



Marriage ceremony Overview

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Welcome

Celebrant introduction and welcome to the guests. There may be some special mention of family and friends who could not attend due to distance or have travelled distances to be there. In the welcome the bridal party is introduced by name and connection (I would like to introduce Best Man James. George and James have been close friends since their days at university).

Introduction

Opportunity to set the scene by saying something about how the couple met, their romance, and their hopes and dreams. This is a suitable place to tell the courtship and love story of the couple to date. After interviewing and listening to you as a couple, I will be able to write about your love affair, your values, your belief in marriage and your future dreams.

Reading &/or Music

There is no limit to number of readings/music that occur in a ceremony. Readings and music have important functions in a ceremony. This reading can be done by a family member or friend.

Presentation of bride and/or groom

The tradition of “giving away” has evolved in many different styles at modern marriage ceremonies – represents a statement of bringing their adult children with their blessings into their new married life.

- *Bride’s father gives the bride away*
- *Bride not given away and already present with the groom*
- *The bride is given away by an escort (usually family member or friend)*
- *Both bride and groom are presented by their families This provides opportunity for a commitment, where you ask the families something like “are you willing, now and always, to support his marriage?”*
- *Including the guests could be saying “family and friends, will you support with love the marriage of your dear friends?” Joint reply, “we will”*

Thanking parents

- *Celebrant reading on behalf of the couple addressing the parents*
- *Party A's tribute to parents*
- *Party B's tribute to parents*

Celebrant Authority

As prescribed in the **Marriage Act 1961, section 46(1)**, an authorised celebrant must say following passage in entirety:

I am duly authorised by law to solemnise marriages according to law.

Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

The Asking

This is a traditional part of the ceremony and not a legal requirement. It should not be confused with the marriage vows. Customarily, the bride hands her bouquet to a bridesmaid or the celebrant and joins hands with her groom.

The wording of the asking is a matter of choice. In its simplest form it is something like:

Celebrant: Philip will you take Chloe to be your wife? Will you love, cherish, respect and honour her, standing by her in good times and in bad for the rest of your life together?

Groom: I will

Celebrant: Chloe, will you take Philip to be your husband? Will you love, cherish, respect and honour him, standing by him in good times and in bad for the rest of your life together?

Bride: I will

Pledge

A pledge by the bride and groom is an option in the ceremony. The following example of a pledge written by a couple and repeated, in unison, after the celebrant:

I will love you through the good and the bad, through the joy and the sorrow. I will try to be understanding and to trust in you completely. I will make you a part of me and, in turn, become a part of you. Together we will face all of life's experiences and share one another's dreams and goals. We will be equal partners in an open, honest relationship throughout all our years.

Vows

Vows are the most intimate and personal element of a marriage ceremony. As a couple, take the time to plan this intimate task out together. It will be the joint conversation that you have as a couple sharing in the vision of your marriage and your life together, your goals and dreams. This will make for warm and loving vow commitments.

To assist you, write down some key words that describe your lover. Then write a sentence around them – you can compare and decide on what key words and sentiments make you happy to hear or you can write them individually and then send to me for inclusion. Your lover will then hear them for the first time on your wedding day. The choice is yours.

I encourage you to write these yourselves. My role is to assist with the process, but the value and beauty of those intimate words should be wholly of your doing.

According to the Marriage Act 1961, section 45(2), the vows must contain a minimum the following words:

"I call upon the persons here to witness that I, AB (or CD), take thee CD (or AB) to be my lawful wedded wife (or husband) or words to that effect."

These are simply incorporated into the vows you write.

Exchange of rings (or other symbols of unity)

The exchange of rings can either be done as a separate part of the ceremony after the vows, or at the same time as the vows – that is, the groom makes his vows and places a ring on the bride's finger then the bride makes her vow and places a ring on the groom's finger. Different traditions place on different finger.

Blessing

There are a number of different poems/readings that can be used to bless the marriage. I will write some words along with reciting a poem/reading that resonates with you. A friend or relative can also read the blessing.

Declaration of marriage

The pronouncement of the bride and groom as husband and wife signifies the official end of the ceremony.

Kissing

Traditionally, the celebrant tells the groom that he may kiss the bride. Many couples will regard this as old fashioned and would prefer "you may now kiss".

Signing the Marriage Register

Signing of the register and the marriage certificate is a legal requirement.

Normally it is done at a small table in view of the guests.

Inform the guests

The guests will be told that you are going to sign the register (or sign the certificates) and that this will take about 10 minutes and you will return to be presented as a married couple. I will suggest to photographers/guests taking photos that the documents will be signed first and then they will be allowed opportunity to pose for photos.

Presentation of the bride and groom/partners

This is final part of the ceremony. Return with the newly-weds (and possibly witnesses) and announce them as Mr and Mrs or whatever title decided upon.