

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Marriage is an important and far-reaching step. It is protected by the State and is recognised as one of the foundation stones of our society. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share together in a life of adventure and joy as they discover each other and the life and blessing God has for them. This makes it a solemn, public and lifelong covenant, made between a man and a woman, but celebrated in the presence of a priest and a congregation.

It is important that you take the time to plan your service. Following is an outline of a wedding service then a range of options for each heading. Go through each section and select the option which you like best. You wish to make some amendments or write your own. Feel free to do this but I need to give final approval.

- A. Music In
 - 1. Introduction (Saying why we are here, what we are doing, why etc...)
 - 2. Opening Greeting
 - 3. Opening Prayer
 - 4. Readings & Comments (see separate section)
 - B. Hymn (see separate section)
 - Address
 - 5. Declarations
 - 6. Affirmation Of Support From Parents)
 -) - may be omitted
 - 7. Affirmation Of Support From Friends)
 - 8. Prayer
 - 9. Vows
 - 10. Blessing of Ring(s)
 - 11. Giving of Ring(s)
 - 12. Formal Announcement
 - 13. Blessing Prayer
 - 14. Prayers for the Couple and their future
 - 15. Final Blessing
- C. HYMN
 - D. Signing of license
 - E. Music out.

The Wedding Service

1. INTRODUCTION

(a) We have come together in the presence of God to witness and celebrate the marriage of N and N. Marriage is a gift of God in creation. Of all human relationships it best makes known to us the union of Christ with his Church. God intends that husband and wife should be united in heart, body and mind, and find in their union the fulfilment of their love for each other, and the stability necessary for family life and the care of children. Marriage, therefore, involves a serious and lifelong commitment in mutual love and joy to seek each other's good in a union of strength, sympathy and delight.

(b) God has created us in his image; male and female he has created us. It is in his love we are drawn to each other. So we come now to witness, support and commend to him the marriage of N and N. God's purposes never change; ours so much depend on the grace and adequacy of the partner. His love will never fail; ours needs to forgive and be forgiven. Those who marry in his love are God's ministers to each other of reconciliation and change.

(c) We have come together to witness the promise of N and N in marriage, to share with them in their happiness and in their hopes for the future. Marriage involves caring and giving. It involves learning to share one's life with another person; forgiving as Christ forgives; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together. It involves facing together whatever adversity may arise.

Here, before God, N and N wish to pledge their love for each other and their desire to spend their lives together.

(d) We have gathered to celebrate the marriage of N and N. Marriage is the promise of hope between a man and a woman who love one another, who trust that love, and who wish to share the future with each other. It enables two separate people to share their desires, longings, dreams and memories, and to help each other through their uncertainties. It provides the encouragement to risk more, and thus to gain more.

In marriage husband and wife belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their children may grow. Society recognises and affirms their relationship, and they begin a new life together in the community.

2. OPENING GREETING

(a) N and N, we rejoice with you; we are glad to join with you in the celebration of your marriage; to witness your vows, to pray with you and to wish you joy in your life together.

(b) N and N, you are welcome. Pray that God will uphold and cheer your life together, that the promises you make be honourable, your words true, now and in time to come.

(c) N and N before you can take your vows we want to wish you the riches that marriage can bring. So let us ask for a blessing on this marriage. Let us pray.

3. OPENING PRAYER

(a) Father, touch us with an awareness of your presence in all the world around us as we gather here. Awaken in us a sense of wonder at your creation and love, as we share in this marriage of N and N. Deepen our love for those close to us, and for those who, although strangers need our concern.. Help N and N as they commit themselves to each other, and grant to us all a heightened sense of joy in life, because we share this moment with them. Amen.

(b) Lord, we thank you for the gift of marriage and for the joys it brings. Bless us as we gather together to share in this marriage, to give you thanks for the love which brings N and N to each other and makes them want to share that love for the rest of their lives. Amen.

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(c) Father of all, we are grateful for all that is important and precious in life. In particular, we are glad that N and N have decided to commit themselves to one another within the context of the marriage relationship. Bless them and our celebration with your love in the name of Jesus. Amen.

(d) Father, we pray that the love N and N have for each other will never die, but deepen and increase as time goes by. May their love and care for each other last a lifetime. May this act of marriage start them on the lifelong task of honest sharing and open communication, and we ask that their example of love be that of Jesus Christ who has shown us the meaning of loving acceptance and self-giving service. Amen

B. OPENING HYMN

4. READINGS.

ADDRESS

5. DECLARATIONS.

(a)

Priest (first to the bridegroom, then to the Bride):

N, do you wish to marry N? . .

Answer: I do.

Priest: Will you love her/him, comfort her/him,
honour and keep her/him in sickness and in health,
and be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?.

Answer: With the Lords help, I will.

(b)

Priest: N and N will you make your public declaration?

Bridegroom: I wish to marry N.

Bride: I wish to marry N.

(c)

Priest: N. will you take N. to be your wife/husband?
Will you share her/his joys and ease her/his burdens?
Will you be honest with her/him
and be faithful to her/him always as long as you live?

Answer I will, with the help of God.

(d)

Priest: N. do you love and trust N.
and want to live with her/him,
sharing, everything?

Answer: Yes I do.

Priest: Will you stand by her/him no matter what happens,
respecting her/him as a person,
understanding her/his needs,
and enjoying her/his love until death parts you?

Answer: Yes I will.

(e)

Priest: N. sharing with N. in a relationship of love,
tenderness and laughter,
will you stand by her/him through all her/his tomorrows,
respecting her/him as a person,
her/his individuality, her/his needs,
her/his changes, and enjoying her/his love through
all your life together?

Answer: I will.

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6. AFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

- (a) Priest (to the parents):
As N and N enter a new life together,
do you, their parents, rejoice with them?
Parents: We do. May God bless you both
- (b) Priest (to the parents):
Will you, their parents, accept and support this marriage?
Parents: We will, and may God bless them both.
- (c) Priest (to the parents):
Are you willing to strengthen this marriage
by upholding both N and N with your love and concern?
Parents: We are.
- (d) Priest (to the parents):
In this new relationship between N and N do you,
as their parents, pledge your loving support?
Parents: We do. May you find a rich and full life together.
- (e) Priest (to the parents):
Parents, by their presence, are saying to N and N
that they pledge their loving support.
Do you, the parents of N and N,
give them to be married?
Parents: We do.
- (f) Priest: (to the Bride's Father)
Do you support the marriage of N to N?
Bride's Father: I do.
- (g) Priest
Who gives N to be married to N
Parent(s): I do

7 AFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

- (a) Priest (to the whole congregation)
You have come to witness this exchange of vows.
Will you do all in your power to support this marriage now,
and in the years ahead?
People: We will
- (b) Priest (to the congregation)
Will you do all in your power to support this couple now, and in the years ahead?
People: We will

8. PRAYER.

Eternal God, creator and sustainer of all mankind, give your grace to N and N Grant that their vows may be sincere, their love wholehearted, and that in the strength of the Holy Spirit they may grow together in the love, joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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9. VOWS.

(a) Bridegroom:

I, N, take you, N, to be my wife,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

Bride:

I, N take you, N, to be my husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

(b) Bridegroom:

N, all that I have I offer you; wherever you go I will go,
what you have to give I gladly receive, and so I take you for my wife.
I pray God will grant us lifelong fidelity.

Bride:

N, all that I have I offer you; wherever you go I will go,
what you have to give I gladly receive, and so I take you for my husband.
I pray God will grant us lifelong fidelity.

(c) Bridegroom:

N, today I take you to be my wife.
Whatever life may bring I will love you and care for you always.

Bride:

N, as you take me to be your wife, so I take you joyfully to be my husband.
Whatever life may bring I will love you and care for you always.

(e) Bridegroom:

N, I take you to be my wife, to be with you whatever happens to us,
in comfort or in hardship, in health or in sickness, in sorrow and in joy.
I will love, protect and serve you to the end of my life.
This I vow before God.

Bride:

N, I take you to be my husband, to be with you whatever happens to us,
in comfort or in hardship, in health or in sickness, in sorrow and in joy.
I will love, protect and serve you to the end of my life.
This I vow before God.

(f) Bridegroom:

N, I have lived with you and I love you.
Today I give myself to be your husband
and I take you to be my wife.
Whatever life may bring,
I will love you and care for you always.

Bride:

N, I have lived with you and I love you.
Today I give myself to be your wife
and I take you to be my husband.
Whatever life may bring,
I will love you and care for you always.

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10. BLESSING OF RINGS.

(a) Bless, gracious Lord, this ring grant that he who gives it and she who wears it may be faithful to each other and continue in love to their lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(b) Lord, may your blessing encircle this symbol of the love of N and N. Lead them together, gracious Lord. Grant they grow old in your favour and keep them in your love eternally.

(c) Let this/these ring/s say to all that your commitment is deep and everlasting.

(d) Lord, bless these rings, so that those who wear them may ever live in love and trust with each other.

Amen

(f) Wedding rings serve as a symbol of the vows you have just made. They are the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible love which binds your lives together. As they are of the finest of earth's materials, so your love is of the richest of human values. As the rings are without edge or seam, having no beginning and no end, so they symbolise the perfection of love which knows no end.

11. GIVING OF RINGS.

(a) N, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow.
With my body I honour you,
and all that I have I share with you.

(b) N, with this ring I wed you.
With my body I honour you.
God make me your true husband (wife), in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

(c) N I give you this ring to be a token of my constant faithfulness and love, and as a symbol that all I have I share with you.

(d) Let this ring symbolise our one life together.

(e) N this ring I give you, in token of our marriage vow.
May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love and of all that we share together.

12. FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT

(a) Priest (joining their right hands)
N and N. have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, and have declared their marriage by joining hands and the giving and receiving of a ring (of rings). They are now therefore husband and wife.

(b) May God so join you together that nothing shall ever part you.

(c) N and N you are now husband and wife. Become one. Fulfil your promises.
Love and serve the Lord.

(d) N and N you have expressed the love you have for each other and your hopes for the future.
You have made promises to each other, and have symbolised them by joining hands and giving rings. You are now husband and wife.

(e) N and N, you have made promises to each other and have exchanged rings as a symbol of your love. I now pronounce you to be husband and wife.

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13. BLESSING PRAYER.

(a) The power of God keep you, the love of God be in your life and work, the grace of God strengthen your love that it may endure for ever; and the almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless you and protect you all the days of your life. Amen

(b) N and N you are welcome now as husband and wife; may God enrich the life you have chosen, and fulfil your hopes. Pray for his blessing, and we will pray with you. Holy Creator Spirit, you made us and you change us. Let your loving wisdom work for N and N, deepening and developing their desire, moulding and freeing their generosity. May they achieve stability and sweetness in their daily lives, until their lives shall end; and may they train, support, inspire the children with whom you entrust them, to enjoy your blessing and to serve your world. Amen

(c) May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless, preserve and keep you. May he give you light to guide you, and love to unite you, that you may be faithful to the vows you have made this day, and live together in joy and peace till your lives end. Amen.

(d) N and N, you have committed yourselves to one another in love, joy and tenderness. May the blessing which I have found in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be yours as well. Amen.

14. PRAYERS

Eternal God, creator of us all,
we praise you for all the joys that can come to men and women through marriage.

Today we especially pray for N and N as they begin their married life.
With them we thank you for the love and care of their parents,
which has guided them to maturity and prepared them for this commitment.

Give them strength to keep the vows they have made,
to be loyal and faithful to each other, and support each other throughout their life,
that they may bear each other's burdens and share each other's joys.
Help them to be honest with each other, *and to be wise and loving parents to any children they may have,*
and to welcome both friends and strangers into their home.

In all their future together may they enjoy each other and grow through the love they share,
until, at the end of this life, you receive us into your eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

The Lords Prayer - Old Version

Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass
against us
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom
the power and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen.

The commonly used version:

Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from a time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen

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15. FINAL BLESSING

- a The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and forever. Amen.

- b Go in peace. May your love grow throughout your life together, through all the trials and triumphs that lie ahead of you.
N and N go now in peace.
(to the congregation)
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and for ever. Amen.

- c God's love refresh the lives of all of you here today.
May the vows made by N and N remind us of our love for others.
May the friendship we have for them grow in meaning as the years pass; And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

C. HYMN-

D. Signing of license

E. Music out.