

Your Wedding Ceremony



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General information

I am a Civil Marriage Celebrant and a wedding photographer (just not at the same time!). This booklet was originally created as a resource for couples for whom I was officiating their ceremony. I have made it available to couples where I will be photographing your wedding but it is written from the perspective of a celebrant not as a photographer.

Thank you for considering me to be your Marriage Celebrant. Civil Marriage Celebrants are appointed by the Australian Federal Government to officiate at non religious wedding ceremonies. I am aware of the importance of a ceremony that is conducted with clarity, courtesy and confidence. My role on the occasion of your wedding is to ensure that the ceremony reflects your exact needs and wishes while meeting the legal requirements of the Australian Government. At every point of the consultation process I am available to discuss any concerns and possible changes you may have. I wish you every happiness on the occasion of your forthcoming marriage.



Please note: I have been fortunate to be invited to be the officiant at several same sex marriages, I have struggled with wording in this booklet in my attempt to be inclusive of same sex marriages. I often refer to bride and groom. My intention is not to be excluding of same sex couples, please be aware that any gender indicated by bride and or groom can easily be swapped.

Love is love!

All of my wedding resources are available on my website celebratinglifephotography.com.au



youtube coming soon



Checklist to be done before the day:



1. Completion of the Notice of Intended Marriage.

To be lodged with a Marriage Celebrant no earlier than 18 months before and no later than one month, one day before the wedding ceremony.

2. Final selection of wedding ceremony.

When we meet up I will talk to you about your story. I will use this to write a personalised wedding ceremony but in this booklet you will find options for introduction, question and response etc. These are not set in stone, if you like selection 4 but you want to include the last line of selection 5 then please tell me. I will ensure that your wedding ceremony is written the way you want it!

3. Signing of Declarations

This should be completed at the on-site rehearsal but if not then they need to be signed after the NOIM and before the actual ceremony.

4. On-Site Rehearsal

This is optional but would provide a good opportunity for us to practise the structure, length and wording of the ceremony. I recommend an on-site rehearsal where ever possible and if possible having a rehearsal that the same time of day as the ceremony is a good option so we can see where the sun and shade will be.

5. Witnesses

Two people over the age of 18 years are required to assist in the signing of the documents during your wedding ceremony. They may be family members or friends. Brides please note – when you sign your marriage certificate please sign your maiden name.



Booking the venue:

Booking of venue is your responsibility. Some issues to consider when considering location is shelter, access for elderly and any less able bodied guests. If you have selected an outdoor venue, it is advisable to organise an alternative location in case of bad weather. A booking for a public place should be confirmed in writing to you from the relevant authority and you should carry this letter with you on the day of the wedding ceremony (this letter can go in the mother of the brides handbag or the groomsman's jacket pocket).

Music for your ceremony:

The inclusion, choice and organisation of music is your responsibility. You need to appoint a responsible and reliable guest to conduct this part of the ceremony. Selecting 4 songs is recommended.

- 1 song for walking down the aisle,
- 2 for signing (depending on your photographer your signing could take 1 minute or 5 or 6 minutes – best to have 2 songs just in case)
- 1 song for walking back down the aisle.

If you want specific pre and post ceremony music then please bring that along otherwise I have a few 'wedding music' playlists in my bag so guests aren't arriving to silence.

Table and chairs for signing:

If required, I supply a table to be used for the signing of documents. It is the size and shape of a card table which I cover with a white tablecloth. You may like to make alternative arrangements for your own choice of table and/or covering.

Legal documents required BEFORE the wedding

Before the ceremony I need to sight:
Birth certificates or Passport
Photo ID - drivers license or proof of age card
Divorce or death certificates if there has been a previous marriage.



Suggested wedding ceremony structure:

1. An introduction

2. Readings

- It is suggested that if you have readers you ask them to make a small personal introduction before each reading, i.e. bride and groom, I read this poem to you as you would read it to one another.

3. Monitum

- This is a compulsory section of the wedding.

4. Question and response

5. Exchanging of wedding vows (must include the compulsory section but before or after the compulsory part is up to you, you can write your own vows or select from the vows I have included in this booklet or you can mix and match. All I ask is that if you write your own vows you give me a copy of them a couple of days before the ceremony. – I need them if you are going to repeat after me but I prefer to have them even if you are memorizing the vows just in case you need me to prompt you)

6. Exchanging of wedding rings

7. Pronouncement/declaration of marriage

8. Signing of register, certificate and other documents

9. Conclusion

Some points to consider:

Will the bride/s or groom/s be given away or will you both arrive together or mingle with guests beforehand?

Will there be attendants (eg. best man, matron of honour, bridesmaids, pages and flower girls)?

Will either/both bride or groom be changing their name?

Do you plan to memorise your vows, have them written down on card or repeat after the celebrant?

Does the date of your wedding clash with any events of a cultural, sporting and government nature; eg AFL Grand Final Day, Australia Day fireworks, public holiday etc?

Will you mix and match the wording of your ceremony from samples or compose your own?

Will traffic (noise) and parking be an issue at your wedding?

If you are getting married at a popular wedding venue (i.e. Kings Park) then how will your guests know which ceremony is yours?

If you are thinking of Swan Shell in Burswood is the helicopter likely to be operating tours (it is very loud and will mean that we have to stop every time it takes off or lands. This can make a 20 minute ceremony last up to 40 minutes).

Introductions



Sample 1:

Celebrant: Good afternoon my name is Emma Basc and I have been asked by (....) and (....) to conduct their marriage ceremony. It is on their behalf that I welcome you here today on such a special occasion and to acknowledge the significant and valued place you all hold in their lives. Love and thoughts are also offered to those family and friends not here today but whose lives (....) and (....) share.

And so I ask, who brings this woman to be married?

FoB: I do.

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

Today is a special day for the bride and groom. A day when they stand apart from invited guests as an open expression of their love. You have been invited to share one of the most special times of their lives. Their decision to enter into marriage is not taken lightly but as a full commitment and is approached with a sense of joy and anticipation of a continued happy life together. (....) and (....) believe that marriage is founded on mutual sincerity and understanding.

They intend to build their marriage with confidence, faith and respect for each other. Marriage will be the start of a new commitment. A new beginning to their already established relationship. There will be a continuation of openness and full discussion, trust and encouragement.

In marriage each of them will have separate needs, values and expectations. They believe that their love will give them the strength to achieve all goals together.

Sample 2:

Celebrant: Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Father of the bride: I do.

Celebrant: Thank you.

Good afternoon, my name is Emma Basc and I have been asked by (....) and (....) to conduct their wedding ceremony. You have been invited as guests, not only to witness their commitment to each other, but also to wish them every happiness for their life together.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?

FoB: I do

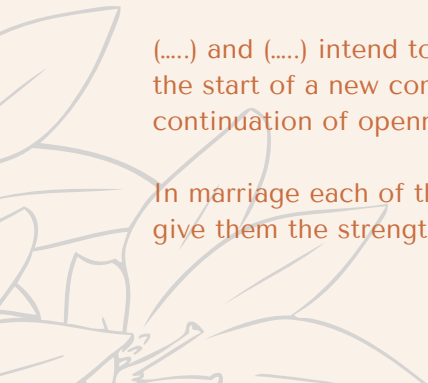
Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

We are here today to celebrate the love (....) and (....) have for each other and to give official recognition to their decision to accept each other totally and without reservation. Their decision to enter into marriage is not taken lightly but as a full commitment and is approached with a sense of joy and anticipation of a continued happy life together.

(....) and (....) intend to build their marriage with confidence, faith and respect for each other. Marriage will be the start of a new commitment, a new beginning to their already established relationship. There will be a continuation of openness, trust and encouragement.

In marriage each of them will have separate needs, values and expectations. They believe that their love will give them the strength to achieve all goals together.



Introductions



Sample 3:

Celebrant: Good evening, my name is Emma Basc and on behalf of () and (), I welcome you to witness their marriage and to wish them every happiness for their life together as husband and wife.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?

FoB: I do

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

The pleasure of sharing experiences together is what marriage often symbolises but it is important to remember that a good marriage recognises and encourages the dreams and aspirations of the individual. That courtesy and respect is a strong basis for the couple's mutual goals. () and () 's marriage will be the start of a new beginning and commitment to their already established relationship.

Sample 4:

This song has been selected by (....) for (....) and it epitomises why they're now standing before you and I. Good evening, my name is Emma Basc and I have been invited by (....) and (....) to conduct their marriage ceremony. (....) and (....) felt that this home which they have created together is an appropriate place to celebrate the cementing of their love for each other.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?

FoB: I do

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

Sample 5:

(.....) and (.....) have decided to seal their marriage with this wedding, so on their behalf, I welcome you here this evening.

The experience of their love touches all of us and it is fitting that we should celebrate their happiness. This wedding gives public recognition to the private experience of their love.

At a different level we share in it, we rejoice for them and we support them.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?

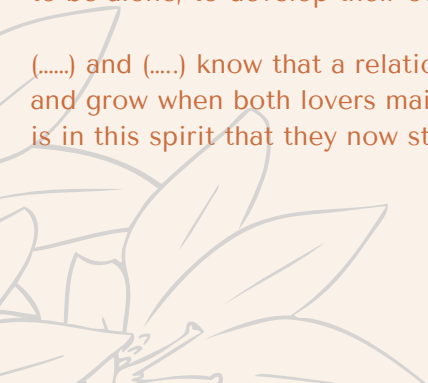
FoB: I do

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

Though marriage means the greatest intimacy between two loves that is possible to humankind, this closeness should not diminish but allow each partner to grow as an individual and encourage the other's need to be alone, to develop their own talents and qualities.

(.....) and (.....) know that a relationship of ultimate love can never be taken for granted but can only survive and grow when both lovers maintain the will to openly and sensitively develop their relationship as equals. It is in this spirit that they now stand before us.



Introductions



Sample 6:

Celebrant: Good morning, my name is Emma Basc and on behalf of (.....) and (.....), I welcome you to their wedding ceremony.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?

FoB: I do

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

The Melbourne poet, Judy Bielicki has this observation on the value of a good relationship between two people who love each other.

"It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round. However, without doubt, it is friendship that keeps our spinning existence on an even keel.

True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life- it is the strong foundation on which to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and it is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic.

True friendship holds a mirror to our foibles and failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness. True friendship nurtures us to grow to our best potential.

(.....) and (.....) came together as friends. Today they pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and most importantly, the fun of true friendship.

Sample 7:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, my name is Emma Basc and it is my honor to be here to welcome you, the family and friends of (...) and (...), to join in the love and happiness on this their wedding day.

And so I ask; who brings this woman to be married?


FoB: I do

Thank you

Personal introduction to be written based on information from bride and groom

Every wedding ceremony at which a clergyman or celebrant is asked to officiate is of course a marriage that already exists. This ceremony gives social recognition to a union that has already taken place in the hearts of the couple.

It is (...) and (...) wish at this time to declare their marriage partnership to the world. It is a statement of commitment to each other and to the ideals they already have and share.



Monitum

One of the two compulsory sections of the ceremony:

(...) and (...)

I am duly authorized by law to solemnize 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 two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.



Question and Response

Response may be in the form of "I do" or "I will".

Sample 1:

(.....), do you take (.....) to be your lawful wedded wife/husband? Do you promise to love and respect her/him, be honest with her/him, and stand by her/him through whatever may come so you can genuinely share your life together?

(...): I do.

Sample 2:

(.....) Will you take (.....) to be your lawful wedded husband/wife? To have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

(.....): I will.

Wedding Vows



Second of the two compulsory sections of the ceremony:

Compulsory section that must be included somewhere in the vows:

I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, (full name), take thee, (full name), to be my lawful wedded husband/wife.

In addition to the compulsory vows, couples can write their own vows or use one of the samples or a combination:

Sample 1:

I, take you to be my partner,
To share both the happy and unhappy times,
As a couple.

Sample 2:

To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse,
for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part.

Sample 3:

To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

Sample 4:

I promise to love, respect and nurture you
be honest with you and stand by you
through all that we may share together.

Sample 5:


I ask our family and friends present today,
to witness my vows that I make freely,
as a sign of my love and commitment to you.
I vow to love and honour,
respect and be loyal to you
Through good times and bad
As long as we both shall live.

Sample 6:

I take you to be my partner, To share both the good and the bad times,
As a couple
And as a family.

Sample 7:

To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.



Exchange of Rings

Something to think about - who will have the rings?:



Sample 1:

(bride/groom) with this wedding ring
I wed you and pledge my eternal love.

Sample 2:

(...) with this ring,
I thee wed
Take and wear it
As a pledge of my loyalty
And of our unity.

Sample 3:

(.....), with this ring,
I declare my love and commitment to you.
Take it and wear it
As a pledge of my loyalty
And as a symbol
Of all we share.

Sample 4:

(.....) I give you this ring as a symbol of my deepest love and respect for you. I thank you for our precious family. I look forward to our future lives together.

Sample 5:

(....), I offer this ring
as a pledge of my lasting love
and as a symbol of all we share.
I promise to encourage you and
hold your above all others.

Declaration

Something to think about - who will you have as your witnesses?



Sample 1:

() and () you have taken vows to love and to encourage each other in your years ahead. You have both come here openly and freely with love in your hearts. You have sealed your promises with the giving and receiving of rings. It therefore gives me much pleasure to pronounce you husband and wife.
You may kiss the bride/groom.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will be taking just a few moments to sign the wedding documents. Please come feel free to chat among yourselves while this part of the ceremony is being conducted. I call upon () and () to act as witnesses.

Sample 2:

(.....) and (.....) have invited family and friends here today to witness the public declaration of their marriage and to share in their happiness. Therefore, it is on your behalf that I have much pleasure in declaring them to be now married. Now might be a good time for a kiss!

We now ask for your patience as () and () take a few moments to sign their wedding documents. I call upon () and () to act as witnesses. Please feel free to chat among yourselves while the wedding papers are being signed.

Sample 3:

Family and friends, it gives me great pleasure to pronounce (.....) and (.....) husband and wife.

You may kiss your bride/groom

At this point (.....) and (.....) will sign their wedding papers.

Please bear with us for a few moments as the legal documents are completed. While this procedure is being conducted, a song for (.....) from (.....) will be played. I call upon (.....) and (.....) to act as witnesses.

Sample 4:

Ladies and gentleman, () and () have declared before us all that they will live together in marriage. They have made special promises to each other. They have symbolised it by joining hands, taking vows and by exchanging rings. So therefore on your behalf and on behalf of the community I now declare them to be husband and wife. You may kiss your bride/groom.

Please stay seated while we sign the wedding documents.

Conclusion

Something to think about - will you walk back down the aisle or will you invite your guests to come to you?

Sample 1:

Celebrant: Ladies and Gentlemen. As I present the bride and groom with their official marriage certificate can I ask you to all please stand and join me in welcoming for the very first time Mr and Mrs

Sample 2:

Celebrant: I introduce to you for the first time, (.....) and (.....) (.....) who are now husband and wife..
We welcome you to come forward and offer your congratulations.

Sample 3:

Celebrant: I introduce to you for the first time, (.....) and (.....) (.....). Please raise your glasses in a toast to the bride and groom.

We welcome you to come forward and offer your congratulations.





Congratulations on your engagement!

This booklet is the first of a three part series. Additional parts to follow include a booklet with options for ceremonies and readings and a third booklet with hints and tips.

They all compliment my book 'Oh My Goodness I'm Getting Married - Now What' which is available via Kindle or available for all of my wedding couples. Ask me where you can find your copy.