speaks: At this time we will have the lighting of the unity candle. I want to ask representatives of both families to light one of the Unity candles. Will you come forward and light a candle please.

Before the Bride and Groom come forward to light their wedding candle, allow me to explain the symbolism behind these candles.

The two outside candles have been lit to symbolize the union of these two young people and the two families from which they come.

The bride and groom will light the center candle from the other two. The three candles will remain lit.

One candle for each of them, one candle for the unity of their new family, and as symbols of their commitment to each other and to a lasting and loving marriage.

Bride and Groom please light your candle.

3. The two outside candles have been lighted to represent both your lives in this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways. As you join now in marriage, there is a merging of these two lights into one light. This is what the Lord meant when He said, "On this account a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh." From now on your thoughts shall be for each other rather than your individual selves. Your plans shall be mutual, your joys and sorrows shall be shared alike. As you each take a candle and together light the center one, you will extinguish your own candles, thus letting the center candle represent the union of your lives into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, neither shall your lives be divided but a united testimony in a Christian home. May the radiance of this one light be a testimony of your unity in the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. 4. A candle-lighting service can be a very meaningful part of your service. However, think through what you want it to symbolize. One option is to have no interpretation of your act, just doing what is suggested in # A-C below in silence or accompanied softly by the organ ("Oh Perfect Love," "O Master Let Me Walk With Thee," etc.), by a solo, a reading of scripture (ex. I Cor. 13), or another reading. You can more consciously include your parents by having them light the two outside candles before the processional. Add in a statement about them, if you wish. Option C is another way of symbolizing the need for Christ at the center of your marriage. Even with A-D, special music can be used during the actual lighting.

p.s. A Roman Catholic priest friend of mine once told me that he refused to include unity candles in his weddings because this liturgical device originated in TV soap opera rather than in the church. I don't know the truth of that, but I've also heard something similar about the time for objections ("let them speak now or forever hold their peace") we often associate with weddings, that this was a product of Hollywood imagination to add drama. -plh

A. _____ and _____, the two outside candles burning here represent your lives at this moment. Each light is distinct, each able to go its separate way. _____ and _____ are two persons; unique, complex, individual human beings. And the same Father who gave each of you your individuality and uniqueness is now giving you to each other. The scriptural mystery shall be fulfilled. The two shall become one flesh.

From now on, what each of you have been individually, you will become together. What will touch your lives as individuals will become a part of a new unity. As each of you take a candle, carry the flame to the center candle, and extinguish the small candle, thus let the center fire represent the new unity being celebrated in this service. As the one center light cannot be divided, neither can your lives. May the one in whose name you are joined, who worked in your lives as individuals, continue to walk with you in your life together.

B. The two outside candles have been lighted to represent both your lives in this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways. To bring bliss and happiness to your home, there must be the merging of these two lights into one light. This is what the Lord meant when He said, "On this account a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh." From now on your thoughts shall be for each other rather than your individual selves. Your plans shall be mutual, your joys and sorrows shall be shared alike. As you each take a candle and together light the center one, you will extinguish your own candles, thus letting the center candle represent the union of your lives into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, neither shall your lives be divided but a united testimony in a Christian home. May the radiance of this one light be a testimony of your unity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. (There are four candles upon the worship center. Only one is lit, the tallest one standing behind a lower, but perhaps wider candle, two unlit candles are in holders on either side.)

"In God we live and move and have our being," (Acts 17:28). One candle has been lit before and above all others, the candle which represents the presence of God in our lives, the Christ candle. Together you will each take a candle and light it from the Christ candle. All that each of you have ever been, are now, or ever will be, is grounded in the presence of God. Together you will light the center candle from your separate lights, symbolizing that you bring your light, and God's light to this marriage. All lights will remain lit as a testimony that God will shine through your marriage and through your own individual lives. Let your lights shine.

D. The candles which _____ and _____ now light represents the coming together of their two lives in a marriage relationship. Their two individual candles continue burning. In the same way, _____ and _____ will continue to be two unique individuals in the midst of their marriage. (This can just be printed in the bulletin with no words spoken during the candle lighting.)

SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

THE MARRIAGE PRAYER

(The man and woman may kneel)

1. O God, Lord of life and Love eternal, Author of all good and Giver of all joy: we thank thee for the gift of marriage. We bless thee for the joy which these thy servants have found in each other, and for the covenant which they have made before thee. Gracious Father, whose love is everlasting, grant that "Groom", and "Bride" may dwell together in Unity and love all the days of their life. Give them health, prosperity and peace. Strengthen them to obey and serve thee, that they may walk in the steps of Jesus Christ thy Son. And when the joys and sorrows, and all the good and evil of this passing world are ended, let them inherit thy promises and share in thine eternal glory. O God, our heavenly Father, look in favour upon all our homes. Defend them

against evil from within and without, and supply their needs according the riches of thy grace. For ourselves also, we pray, O Lord, that directed by thy Spirit, we may look each to the good of others in word and deed, and grow in grace as we advance in years; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who teaches his disciples to pray together saying **The Lord's Prayer...**

2. ***O God, the Author and Giver of all good things, we bless you for the gifts of love and friendship, and for the joys which gladden our life. May your blessing rest upon and abide with these who have here plighted their mutual love. Crown this day with your perpetual favour and lead them in the way of love and peace, even into eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who teaches us all as his disciples to pray together; The Lord's Prayer..***
3. O God, Creator and Father of us all, we thank you for the gift of life – and in life, for the gift of marriage. We praise you and thank you for all the joys that come to men and women through marriage, and the blessings of home and family. Today we especially pray for “Groom” and “Bride” as they begin their life together as husband and wife. With them we thank you for the joy they find in each other. Help them to support each other with patience, understanding and honesty. (Teach them to be wise and loving parents of any children they may have.) Look with favour, God, on all our homes. Defend them from every evil that may threaten them, from outside or from within. Let your Spirit so direct all of us that we may each look to the good of others in word and deed, and grow in grace as we advance in years, through Jesus Christ our Lord who teaches us as his disciples to pray together saying, ***The Lord's Prayer..***
4. ***(for use when Holy Communion is celebrated) Words can never fully express what is in our hearts, O God. Our hearts are full now. We are hope-filled. We go forth from this place with new strength and joy. Your meal has helped us to know how much you are with us. Thank you for not giving up on us. Thank you for inspiring people such as “Groom” and “Bride” to love each other. Be with them and us all as we leave this place. AMEN.***
5. In peace, let us pray to the Lord. All grace comes from you, O God, and you alone are the source of eternal life. Bless your servants “Bride” and “Groom”, that they may faithfully live together to the end of their lives. May they be patient and gentle, ready to trust each other, and to face together the challenge of the future. May they pray together in joy and in sorrow, and always give thanks for the gift of each other. Be with them in all their happiness; that your joy may be in them and their joy may be full. Strengthen them in every time of trouble, so that they may bear each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Give “Bride” and “Groom” grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to ask for each other's forgiveness, and to know your mercy and love. May your peace dwell in their home and be a sign of hope for peace in the world. Let their home be a place of welcome, that its happiness may be freely shared. Through loving one another in Christ, may they be strengthened to love Christ in their neighbour. May they be creative in their daily work, and find fulfillment in the life of their community. May “Groom” and “Bride” enjoy the gift and heritage of children. Grant that they may be loving and wise parents, with grace to bring up their children to know you, to love you, and to serve you. Grant them the grace to share their love and faith with “children”. Bless the parents and families of “Bride” and “Groom” that they may be united in love and friendship. Grant that all married people who have witnessed these vows today may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. We ask these prayers in the name of Christ our Lord. Let us pray the prayer that our Lord teaches us saying, Lord's Prayer
6. ***Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation and giver of all grace: look with favour upon the world you have made and redeemed, and especially upon “Groom” and “Bride”. Give them wisdom and devotion in their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, a counselor in perplexity, and a companion in joy. Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and each other all the days of their life. Give them courage, when they hurt each other, to recognize and confess their fault, and the grace to seek your forgiveness, and to forgive each other. Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. Give them such fulfillment of their mutual love that they may reach out in concern for others. {Give to them, if it is your will, the gift of children, and the wisdom to bring them up to know you, to love you and to serve you.} Grant that all who have witnessed these vows today may find their lives strengthened, and that***

all who are married may depart with their own promises renewed. Enrich with your grace all husbands and wives, parents and children, that, loving and supporting one another, they may serve those in need and be a sign of your kingdom. Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, may be so transformed by your Spirit that your peace and justice may fill the earth, through Jesus Christ Lord. Amen. The Lord's Prayer.

7. Eternal God, without your grace no promise is sure. Strengthen "Bride" and "Groom" with patience, kindness, gentleness, and all other gifts of your Spirit, so that they may fulfill the vows they have made. Keep them faithful to each other and to you. Fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home of peace and welcome. Guide them by your word to serve you all their days. Enable us, O God, in each of our homes and lives to do your will. Enrich us with your grace so that, encouraging and supporting one another, we may serve those in need and hasten the coming of peace, love and justice on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN. *The Lord's Prayer.*

8. *O Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who did share at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: Be present in the home of these your servants as Lord and King; give them grace that they may minister to others as you minister to men and women, and grant that by deed and word they may be witnesses of your saving love to those with whom they live; for your holy name's sake, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Lord's Prayer.*

9. RESPONSIVE PRAYER BY CONGREGATION

Minister: Father, look with favour upon "Bride" and "Groom" whom you have made one in holy marriage.

Congregation: Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.

Minister: Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and each other all the days of their life.

Congregation: Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault and to seek each other's forgiveness as well as yours.

Minister: Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness may heal guilt and joy may conquer despair.

Congregation: Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others.

UNISON: Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. Grant that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, where you O God, with your Son and Holy Spirit live and reign together, both now and forever more AMEN.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

1. Forasmuch as "Groom", and "Bride" have made this solemn covenant of marriage before God and this company, I declare them to be husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (The man and woman may kiss one another) The Lord bless you and sustain you; the Lord pour the riches of his grace upon you, that you may please him in body and spirit, and grow together in love all the days of your life. AMEN.

2. *Forasmuch as you, "Groom", and you "Bride" have consented together in wedlock and have pledged your troth to each other in the sight of God and in the presence of this company; (and have confirmed the same by the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring); now, therefore, in the name of the Creator, Preserver and Redeemer I pronounce you husband and wife. AMEN. Whom, therefore, God has joined together, let not anyone put asunder.*

3. Forasmuch as "Groom", and "Bride", have made this solemn covenant of marriage before God and all of us here, I declare them to be husband and wife; in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

4. *It gives me great pleasure to announce on behalf of all the witnesses gathered here that "Groom" and "Bride" are husband and wife according to their promises given just now and according to the laws of this*

province. May they find great happiness and deep love as marriage partners. (The vows may be sealed with a kiss)

5. “Bride” and “Groom” it is now my joy to declare you husband and wife since you have willingly committed yourselves to each other for the rest of your lives. I charge you to become as one in your relationship in the days ahead. Fulfill your promises to each other. Love and serve the Lord. Let nothing separate you from each other.
6. ***Before God and in the presence of this congregation, “Bride” and “Groom” have made their solemn vows to each other. They have confirmed their promises by the joining of hands [and the giving of rings]. Therefore I proclaim that they are now husband and wife. Blessed be the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.***
7. “Groom” and “Bride”, you have committed yourselves to each other in this joyous covenant. Become one. Fulfill your promises. Love and serve God, honour Christ and each other, and rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit. (To the congregation) By their promises made before us here today, “Groom” and “Bride” have united themselves as husband and wife in sacred covenant. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.
8. ***Those whom God has joined together let no one separate. “Bride” and “Groom”, you are wife and husband with the blessing of Christ’s church. Be merciful in all your ways, kind in heart, and humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another. Forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of one body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you.***

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

1. As God’s own, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, and patience, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, and crown all these things with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:12–14
2. ***Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him. Colossians 3:17***

MUSIC

Optional: Soloist, Musician, Organist, Congregational hymn

BENEDICTION

1. The grace of the Lord Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. AMEN.
2. ***The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord be kind and gracious you. The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace. AMEN.***
3. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. AMEN.
4. ***Go forth bound together by the love of God. Go with hope and joy and with a heart full of dreams, knowing that God is always with you. AMEN.***
5. Holy Father, creator of the universe, maker of man and woman in your own likeness, source of blessing for married life, we humbly pray to you for this woman who today is united with this man in this sacrament of marriage. May your fullest blessing come upon her and her husband so that they may together rejoice in your gift of married love (and enrich your Church with their children). Lord, may they both praise you when they are happy and turn to you in their sorrows. May they be glad that you help them in their work and know that you are with them in their need. May they pray to you in the community of the Church, and be your witnesses in the world. May they reach old age in the company of their friends, and come at last to the kingdom of heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

6. *The grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep, you, that you may live in faith, abound in hope, and grow in love, both now and forevermore. AMEN.*

THE PRESENTATION

RECESSIONAL