

# *Civil Ceremony*

(Non-Religious)

## WELCOME

Love is a miraculous gift, and a wedding is a celebration of that gift. We have come here today to celebrate this gift of love, and to add our best wishes and blessings to the words that shall unite (**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**) in the bonds of marriage. What you promise to each other today must be renewed again tomorrow and every day that follows. At the end of this ceremony, legally you will be husband and wife. Still, you must decide each and every day to commit yourselves to one another. Make such a decision, and keep on making it, for the most important thing in life is to love and to be loved.

## CONSENT

(**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**), do you come here of your own free will, accompanied by your family's blessings, to be united as husband and wife forevermore?

*(Both answer):* **I do.**

Who presents (**BRIDE**) to be married to (**GROOM**)?

*(The Escort shall say):* **Her Mother and I** or **I do** or **We do** or **Her Family** or other.

*(Bride gives bouquet to Maid of Honor).*

## ADDRESS AND READINGS

Today you are taking into your care and trust the happiness of the one person in this world whom you love with all your heart. And you are giving yourself, your life, and your love, into the hands of the one who loves you with all their heart. Always remember this, to the whole world, you are but one person, but to one person, you are the whole world.

However, true love goes far beyond the feelings of excitement and romance. It is caring more about the well-being and happiness of your marriage partner than your own needs and your own desires. And true love does not consist of gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction. You see, love makes burdens lighter because you divide them. Love makes joys more intense because you share them. Love makes you stronger so you can become involved with life in ways you dare not risk alone. True love says the two of you are just better together than when you were apart.

When you enter into marriage, you enter into life's most important relationship. It is a gift given to bring comfort when there is sorrow, peace when there is unrest, laughter when there is happiness, and love when it is shared. But a successful marriage is not something that just happens. It takes work, it takes understanding, and it takes time. Most importantly, it takes a commitment from both of you – a commitment to do whatever it takes to make your relationship thrive and not just simply survive. A good marriage must be nurtured. Listen to these “words of wisdom” on how to create a successful marriage from a little book entitled The Art of Marriage.

### *The Art of Marriage*

The little things are the big things.  
It is never being too old to hold hands.  
It is remembering to say “I love you” at least once a day.  
It is never going to sleep angry.  
It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.  
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives; it is facing the world together.  
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.  
It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.  
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.  
It is not looking for perfection in each other.  
It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor.  
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.  
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.  
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.  
It is the common search for the good and the beautiful.  
It is the establishing of a relationship in which the independence is equal, the dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.  
And finally, it is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.  
*(Reading #2)*

### **WEDDING VOWS**

*(The Officiant shall say):* (**GROOM**), please repeat after me.

**I, (GROOM), take you, (BRIDE), / to be my partner in life. / I promise to walk by your side forever, / and to love, help, and encourage you / in all that you do. / I will take time to talk with you, to listen to you, / and to care for you. / I will share your**

**laughter and your tears / as your partner, lover, and best friend. / Everything I am and everything I have is yours / now and forevermore. (Wedding Vow #2a)**

*(The Officiant shall say):* **(BRIDE)**, please repeat after me.

**I, (BRIDE), give myself to you (GROOM), / on this our wedding day. / I will cherish our friendship, / and love you today, tomorrow, and forever. / I will trust you and honor you. / I will love you faithfully / through the best and the worst, / through the difficult and the easy. / Whatever comes our way, I will be there always. / As I have given you my hand to hold, / so I give you my life to keep. (Wedding Vow #2b)**

## **EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS**

The wedding ring is a circle that has no end, and symbolizes the never-ending love that exists between you. The ring is made from precious metal purified by the heat of testing, and is a symbol of the purity of your love for one another. The ring also is made of rare gems that radiate a brilliance and a quality unlike other ordinary stones, and represents the riches that reside in each of you. May these rings always reflect the light of your love throughout your life together.

## **RING EXCHANGE VOWS**

*(The Officiant shall say):* May I have the token of **(GROOM)**'s love for **(BRIDE)**?  
*(Officiant receives ring from Best Man. Groom places ring on Bride's finger.)*

*(The Officiant shall then say):* **(GROOM)**, please repeat after me.

**I give you this ring. / Wear it with love and joy. / As this ring has no end, / neither shall my love for you. / I choose you to be my wife / this day and forevermore. (Ring Vow #5)**

*(The Officiant shall say):* May I have the token of **(BRIDE)**'s love for **(GROOM)**?  
*(Officiant receives ring from Maid of Honor. Bride places ring on Groom's finger.)*

*(The Officiant shall then say):* **(BRIDE)**, please repeat after me.

**This ring I give you / in toke of my love and devotion, / and with my heart, / I pledge to you all that I am. / With this ring, I marry you / and join my life to yours. (Ring Vow #6)**

## **LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE**

*(Or other optional Wedding Tradition)*

When the flames of two individual candles join together, a single brighter light is created from that union. May the brightness of this light shine throughout your lives, giving you courage and reassurance in the darkness. May its warmth give you shelter from the cold, and may its energy fill your spirits with strength and joy. Now as you light this candle, may it symbolize that today you become one . . . hand in hand, heart to heart, flesh to flesh, and soul to soul.

## **WEDDING PRAYER / BLESSING**

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be a shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be a companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place to enter the days of your togetherness. May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years. May happiness be your company ion, and may your days together be good and long upon the earth. (*Apache Blessing*) (*Blessing #2*)

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

(G) and (B), because you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage, and demonstrated this by the exchanging of vows and the giving of rings, I pronounce you husband and wife.

## **KISS**

(*The Officiant shall say*): (**GROOM**), you may kiss your Bride.

(*Bride and Groom kiss.*)

(*Bride receives bouquet from Maid of Honor.*)

## **PRESENTATION**

(*The Officiant shall say*): Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce to you for the very first time, Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_.