

Ceremony Rituals



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Rituals

Unity Candle - In this case, two small candles are placed on the side of one larger candle. The couple each take a small candle that is pre-lit and together, they light the large candle in the middle. This symbolizes 2 flames becoming one, just as their lives are. To symbolize two families becoming one, often times the Mother's of the couple will approach the ceremony space and light the candle's that each person will use to light the larger candle. Then the couple perform the ceremony.

Reverse Unity Candle - Have an unlit candle passed out to each adult guest. To start the candle ceremony, the couple light a single candle together. Then, they use that candle to light those of their bridesmaids and groomsmen, who then start spreading the flame to the rest of the guests. As light is shared among guests, the end result is a community-wide holding of the light. Especially for an evening wedding, the dim light of candles is stunning.



Rituals

Communal Blessing of the Rings / Ring Warming - This is where your family and friends bless your rings (this works best at smaller weddings). The ritual is simple but powerful. We place the wedding bands in a lovely box or decorative pouch to be handed from guest to guest before the ring ceremony begins or during a period of music and reflection. Each guest holds the rings and silently offers a prayer or wish for the couple. In essence, the rings are warmed by the hands and hearts of the guests.



Rituals

Vows to each others children (Blended Families) - For blended families, making vows to each other's children has become a heartwarming part of the wedding day.

Tree Planting Ceremony - Planting a tree is a physical manifestation that symbolises the growth of your relationship. Together you can see the tree grow just as your love and married life does, and you must nurture it in order to keep it alive. So, you gather two pots of dirt, possibly from a special, significant place, and plant a tree in the combined soil.

Water it together with two watering cans (perhaps, again, with water from a meaningful place), or even one shared watering can. You may even consider including your guests or immediate family and friends—ask them to add their own scatters of soil or seeds.

Love Letters Ceremony - In addition to the wine ceremony, some couples choose to include love letters to each other to read when they open the box with wine on their anniversary. You can slide the love letters in an envelope as well and promise to open them “x” amount of years later. You can even include a copy of your vows that you exchanged during the ceremony.

Rituals

Wine Ceremony - A wine box ceremony is a wedding ritual in which, during the proceedings of the wedding ceremony, a bottle of wine is enclosed into a box. Some couples opt to add an extra layer of meaning within the ceremony by including love letters to one another alongside the wine, or by designating a specific occasion (such as a future anniversary) when the box will be opened and the wine will be consumed. Pick a wine of your liking and be sure to choose one that will preserve well. Most wines are stored better horizontally so be sure to make sure it will work well with how you plan on storing it!

Have the wine and the box on display on a table near the altar, along with anything you wish to include in the box (such as letters to one another). When the time comes, have your officiant explain the significance of the wine box. Make sure he or she mentions the wine you've chosen and how long you plan to save the wine (or if you're going to open it to help you get through a tough time or on another occasion).

Then, the two of you will place the wine and any accompanying items into the box and close the lid. Your officiant should explain that you will be sealing the box, but save the hammering for once you're back home, as a long pause in the ceremony for you to hammer the box shut could take a while! You could also choose a box with a latch and a lock, which you could more quickly close with a key mid-ceremony.

Rituals

Water Blending Ceremony - Instead of coloured sand, some couples choose to substitute the sand for coloured water. Simple water with food colouring can create a unique and colourful unity ceremony. Not only can you customize the colours to your wedding day scheme, but you can colour the water to symbolize the core values you want to symbolize in your marriage. For example, yellow water could represent happiness and joy, while blue water could represent friendship and health. Mixed together, the colour green represents growth, stability, and harmony. You can customize this to whatever colours and representations you would like.

An interesting take on the water ceremony is where the individual vials of water have colouring in them and the centre container has some water with a little bleach mixed in. When the couple pours the water together, the colours disappear and the water runs clear due to the bleach. This could have spiritual meaning where two lives are being cleansed and becoming pure together as they begin their new life and path as a married couple.

Rituals

Jumping the Broom - This is a ceremony in which the couple, either at the ceremony or at the reception, signify their entrance into a new life and their creation of a new family by symbolically "sweeping away" their former single lives, former problems and concerns, and jumping over the broom to enter upon a new adventure as partners, or husband and wife. This "leap" into a new life (marriage) is performed in the presence of families and friends. You can be as creative as you want when planning for this special ceremony. The straws of the broom represent family; the handle represents the Almighty/Universe; the ribbon represents the tie that binds the couple together.

Broom jumping is a brief ceremony usually within the wedding ceremony toward the end. The jumping of the broom is symbolic of binding a couple in marriage and also can be used to symbolize fertility and prosperity of the couple. If you decide to use your own broom and decorate it yourself, be sure it coordinates with your wedding colours. Using your own broom can also be a great bonding activity before the wedding. Another idea is to have a basket full of colourful ribbon pieces at the wedding or reception and allow guests to tie ribbons around the broom before the ceremony begins. This allows the audience to participate. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a special person from the audience brings the broom and places it in the path of the wedding couple. They then jump over the broom on their way to the recessional.

Rituals

Stone/Crystal Ceremony - The Oathing stone ceremony embraces the old European/Scottish tradition to add a meaningful highlight to your wedding ceremony. It is where the couple place their hands upon a stone while saying their wedding vows. Called the Oathing stone it was thought to be the best way to express your solemn promise in physical form. Etching your vows in stone is a sacred symbol across cultures. In the Scottish tradition an oath given near a stone or water was considered more binding. During the reading of the couples wedding vows, they hold an Oathing Stone in their hands. It is believed that holding the stone during the reading of the vows casts them into the stone. In some areas of Scotland, the couple would carve their names on a tree or a stone.

In a more modern version, the Oathing Stone can be engraved with the couple's initials in the middle, accompanied by the date of their wedding. Couples have also opted to have seashells, or crystals, instead of stones, bringing their own special intentions and meanings into the moment.

Another version of the stone ceremony is where guests will write a loving message on each stone, or simply make a wish on a stone, crystal or shell, and the couple will keep the collection at the end of the day.

Rituals

Rose/Flower Ceremony - A rose ceremony can be performed after the exchange of vows. In this case, the couple each have a rose that they exchange to one another that will symbolize their first gift to each other as a married couple. The roses can then be dried and preserved. Roses can also be given to each of the couples parents as a gift and a gesture of uniting the families together.



Colour Meanings

HAND FASTING & SAND CEREMONIES

- Red - will, love, strength, fertility, courage, health, vigor, passion.
- Orange - encouragement, adaptability, stimulation, attraction, plenty, kindness.
- Yellow - attraction, charm, confidence, balance, harmony, happiness.
- Green - fertility, luck, prosperity, nurturing, beauty, health, love.
- Dark Blue - safe journey, longevity, strength, communication.
- Light Blue - tranquility, understanding, patience, health, communication.
- Purple - healing, health, strength, power, progress, spiritual connection.
- Black - strength, empowerment, wisdom, vision, success, pure love.
- White - spiritual purity, truth, peace, serenity, devotion.
- Gray - balance, neutrality, used in erasing, canceling, neutralizing, and return to the universe without repercussion.
- Pink - love, unity, honour, truth, romance, happiness.
- Brown - healing, skills & talents, nurturing, home & hearth, the earth.
- Silver - creativity, inspiration, vision, protection.
- Gold - unity, longevity, prosperity, strength.

Hand Fasting

Tying the knot: This is actually one of the oldest wedding traditions that literally binds a couple's hands together. Embracing hands has long been a symbol of love and the ritual of hand fasting dates back to the ancient Mayans, the Hindu Vedic community, and the Celts in Scotland.

Hand fasting is the symbolic act of a couple's hands being tied together often with cords or ribbons, representing their union. Different colours have different meanings, just like in the Sand Ceremony. This ritual was present around the Middle Ages, but hand fasting was a symbol of engagement, not marriage back then, often included in Beltane celebrations. Prior to 1939, it was legally recognised by Scotland as a marriage practice in place of church weddings. The phrase "hand in marriage" also stems from this practice.

This is a beautiful and meaningful ritual, that has the added bonus of bestowing you with a lovely symbolic reminder of your wedding day. There are a few variations of tying the knot across different cultures and couples.

Hand Fasting

METHODS

[\(See more here\)](#)

1. Clasp forearms. Wrap cords around arms and wrists.



2. Place left hands side by side. Knot on top.



Sand Ceremony

Sand Ritual for Couples and Families: A growing favourite wedding ritual, the sand ceremony is a wonderful alternative. It's meaning is simple and beautiful; two becoming one! Or in the case of families, it symbolises the beautiful, complex and layered blending that occurs when we come together in committed relationship, with our partners and with our children.

Couple: The couple mix two different colours of sand into one container, thereby symbolising their lives and hearts entwined. Once combined, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate the sand out again, just as the couple are so joined together. It can be nice to include a 3rd colour, of natural or white, as the top and bottom layer when only the couple are performing this ritual.

Family: The couple and the children (or whoever is being included) all have different coloured sands that they pour into one vessel. Again different colours have different meanings and the end result can be quite stunning and a beautiful ongoing reminder for everyone of what the wedding represented for the whole family.

Sand Ceremony

EXAMPLES

[\(See more here\)](#)



The Asking

EXAMPLES

The Asking is NOT a legal requirement in your wedding ceremony, however many couples like to say I DO! There are lots of options when it comes to 'The Asking'. You can do separate ones, combined ones, funny ones, religious ones. Whatever most clearly reflects the promises and intentions that you would like to bring into your marriage.

1. (Partner 1) do you now choose (Partner 2) to be your life companion, to share your life openly with him/her, to speak truthfully and lovingly to him/her, to accept him/her fully as he/she is and delight in who he/she is becoming, to respect his/her uniqueness, encourage his/ her fulfillment, and compassionately support him/her through all the changes of your years together? (*I do*)
2. (Partner 1) will you take (Partner 2) to be your partner this day, to love her/him, respect her/him as a person, do your best to understand her/his needs, ensure her/his happiness, and actively grow with her/him through all the changes of your years together? (*I do*)

The Asking

EXAMPLES CONT...

3. (Partner 1) will you take (Partner 2) to be your lawful wedded wife/husband this day, standing by her/him no matter what happens, respecting her/him as a person, understanding her/his needs, encouraging her/his fulfillment, loving her/him and enjoying her /his love, until death parts you? *(I will)*

4. Will you take (Partner 1) to be your lawful husband/wife? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, Honor and keep him/her, in sickness and health, And forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him/her As long as you both shall live. *(I will)*

COMBINED

5. (Partner 1 & 2), do you choose to be each other's life companion, to share your life openly with each other, to speak truthfully and lovingly to each other, to accept each other fully as you are and delight in who each of you is becoming, to respect each other's uniqueness and encourage each other's fulfillment, and compassionately support and nurture each other through all the changes of your years together?

The Asking

FUNNY ASKINGS

6. (Partner 1) do you choose to love and cherish (Partner 2), even when she walks in front of the TV when you are watching the football...

(Partner 2), do you choose to love and cherish (Partner 1), even when he leaves the toilet seat up...

7. Do you promise to love, honour, but not obey because that's a little creepy?

8. (Partner 1) do you promise to be the spell checker, grammar friend, and tell (partner 2) when things need hyphens. To be his partner in exercise, even though you are so much faster, and most of all, do you promise to try things, even though you are sure you will not like them, just because he asks you to?

Please Note: Many of these 'askings' can also be turned into personal vows that you speak to one another. Personal Vows are not a legal requirement for your wedding ceremony.

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