

## **A WEDDING SERVICE**

Adapted from various sources

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(Bride walks down with parent-s)

We are here in the sight of God with expectation and love for these two special people to witness their union in marriage. This celebration is the outward sign of inward union of hearts. It is a union created by loving purpose and kept by abiding will. In this event we are gathered to acknowledge the true marriage which already dwells within them.

### **QUESTION TO THE COUPLE**

Do you come in freedom and without reservation to give of yourselves to each other in marriage?

### **THE HOMILY**

We join together in loving fellowship to share in one of the great sacraments of human life, the uniting of two lives into one of mutual love and loyalty. Neither our presence nor this service gives marriage its sanctity, for only two loving people under the sight of God can do that. But we hope that our presence can lend support and encouragement to the both of you as you begin this new life together.

A good and happy marriage is never complete. What you have before this moment is but a fraction of what you will become together as the years pass. The joy of marriage is filling out the story that you have already begun. And so, with each year, with each joy, with each sorrow, with argument and with each peace, you will become a bit more married. Marriage is not a static state but a lively and challenging adventure and it is my charge to you now to keep that spirit of adventure alive in your life and in your love.

This day is an act of faith in one another. Your faith must not be a vain hope in what the other will do or become. Yours must be that deeper faith that each of you will be acceptable in each other's eyes simply as you are. Such a faith requires that you be honest towards yourself as well as being attentive

to the other. The years will bring many changes and such a covenant will maintain only so long as you remember that your pledge to one another is a devotion in freedom.

Please remember that your marriage will be like a dance; sometimes close, sometimes apart but always together. Always remember that courtesy and consideration, even in the hardest of times, will sustain you. Trust, passion and respect are the sustaining virtues of marriage. Hold them close and they will help you learn from each situation and help you realize that wherever you turn you will always meet yourselves again.

### THE UNITY CANDLE CEREMONY

Marriage brings two people into a sacred unity. Although you begin this new life as one, you have arrived here from a past full of joys and sorrows, love and remembrance. Each of you comes from your family to begin a new one. In the lighting of these candles each of your pasts are recognized for the gifts they bring to your present and future. By lighting these candles you symbolize the transformation of your past to your present. May the light of these candles inspire you both to remember your past even as you live out your future with the warm hope they symbolize. May these candles invite God's love and creation into all that you share from this moment on. I now invite (the mothers or the families or the couple) to light the side candles representing your pasts and from that flame I invite the bride and groom to each join those pasts into the hope and unity of a new future together. (Bride and groom light the center candle with each side candle)

Or Optional

### SAND CEREMONY

Even as you begin this new life together you have arrived here from a past full of love and remembrances. You have come from your families to begin a new family. These sands, each in their own container, represent the many moments of love you have known from your families, the joys and struggles of each of your lives. Now you will blend together these grains of sands, moments of your lives into one container representing your new life made one. May the sands of time remind you of the ground from which you have sprung. Even as sand is rock made soft by time, so may your love through the years become so gentle. Even as sand slips between our fingers, the love

which this sand represents will guide you always. Like the sand of time, may your love last an eternity.

(Bride and Groom pour the two sands into one vase)

(OPTIONAL READING)

## BETROTHAL

, will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in the shared state of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and cherish her in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, and, forsaking all others, keep her only unto you until the end of your days? (I will)

, will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together in the shared state of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and cherish him in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, and, forsaking all others, keep him only unto you until the end of your days? (I will)

OR

## HAND HOLDING CEREMONY (Optional)

(Bride), place face (Groom) and hold his hands, palms up, so you may see the gift they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, strong and vibrant with love, they are holding yours on your wedding day, as he promises to love you all the days of his life.

These are the hands that will work along side yours, as together you build your future, as you laugh and cry and share your innermost secrets and dreams.

These are the hands that will love you and cherish you through the years, a lifetime of happiness. These are the hands that will wipe countless tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

(Groom) please hold (Bride's) hands palms up, where you may see the gift they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, smooth and full of life, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as she pledges her love and commitment to you all the days of her life.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times. 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 love you and cherish you through the years, a lifetime of happiness.

#### EXCHANGE OF VOWS

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife  
To have and to cherish from this day forward  
For better or for worse  
For richer or for poorer  
In sickness and in health  
In sorrow and in joy  
I will love you with all my being until the end of our days.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded husband  
To have and to cherish from this day forward  
For better or for worse  
For richer or for poorer  
In sickness and in health  
In sorrow and in joy  
I will love you with all my being until the end of our days.

## BLESSING ON THE MARRIAGE

(Adapted from James Dillet Freeman)

May the spirit of all life bless you on this journey you are beginning and may your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring. May life grant you patience, tolerance and understanding.

May you always need one another – not so much to fill the emptiness as to help each of you know the fullness you have together. A mountain needs a valley to be complete and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain over it. So let it be with each of you.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.  
May you want one another, but not out of lack.  
May you entice one another, but not compel.

May you embrace one another, but not encircle.  
May you succeed in all important ways with one another but not fail in the little graces.

May you look often for things to praise and take no notice of the small faults. And if you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you have the good sense to take the first step back towards each other again.

May you enter into this passionate mystery which is the awareness of each others presence. A presence which as physical as it is spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side and warm and near when you are in distant places.

May you always find your happiness in making each other happy and may you always find your love in loving each other.

## EXCHANGE OF THE RINGS

(Minister asks for the rings and holding them says)

I hold in my hand the rings which are an ancient and sacred symbol of love. The circle of the ring speaks of the continual nature of love for it has no beginning and it has no end. May this circle of love declare the unity and oneness of your life together. And may the incorruptible substance of these rings represent a love glowing with increasing luster through the years

before you. May God bless these rings which you give to each other as the sign of your love, your trust and your faithfulness.

(Minister opens his hand, the groom, then bride each put the ring on the other and repeat)

Groom: This ring I give you in token of my devotion and love. And with my heart, I pledge to you all that I am. With this ring I marry you and join my life to yours.

Bride: This ring I give you in token of my devotion and love. And with my heart, I pledge to you all that I am. With this ring I marry you and join my life to yours.

(OPTIONAL READING)

#### SHARING THE FIRST CUP OF WINE

(Minister pours wine into one cup and says)

Into this cup is poured wine, bitter and sweet, even as life itself will pour into your marriage the varied bitterness and sweetness of love. Only in the deepest intimacy of trust and love may the bitter and sweet be blended well enough to make the life you share full and brave. Many days you will eat and drink together. Many days you will have struggles and joys that only you will know of. By drinking from this single cup you symbolize the intimacy that is only yours to share. May God bless this wine as a symbol of that deepest love which sustains you. Drink now and may the cup of your lives rich and full to running over.

(Minister hands the cup to bride who drinks and then hands the cup to the groom who drinks and then hands the cup back to the minister)

#### THE PRAYER

Dear God bless these two that they may hold steadfast to the love between them. May their home be a sanctuary of peace, a source of radiance going out from one to the other. May they remain in that love and peace. May the power of life that is your gift to us and the abundance of it ever and always touch their lives. Even as they have chosen each other from the world's

multitudes, may the days and the years, now veiled by this moment, deepen the wisdom of their choice and enlarge the storehouse of love that is theirs. Look graciously upon them that they may honor and cherish each other always. May their lives be blessed with joy and peace and may their days be good and long upon this earth. Amen.

#### THE PRONOUNCEMENT

, having chosen each other in love and in freedom and having declared their purpose before this gathering and God and having made their pledges to one another, I now declare them husband and wife. Let all others honor them and the threshold of their house and may this moment begin years of love and joy. You may kiss.