



Casually Elegant Weddings

individualized service for quality results in Las Vegas

Greetings,

Your wedding will be one of the most significant events in your life, just as marriage will be a life-changing process. To help you plan, this document will cover many of the basics and options of a wedding ceremony. It's organized into three sections, weddings: 1) not mentioning God; 2) mentioning God, but not particularly religious; 3) additional customization. Within each section you'll find parts that are entirely optional. And because it's impossible to include all the unique ways your ceremony can be constructed, please remember that you may add, delete, or change almost anything. "Cut and paste" freely, request more alternatives, or include elements of your own design. We encourage you to imagine what will be most memorable to you.

It isn't necessary for you to read through any (or all) of this, as we can tailor your ceremony through phone or Skype conversations, or personal meetings. But we find that many brides like to see a foundation upon which we can build. Then, you may enjoy considering options.

Although you can be as involved as you choose, and will always have the final word, we are prepared to design an individualized service for you. It is not necessary for you to do all the detail work yourself.

Regarding the ceremony, we strongly encourage you to set aside any thoughts or comparisons about "the right way" of doing things — with the single exception that your ceremony ought to reflect the two of you. That's why we hope you will critique the suggestions displayed here. This is *your* day, *your* wedding, and it doesn't have to be like any other. If you'd like to go in a specific direction but aren't quite sure how to get there, phone us (702-580-6589), discuss your thoughts, and we'll help you reach your desired result.

Our goals are many but condense down to these: Your ceremony will be treasured. It will fit your personality in a wonderful way. It will be comfortable.

Pastor Ed Bruning

General suggestions

A bit of basic thought applies to all three sections which will follow. There are a thousand and one things that can help make your wedding what you've intended it to be, and many will show up from time-to-time in our blog, but these basics are listed to serve as quick answers to common questions:



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- The elements of your wedding ceremony can be arranged in almost any order. Likewise, most are optional and all can be worded differently. This guide shows what works well for a great many couples but you may prefer something else. We can usually adjust to your preference, though we will offer advice if we think there may be difficulties achieving the ceremony you're aiming for.
- Pay attention to one another's stress throughout your engagement and preparation. Help one another when you are needed. Give one another a break when you can. Protect one another from insistent relatives and pushy people.
- Common sense and personal preference should rise above every other consideration as you plan and experience your wedding.
- Be yourselves. Nothing can make a wedding more personal, intimate, and successful than to see the two of you being yourselves.
- Look into one another's eyes as you say your vows. The emotions you'll experience will be greater than words can contain.
- Allow your focus to be on your feelings and on one another. Hold hands and face one another (unless you must look aside in order to regain composure).
- Walk naturally (though maybe a bit slower than normal). Stand comfortably, flexibly. Allow yourself to laugh and cry.
- Brides: Practice lifting floor length gowns from your feet so that this can be done confidently when using stairs and when turning. Wear your dress for at least an hour at some point before your wedding, experiencing the full range of your natural motion, so that you'll be as comfortable as possible. Break in your shoes before the wedding. Bring a pair of flats for relief when you need it.
- Brides: If someone is walking you down the aisle, we'll "ask the question" any way you want. Possible responses include 'I do'; 'Her father and I do'; 'Her mother and I do'; or 'We do' (spoken by parents, or by extended family or friends). We don't expect responses to be memorized.
- We won't use the word "obey" but can substitute the phrase "rely upon" if you ask for this traditional wording. It was originally meant to remind the husband of his bride's trust and therefore his responsibility to be trustworthy.
- We do not include the formerly traditional question: "If anyone knows any reason why this couple should not be joined together in marriage, let him speak now or forever hold his peace."
- Please help us with phonetic spellings (pronunciations) of the names you'd like spoken during the ceremony — and the way you each want to be addressed informally, in your vows, and at the conclusion of the ceremony.
- Weddings we perform within the church always include pre-marital discussions. These generally help the ceremony mesh with the couple and their



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interests; and assist in highlighting strengths and addressing work areas in ways that will be valuable in their married life. We've included resources in our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials in case you want a similar opportunity. We'll also be available to you for such discussions, either long-distance or whenever you happen to be in town.

Section One – Weddings Not Mentioning God

The Pastor May Say ^[optional]

'Who presents this woman in marriage to this man?'

WELCOME

In the beauty of this place, we gather as a family of friends. We are excited and happy to celebrate the marriage of _____ and _____. We hope that everyone today will experience a renewed appreciation of the miracle of love as _____ and _____ become husband and wife.

OPTIONAL READINGS

REMARKS CONCERNING LOVE ^[optional, but recommended]

This part is essentially your "gift" to your guests. They have come to celebrate – and are therefore focused on – the two of you. But what is happening inspires them to think broadly. For a brief moment, this part of your ceremony becomes theirs too. Without any obvious attempt to do so, you are encouraging your guests to think about love in their own lives. This is good for them as well as for you. It generally leads to more personal conversations at your reception.

CONCERNING THE WEDDING GUESTS ^[optional]

_____ and _____, the family and friends who surround you today are honored to have been invited to share this moment. We celebrate your marriage. But not only today. Yes, what is happening here carries the stamp of our confidence in you. What happens in the days and years hence will be evidence of it.

_____ and _____, as you speak your vows of lifelong faithfulness to each other, we, your family and friends, declare our vows of personal commitment to your complete and continuing happiness as husband and wife.

INTENTIONS

_____ and _____, you have come here to be united in marriage, which consists



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in your mutual consent, sincerely and freely given; it is proper, then, to declare, in the presence of these witnesses, the sincere intent you both have.

Then the pastor will say to the groom

_____, will you have _____ to be your wife, to openly share your life with her? Will you love her, cherish her, honor her, encourage her, and tenderly care for her in all the changing circumstances of life — and putting her above all else, remain true to her in every way?

Will you make this pledge to _____ that if ever marriage is difficult you will believe it can work, you will want it to work, and will you do your part to make it work? And when all is wonderful, and you are rejoicing over your life together, that you will continue to keep your marriage growing and strong so long as you both live?

[The groom answers naturally, often saying: I will.]

Then the pastor will say to the bride

_____, will you have _____ to be your husband, to openly share your life with him? Will you love him, cherish him, honor him, and tenderly care for him in all the changing circumstances of life — and, putting him above all else, remain true to him in every way?

Will you make this pledge to _____ that if ever marriage is difficult you will believe it can work, you will want it to work, and will you do your part to make it work? And when all is wonderful, and you are rejoicing over your life together, that you will continue to keep your marriage growing and strong so long as you both live?

[The bride answers naturally, often saying: I will.]

Then the pastor will say

As you intend, so shall it be!

THE WEDDING VOWS

Many sample vows can be downloaded from our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials. The vows shown here are deliberately simple, positive, and easy to repeat — allowing you to experience all of this wonderful moment without the stress of having to “say it just right”.

The groom, facing the bride, shall take her hands in his, look into her eyes and say (repeating after the pastor):



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I, _____, in the presence of these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my wife, and solemnly pledge to you my loyalty and love, so long as we live.

Then the woman shall say (repeating after the pastor):

I, _____, in the presence of these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my husband, and solemnly pledge to you my loyalty and love, so long as we live.

THE BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS [optional]

The pastor will now extend his hands towards the best man, who shall remove the rings from his pocket. The pastor will return to the bride and groom. The groom will take the bride's ring and place it on the fourth finger of her left hand. The bride will similarly receive and give the groom's ring.

The pastor will say

Wedding rings speak of love. Each ring is a perfect circle without beginning or end. Each is made of the most lasting and beautiful of materials. Giving and accepting these rings testifies to the completeness of your vows. Each time you look at them, be reminded of the excellence and worth you have each brought into this marriage.

Each shall in turn say (after the pastor) while placing a ring on the other's finger

Receive this ring as a pledge and reminder of my devotion and respect for you.

Then the pastor will say

May the wearing of these rings be forever a symbol of the unity that you, as husband and wife, will cultivate throughout all your adventures, all your life!

OPTIONAL "CEREMONIES WITHIN THE CEREMONY" [see details in our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials]

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Then the pastor will again join their hands and say:

Because _____ and _____ have consented together to be married and have declared their love, for all the world to know, it is my great pleasure to declare that you are husband and wife! What here has been joined together, let nothing tear apart.

KISS OF LOVE AND DEVOTION

*The pastor will say: Ladies and Gentlemen, I present you _____ and _____
_____. Please let us know your preferred way of saying this.*



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Section Two – Spiritual Weddings Mentioning God

Religion and spirituality are not necessarily the same, nor do people define either of them uniformly. Weddings performed using our services here are not church weddings, therefore are not specifically religious weddings. We are Christians and may be able present your ceremony in ways that honor your Roman Catholic or Protestant traditions – with neither subscription to nor denigration of the breadth and depth of your church’s doctrine. We serve with 1 Corinthians 9:22 and Romans 8:1 always in mind. Certainly we hope that by performing weddings “outside the church” God’s Spirit will work through us to reach people who might otherwise never encounter a pastor. We’re always ready to answer questions about our beliefs (1 Peter 3:15) but never use weddings for preaching or overt persuasion. We will respect you and appreciate your respect towards us.

References to God may be generalized [“God”] or as specific [“Jesus Christ”] as you choose, and as often as you choose. We will respect you. We cannot however, in good conscience, speak of God using names not found in the Old or New Testaments of the Bible.

The Pastor May Say [optional]

‘Who presents this woman in marriage to this man?’ or
‘Who has the honor of blessing this marriage?’

WELCOME

In the beauty of this place, we gather as a family of friends. We are excited and happy to celebrate the marriage of _____ and _____. We hope that everyone today will experience a renewed appreciation of the miracle of love as _____ and _____ become husband and wife.

CALL TO WORSHIP [optional]

We are gathered here to present _____ and _____ before God to be united in marriage, in accord with the unchangeable truth, “It is not good that man should be alone (Genesis 2:18), therefore a man shall ... be joined to his wife, and they shall become one (Genesis 2:24).”

PRAYER [optional – more samples are included in our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials]

God of love, shower your grace upon _____ and _____, who come to you and pledge to live together in holy marriage. Mix abundant wisdom and devotion in with their unity, that each may generously give to the other strength, counsel, comfort, and companionship. When difficulties or conflicts arise, as life presents these, give patience and permanence to this marriage. Sustain their love with faith and abiding hope. Give _____ and _____ such fulfillment of mutual affection that their marriage will be an example and an inspiration to all. In the name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



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OPTIONAL READINGS

REMARKS CONCERNING LOVE [optional, but recommended]

This part is essentially your “gift” to your guests. They have come to celebrate — and are therefore focused on — the two of you. But what is happening inspires them to think broadly. For a brief moment, this part of your ceremony becomes theirs too. Without any obvious attempt to do so, you are encouraging your guests to think about love in their own lives. This is good for them as well as for you. It generally leads to more personal conversations at your reception.

CONCERNING THE WEDDING GUESTS [optional]

True marriage can never be private, because it has the character of proclamation and celebration. Not only on the wedding day, but in its entirety, marriage is to be respected and upheld by all. It is therefore with joy and commitment that family and friends have come together to bless this wedding.

What happens today carries the stamp of our happiness. What happens in the days and years hence will be evidence of our integrity — the fulfillment of our pledge to encourage and support the blessing we are giving today. _____ and _____, as you speak your vows of lifelong faithfulness to each other, we declare our vows of personal commitment to your marriage.

INTENTIONS

_____ and _____, you have come here to be united in marriage, which consists in your mutual consent, sincerely and freely given; it is proper, then, to declare, in the presence of God and these witnesses, the sincere intent you both have.

Then the pastor will say to the groom

_____, will you have _____ to be your wife, to openly share your life with her [optional: in full accord with God’s Word]? Will you love her, cherish her, honor her, encourage her, and tenderly care for her in all the changing circumstances of life — and putting her above all others, remain true to her in every way?

Will you make this pledge to _____ that if ever marriage is difficult you will believe it can work, you will want it to work, and will you do your part to make it work? And when all is wonderful, and you are rejoicing over your life together, that you will continue to keep your marriage growing and strong so long as you both live?

[The groom answers naturally, often saying: I will.]



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Then the pastor will say to the bride

_____, will you have _____ to be your husband, to openly share your life with him [optional: in full accord with God's Word]? Will you love him, cherish him, honor him, [optional: rely upon him,] and tenderly care for him in all the changing circumstances of life — and putting him above all others, remain true to him in every way?

Will you make this pledge to _____ that if ever marriage is difficult you will believe it can work, you will want it to work, and will you do your part to make it work? And when all is wonderful, and you are rejoicing over your life together, that you will continue to keep your marriage growing and strong so long as you both live?

[The bride answers naturally, often saying: I will.]

Then the pastor will say

As you intend, by the grace of God so shall it be!

THE WEDDING VOWS

Many sample vows can be downloaded from our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials. The vows shown here are deliberately simple, positive, and easy to repeat – allowing you to experience all of this wonderful moment without the stress of having to “say it just right”.

The groom, facing the bride, shall take her hands in his, look into her eyes and say (repeating after the pastor):

I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my wife, and solemnly pledge to you my loyalty and love, so long as we live.

Then the woman shall say (repeating after the pastor):

I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my husband, and solemnly pledge to you my loyalty and love, so long as we live.

THE BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS [optional]

The pastor will now extend his hands towards the best man, who shall remove the rings from his pocket. The pastor will return to the bride and groom. The groom will take the bride's ring and place it on the fourth finger of her left hand. The bride will similarly receive and give the groom's ring.

The pastor will say

Wedding rings speak of love. Each ring is a perfect circle without beginning or end. Each is made of the most lasting and beautiful of materials. Giving and



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receiving these rings testifies to the completeness of your vows. Each time you look at them, be reminded of the excellence and worth you have each brought into this marriage.

Each shall in turn say (after the pastor) while placing a ring on the other's finger

Receive this ring as a pledge and reminder of my devotion and respect for you
[optional: in the name of God, who has brought us together].

Then the pastor will say

May the wearing of these rings be forever a testimony of the unity that you, as husband and wife, will cultivate without ceasing [optional: and be a reminder of the excellent virtues with which you will adorn your marriage].

optional: God and forever bless you!

OPTIONAL "CEREMONIES WITHIN THE CEREMONY" [see details in our Exclusive Wedding Planning Materials]

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Then the pastor will again join their hands and say:

Because _____ and _____ have consented together to be married and have declared this in the presence of [optional: God and] these witnesses, it is my great pleasure to declare that you are husband and wife! What here has been joined together, let nothing tear apart.

KISS OF LOVE AND DEVOTION

[OPTIONAL BLESSING, PRAYER, AND/OR BENEDICTION]

THE REINTRODUCTION

*The pastor will say: Ladies and Gentlemen, I present you _____ and _____
_____. Please let us know your preferred way of saying this.*

THE RECESSIONAL



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Section Three – Additional Customization

We're experienced in many traditions, including

- *Philippine,*
- *Irish,*
- *Scottish,*
- *Spanish & Mexican,*
- *Jewish,*
- *and other wedding customs.*

We've officiated wedding ceremonies that have included

- *unity sand/candle,*
- *cord/coins/veil,*
- *Ketubah/chuppah,*
- *breaking the glass & breaking the dish,*
- *lock/keys of love,*
- *wine, and winebox with love letters,*
- *roses (both ceremonies: for parents, and between Bride & Groom)*
- *salt,*
- *hands,*
- *handfasting,*
- *ring warming,*
- *guest candles,*
- *jumping the broom,*
- *release of butterflies & release of doves,*
- *readers/soloists/dancers/participants,*
- *Canadian signing,*
- *and countless others.*

You may be familiar with some of these. We'll be glad to answer your questions about them. Just as there isn't a "one size fits all" there's no plain, simple way to incorporate customization into a wedding ceremony. So it's better for us to discuss options over Skype or the phone rather than try to shoehorn them into a document such as this. But three are illustrated here...

PARENTS BRINGING CHILDREN INTO A SUBSEQUENT MARRIAGE

Usually inserted into the ceremony after the INTENTIONS and before the WEDDING VOWS. Often this customization also has THE REINTRODUCTION state "I present to you the _____ family!" rather than "Mr. and Mrs. _____".



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PARENTS BRINGING CHILDREN INTO A SUBSEQUENT MARRIAGE [continued]

Obviously the wording shown here has to be adjusted to the age and understanding of the children who will be participating, whether only one or both of the bridal couple is bringing children into the marriage, and the prior relationships that may still or may not exist.

The pastor will say

What we are witnessing today cannot be separated from the blessings that have preceded this marriage. [Names of Children] by presenting your mother [and/or _____ by presenting your father] you are saying that you are endorsing _____ as the very best choice for your mother's [and/or your father's] future.

At the same time you are accepting _____ as your own; and you are telling [him/her] that you are presenting [him/her] with a most treasured gift — the [mother/father] through whom you received life. You are saying that, as the two of them marry, that you are giving _____ the same respect, appreciation, and obedience you give have for [Name of birth father/mother].

[Names of Children], are you sincerely and publicly declaring that you are giving your full blessing to the marriage of your [mother/father] to this [man/woman] and that you are welcoming [him/her] into your family; and also that you are promising to respond to [him/her] as to a loving [father/mother]?

The children of the bride and/or groom each answer: I am.

_____ and _____, on this day of your wedding, do you acknowledge and honor [Names of Children of the bride and/or groom], as entrusted to you [optional: by God], and therefore forever your family, all presented each as a gift to the other, for a lifetime of care and protection.

The groom and the bride shall say: We do.

COVENANT WORDING – the groom gives the bride's father assurance

The pastor says

I now invite the father of the bride to release his daughter in marriage to this man.

The father says (addressing the groom)

Her mother and I have raised our daughter with love and tenderness to her maturity. We now release her into your hands with full confidence that you will meet her needs in all aspects of her life — her spiritual, physical and emotional needs. Will you assure us of your intention to provide for all her needs?

The groom says: I give you my promise to love your daughter in every way.



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COVENANT WORDING – full format

The pastor says

What we are witnessing today cannot be separated from what has been prepared in the past. [Father of the Bride], by having escorting _____ down the wedding aisle, you are saying that you and your wife [or the Mother of the Bride] are endorsing this young man as the very best choice of a husband for your daughter and are bringing her to him.

At the same time you are accepting _____ as your son; and you are telling him that you are presenting him with a most treasured gift – the daughter whom you have raised up to become to a worthy bride – and that you are (transferring or entrusting) to him full responsibility as her protector and provider.

[Father] (and [Mother]), are you affirming that you are giving your blessing to the marriage of your daughter to this man and that you are welcoming him into your family, and also that you are (transferring or entrusting) your responsibility for the care and protection of your daughter to this man?

The parent(s) of the bride answer

I am (or: we are)

The pastor says

[Groom and Bride], on this day of your wedding, do you acknowledge and honor [Father (and Mother) of the Bride] as ^{[optional: God's], instrument(s) in} preparing for your marriage and presenting you each as a gift, each to the other, for a lifetime of care and protection.

The groom and the bride answer

We do.