**GF (GF = groom’s first name) & BF’s (BF = bride’s first name) Ceremony**

*This guide has been designed with you in mind. We want to make your special day entirely unique to both of you. Choose whichever ceremonial contexts fit your personalities and vision. If you need a little inspiration or would like a little more guidance, our officiants are here to help.*

***Typical Format***

*Greeting*

*Presentation of the Bride*

*Opening*

*Charge to the Bride & Groom*

*Pledge*

*Vows*

*Reading*

*Blessing of the Rings*

*Exchange of Rings*

*Reading*

*Unity Ritual*

*Closing Statement*

*Pronouncement*

*Kiss*

*Introduction*

**Greetings**

We gather here today, in the presence of God, family and friends to join GF and BF in matrimony. We celebrate the coming together in love of this man and this woman. We remember that marriage is a time when growing love is made public, when two people share mutual promises before God and before us. We join in our support of them as they offer themselves to each other. We celebrate their joy, their love and their expectations.

We gather here today to celebrate one of life’s greatest moments, to give recognition to the worth and beauty of love, and to add our best wishes to the words which shall unite BF and GF in their marriage.

We gather here today, in the presence of God, family and friends to join GF and BF in matrimony. In witnessing this ceremony today, we are observing an outward sign of an inward union that already exists between GF and BF. Today, they have come before God and before us to publicly affirm their love; to promise to continue to nurture themselves, each other, and this union; and to acknowledge its centrality in their lives. They do so knowing that marriage is at once the most tender, yet challenging, of all relations in life. We join in our support of them as they offer themselves to each other. We celebrate their joy, their love and their expectations.

We are gathered here together, in the presence of God, family and friends, to ratify in the outer, a union of souls that has already taken place in spirit.

We gather here today, in the presence of God, family and friends to join GF and BF in matrimony. Every marriage ceremony is unique, and today, not only are two special people being joined together, but two faiths, as well. Out of two different and distinct traditions, they have come together to learn the best of what each has to offer, appreciating their differences, and confirming that love, which is spoken of in all religions, is our souls’ true home, our true meeting place. So, this is not only a joyous occasion, but a holy one, as well. May you see that your love for each other is truly a gift from God.

Friends; we have been invited here today to share with GF and BF a very important moment in their lives. In the years they have been together, their love and understanding of each other has grown and matured, and now they have decided to live their lives together as husband and wife.

Welcome, family, friends and loved ones.

We gather here today to celebrate the wedding of GF and BF. You have come from near and far to share in this formal commitment they make to one another, to offer your love and support to this union, and to allow them to start their married life together surrounded by the people dearest and most important to them.

Today represents not only the joining of GF and BF but also the joining of their families and friends. GF and BF would like to recognize their parents on this occasion.  They offer their profound gratitude for all the love and care their parents showed in raising them.  The unconditional gifts of love and support that you have continually offered have inspired them to become who they are today.  Without you, this day would not be possible.

Marriage is a commitment in life, where two people can find and bring out the very best in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other human relationship can equal, a physical and emotional joining that has the promise of a lifetime.

Marriage is perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure of human relationships. No ceremony can create your marriage; only you can do that—through love and patience; through dedication and perseverance; through talking and listening, helping and supporting and believing in each other; through tenderness and laughter; through learning to forgive, learning to appreciate your differences, and by learning to make the important things matter, and to let go of the rest.

GF and BF, marriage is the promise between two people who love each other, who trust that love, who honor one another as individuals in that togetherness, and who wish to spend the rest of their lives together. It enables the two separate souls to share their desires, longings, dreams, and memories, their joys and sorrows, and to help each other through all uncertainties of life. A strong marriage also nurtures each of you as separate individuals and allows you to maintain your unique identity and grow in your own way through the years ahead. It is a safe haven for each of you to become your best self, while together, you become better than you ever could be alone. You are adding to your life, not only the affection of each other, but also the companionship and blessing of a deep trust. You are agreeing to share strength, responsibilities and love. To make this relationship work, therefore, takes more than love. It takes trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other. It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so. And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

We have come here today to celebrate love. We see it in the faces of GF and BF who stand before us, and we experience it in our own hearts as well. It is a love which is spoken of in all religions, and is our souls’ true home, our true meeting place. It kindles our souls with hope. We are grateful to them for inviting us to witness and share in this precious moment. To this day they bring their love as a treasure to share with one another.

We are gathered here today to witness the coming together of two people GF and BF, whose hearts and spirits are entwined as one. They now desire to profess before the entire world their intention henceforth to walk the road of life together.

We, who have gathered in this circle, are now privileged to witness and to participate in a ceremony celebrating the public acknowledgment of a love which GF and BF have for each other, knowing that by our presence here with them, we are saying that they, together, are loved by many others. We have come to surround them as they stand before us in this center, where now GF and BF in essence say, "Welcome to our marriage! Welcome to the Celebration!"

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

They would also like to take a moment to remember family members no longer with them and acknowledge the impact that they have had upon our lives and though they are missed, they will forever remain in our hearts and minds.

Marriage is also for children! For them it is, or can be, more than just witnessing. There is an opportunity for them to bring themselves into the new family and in a symbolic sense to give themselves to this new venture as they bring a "Gift of love" which they will present now to GF and BF.   
*The children come bearing flowers, which are given to the Bride and Groom.*

**Presentation of the Bride**

*Options:*

* *The bride is not given away but walks herself down the aisle.*
* *The bride and groom together walk down the aisle.*
* *The bride is given away by an escort, perhaps a family member.*
* *Both the bride and groom could be given away by each of their families, to the other, in a ceremony performed after walking down the aisle. This could even broaden to a question and response by the parents, involving them in the ceremony a little more than some.*
* *The bride and groom can walk down the aisle themselves, having arrived together or the groom meeting his bride at the end of the aisle and escorting her the final leg, and as they get to their parents an exchange, whether formal, emotional, or even with a gift, can occur as a sign of honor and respect and thanks.*
* *The traditional giving away of the bride involves the father walking the bride down the aisle and giving her to the bridegroom. To represent the modern version of the tradition the groom could thank the father as he reaches the front, offering a handshake, high five or a hug and even verbally acknowledging him.*

Who has the honor of presenting this bride today?

Who has the honor of presenting this woman to be married to this man?

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Who stands with this woman to represent her family?

Who presents this bride on this happy day of her life?

Doubly blessed is that couple which come to the marriage altar with the approval and blessings of their families and friends. Who has the honor of presenting this woman to be married to this man?

One of the most understated, but deepest, relationships in human life is that between a caring father and a loving daughter. One of the rare occasions in which this relationship is acknowledged is at a wedding ceremony. BF’s father GBA, today, represents his family, but even more important, in this special gesture, he stands here today in his own loving support of his daughter and gives her hand to another man’s for her safe keeping. So, it is with great pleasure that I now ask, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?”

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Responses might include:*

“I do.”

“Her mother and I do.”

“We do.” (*A nice option, if both parents walk her down the aisle*.)

“She gives herself freely, with my love and blessing.”

“She gives herself freely, with our love and blessing.”

“She gives herself freely, with her mother’s and my love and blessing.”

“She gives herself freely, with the love and support of her family and friends.”

“On behalf of her family, I do.” (*A nice option, if her escort is other than her father—like a friend or grandfather, etc*.)

“On behalf of all who love her, I do.”

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Examples of participation of parents from both the bride and groom’s family (with speaking parts where they usually stand from their seats):*

Will the parents of the bride and the parents of the groom please stand? BP have nurtured and cared for their daughter in a multitude of ways. Likewise, GP have nurtured and cared for their son. BF and GF express gratitude for the inspiration of your love that enabled you to bring forth your children for us all to know and enjoy. As you have held them close, fitting them for maturity, will you now willingly and freely release them to love and care for each other? And will you support and encourage their life together that it, too, may be a blessing for generations to come?

Parents respond in unison: “We do.”

Today, as we join GF and BF in marriage, we celebrate them as they begin a new family together. Yet, we also know that this new branch of the family tree will be strengthened and enriched by the love, traditions, and knowledge of their family roots. Will the parents of the bride and the parents of the groom please stand? Will you BP and GP bless BF and GF in their marriage? Will you celebrate them in their times of joy, and support them and their marriage in times of hardship?

Parents respond: “We will.”

*After one of the above statements, you may choose to honor their parents with a token such as a rose for the mothers, or another symbol that will have meaning for those who spent so many years of their lives loving and raising you.*

**Invocation**

*Opening prayers or a blessing of good wishes on your ceremony*

Our Father, love has been Your richest and greatest gift to the world. Love between two souls which matures into marriage is one of Your most beautiful types of love. Today we celebrate that love. May Your blessing be on this wedding service. Protect, guide, and bless GF and BF in their marriage. Surround them and us with Your love now and always. Amen.

May the God who has created and sustain us, hear our words to each other and grant blessing to this couple, their families, and their friends. Amen.

Thank you, Father, for love. Thank you for marriage. Thank you for giving your gift of beautiful love to GF and BF. Today, they want to dedicate that love to each other. We pray that Thy loving presence will encircle their wedding service. We pray that Thy blessing will encircle the marriage of GF and BF. Amen.

God, for the joy of this occasion, we thank You. For the meaning of this day, we thank You. For this important moment in an ever-growing relationship, we thank You. For your presence here and now and for your presence at all times. We thank You. Amen

(*Short Version*) May you always need one another, not so much to fill the emptiness as to help each other know your fullness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with each other, and not fail in the little graces. Look for things to praise, often say “I love you,” and take no notice of small faults. May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it in loving one another.

(*Long Version*) May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you patience, tolerance, and understanding. May you always need one another, but not out of lack. May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with each other, and not fail in the little graces. Look for things to praise, often say “I love you,” and take no notice of small faults. May you enthusiastically enter into the mystery that is the awareness of one another’s presence—a bond that is as warm and near when you are side by side as when you are separated by time and circumstances. May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it in loving one another.

Marriage is a gift from God, a miracle. After speaking to you both, it is obvious that you already know some of the great blessing’s marriage has to offer. It is an opportunity to feel the joy of taking care of someone who takes care of you, to be challenged towards growth yet gently nurtured, to love deeply and receive it in return. It is about trust, friendship and having a partner to share all life has to offer. It is a commitment to participate in a process of mutual evolution, understanding and forgiveness. It is indeed a sacred union to be treated with reverence. Marriage is not a place to hide from the world. It is a safe place to grow and become wiser. It is a place to evolve into better people; so that you can go out in the world and make a difference by spreading the joy and wisdom that you have found with each other. BF, GF is a gift to you from God, but he is not a gift for you alone. It is God’s will that in your love, this man might find within himself a greater sense of who he is meant to be. You are asked to see the good in this man, to accept him for who he is and who he shall be. In this way, God’s purpose shall be accomplished in this relationship. May this man find the kingdom of heaven through the love you share. And so, it is with you also GF, that although BF is God’s gift to you, she is not a gift intended for you alone. You are asked by God to so love this woman, that in your love she might find herself as God has created her, so beautiful and strong and brave and true, that the entire world might be blessed by the presence of a woman who shines so. May she find refuge in your arms as she has never before. May she know, from now on, that there is one on whose love she can depend on forever.

Marriage is a supreme sharing, perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure in the most intimate of human relationships. It is the joyful uniting of a man and a woman whose care and affection and understanding have flowered into a deep and abiding love. Those who take its sacred vows have their lives blended together into one, as the waters of two rivers are joined when they come together to form an even greater one. A true spiritual marriage is an act of metamorphosis, a profound mystery of creation and rebirth, as two become one. It is not a giving up or loss of oneself, but rather a giving over of oneself to something greater-a transformation of self in which each one can say, “I am no longer only I but also we.” It is a process in which each can be challenged to discover new possibilities in themselves and each other. In such a marriage, the wedding ceremony is the gateway into this mystery. For the lives the two of you have lived up until this moment are, in some sense, now truly completed and over. Together you now live within the creation of something wholly new and transcendent, something which has never existed before-your miraculous marriage-an expression that is at once public and private, precious, sacred, and truly unique to the two of you. In this act, you open yourselves to a fuller experience and expression of the great, vast miracle of love. No ceremony can create your marriage. Only you can do that-through love, patience, dedication, perseverance-through talking and listening and trying to understand-through helping and supporting and believing in each other-through learning to forgive, learning to respect and appreciate your differences, and learning to make the important things matter and to let go of the rest. What this ceremony can do is to witness and affirm the choice you have made to begin a new life today as husband and wife.

To love is not to possess, to own or imprison, nor to lose one's self in another. Love is to join and separate, to walk alone and together, to find a laughing freedom that lonely isolation does not permit. It is finally to be able to be who we really are. No longer clinging in childish dependency, nor docilely, living separate lives in silence. It is to be perfectly one's self and perfectly joined in permanent commitment to another–and to one's inner self. Love only endures when it moves like waves, receding and returning gently or passionately, or moving lovingly like the tide. In the moon's own predictable harmony, because finally, despite a child's scars or an adult's deepest wounds, they are openly free to be who they really are–and always secretly were. In the very core of their being where true and lasting love can alone abide.

Gracious God, always faithful in Your love for us, we rejoice in Your presence. You create love. You unite us in one human family. May Your presence fill our hearts with new joy, and make new, the lives of your people whose marriage we celebrate. Bless all creation through this sign of Your love shown in the love of GF and BF for each other. Sustain them, and all of us, in a love that knows no end. Amen

Loving God, You are at the heart of all our relationships. You are the understanding spirit that brings us together in friendship. You are the caring spirit that enables us to listen to each other's needs. You are the enduring spirit which holds fast when the storms of life hit home. You are the trusting spirit which builds our faith in one another. Bless this time together, we pray. Amen

O God in heaven, bless these friends of ours who are about to give their vows of faithfulness to each other and to live together in the covenant bond of marriage. Let your love become their love, so that in their lives together they may be more concerned about the other than themselves. Above all, help each of us to be their silent partners as we pray for them in the coming days, and be ready to assist them with good counsel and a helping hand. We pray this with joy in our hearts, Amen

O God, Creator of us all, we thank you for the gift of life and on this day, we thank You especially for the joy that GF and BF have found in each other, and for the promises they will make before you. Bless all our families and friends on this special day. We pray particularly for those who are far away today but here in spirit, sharing the joy of this day. We pray, O God, that You remain with GF and BF as a partner in their marriage. Grant to them, and to us all, love and understanding all our days. Amen

Gracious God, your generous love surrounds us, and everything we enjoy comes from You. In your great love you have given us the gift of marriage. Bless GF and BF as they pledge their lives to each other. We feel that you have brought them together in the beginning, helped their love grow, and in this moment are with them in a special way. May their love continue to grow and be a true reflection of Your love for us all. Amen.

O God of promise, Your greatest gift is love, bless GF and BF who today within Your presence will take each other in marriage. We thank You that they have found such love and faith and trust in each other that they wish to live for the other all the rest of their lives. Let nothing come between them, but throughout all the chances and changes of life keep them forever loving and forever true to each other. Keep them safe from all trouble which would hurt them in any way. But, when any trial does come to them, grant that it may only bring closer together and closer to You. Grant to them through all their days the perfect love which many waters cannot quench. Amen.

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. That is impossible. It is even a disservice to pretend it is possible. Yet that is what most of us demand. We have such little faith in the ebb and flow of life and of love and of relationships. We leap forward at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb, for we are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanence, on duration, on continuity. But the only continuity possible in life, as in love, is in growth, in fluidity and in freedom, as dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in creating the same pattern. I speak now to GF and BF of love, in which, the trust and freedom of the other person becomes as significant as the trust and freedom of one's self. I speak to them of generosity, which gathers the beauty of earth for riches and the kindness which turns away the wrath of foolish men and women. I speak of all our hopes for their continued growth through patience, one for the other. May GF and BF keep the vows made on this day, in freedom, teaching each other who they are, what they yet shall be, enabling them to know that, in the fullness of being, they are more than themselves and more than each other, that they are all of us and that together we share joyously the fruits of life on this Earth, our home.

GF and BF, in presenting yourselves here today, to be joined in holy union, you perform an act of faith. This faith can grow and mature and endure, but only if you both determine to make it so. A lasting and growing love is never automatic, nor guaranteed by any ceremony.   If you would have the foundation of your union be the love you have for each other, not just at this moment, but for all the days ahead, then cherish the hopes and dreams that you bring here today. Resolve that your love will never be blotted out by the commonplace nor obscured by the ordinary in life. Faults will appear where now you find contentment, and wonder can be crushed by the routine of daily living.   Devotion, joy and love can grow only if you nurture them together. Stand fast in that hope and confidence; believe in your shared future just as strongly as you believe in yourselves and in each other today. In this spirit, can you create a partnership that will strengthen and sustain you all the days of your lives.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Charge to the Bride and Groom/Partners**

GF and BF, the covenant which you are about to make with each other is meant to be a beautiful and sacred expression of your love for each other. As you pledge your vows to each other, and as you commit your lives to each other, we ask that you do so in all seriousness, and yet with a deep sense of joy, with deep conviction that you are committing yourselves to a dynamic growing relationship of trust, mutual support and caring love.

I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundations of a happy and enduring home. If the solemn vows which you are about to make be kept permanently, and if steadfastly you seek to do the will of your Heavenly Father, your life will be full of peace and joy, and the home which you are establishing will abide through every change.

Hand in hand, you enter marriage; hand in hand you step out in faith. The hand you freely give to each other, is both the strongest and the most tender part of the body. In the years ahead you will need both strength and tenderness. Be firm in your commitment. Don’t let your grip become weak. And yet, be flexible as you go through change. Don’t let your hold become intolerable. Strength and tenderness; firm commitment and flexibility - of such is a marriage made, hand in hand: remember this well!

GF and BF, I would ask that you both remember to treat yourself and each other with respect, and remind yourself often of what brought you together today. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your partnership deserves. When frustration and difficulty assail your marriage – as they do to every relationship at one time or another – focus on what still seems right between you, not only the part that seems wrong. This way, when clouds of trouble hide the sun in your lives and you lose sight of it for a moment, you can remember that the sun is still there. And if each of you will take responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

GF and BF, the contract of marriage is most solemn and is not to be entered into lightly, but thoughtfully and seriously with a deep realization of its obligations and responsibilities. No other human ties are more tender and no other vows more important than those you are about to pledge.

*The Art of Marriage* by Wilfred A. Peterson

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In 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 standing together facing the world. 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 establishing a relationship in which independence is equal, the dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal. It is not only marrying the right partner; it is *being* the right partner. It is discovering what marriage can be at its best!

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Betrothal/Pledge**

GF, will you have BF to be your wife, to live with her, respect her, and love her as God intends with the promise of faithfulness, tenderness, and helpfulness, as long as you both shall live?

BF, will you have GF to be your husband, to live with him, respect him, and love him as God intends with the promise of faithfulness, tenderness, and helpfulness, as long as you both shall live?

Do you take this woman, BF, to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself solely unto her for as long as you both shall live?

Do you take this man, GF, to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself solely unto him for as long as you both shall live?

Will you, GF, have BF to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort and keep her, and forsaking all others remain true to her as long as you both shall live?

Will you, BF, have GF to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort and keep him, and forsaking all others remain true to him as long as you both shall live?

GF, do you come before this gathering of friends and family to proclaim your love and devotion for BF? Do you promise to respect her, and care for her during times of joy and hardship? Do you commit yourself to share your feelings of happiness and sadness? Do you pledge to remain faithful to her?

BF, do you come before this gathering of friends and family to proclaim your love and devotion for GF? Do you promise to respect him, and care for him during times of joy and hardship? Do you commit yourself to share your feelings of happiness and sadness? Do you pledge to remain faithful to him?

GF, will you have BF to be your wife, to live together as friend and partner? Will you love her as a person, respect her as an equal, sharing joy as well as sorrow, triumph, as well as defeat, and keep her beside you as long as you both shall live? BF, will you have GF to be your husband, to live together as friend and partner? Will you love him as a person, respect him as an equal, sharing joy as well as sorrow, triumph, as well as defeat, and keep him beside you as long as you both shall live?

GF, will you have BF to be your wife?

BF, will you have GF to be your husband?

GF, do you take this woman BF, to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself solely unto her for as long as you both shall live?

BF, do you take this man, GF, to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself solely unto her/him for as long as you both shall live?

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**RESPONSE**

Both answer: I do

Both answer: I will

Both answer: For hearing my thoughts, understanding my dreams and being my best friend; for filling my life with joy and loving me without end; I do.

**JOINT VOWS**

BF and GF, do you, with your family and friends as your witnesses, present yourselves willingly and of your own accord to be joined in marriage?

Both answer: *We do*

Will you promise to care for each other in the joys and sorrows of life, come what may, and to share the responsibility for growth and enrichment of your life together?

Both answer: *We will*

**Introduction to the Exchange of Vows**

The formal exchange of your wedding vows is the most ancient part of a wedding ceremony. These are the words that couples, for centuries, have spoken to one another and, while they are very simple words, they have extraordinary meaning and importance. As you speak them to one another, you will discover that these are truly sacred promises, and sacred promises must be kept forever. I am going to speak these words to you now, and ask that you speak them to each other.

Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, GF is my husband, BF is my wife.

GF and BF are here to marry each other. No one else’s will can create such a union. It is their words, their intentions, their vision, that must define and shape this marriage. So, I call upon them now to state their promises before this group: the pledges that will bind them together.

You have known each other for years, through the first glance of acquaintance to this moment of commitment. At some moment, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks – all those sentences that began with “When we’re married” and continued with “I will” and “you will” and “we will” – those late-night talks that included “someday” and “somehow” and “maybe” – and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. Just two people working out what they want, what they believe, what they hope for each other. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, “You know all those things we’ve promised and hoped and dreamed – well, I meant it all, every word.” Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another – acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. You have learned that good company and friendship count for more than wealth, good looks or position. And you’ve learned that marriage is a maze into which we wander – a maze that is best traveled through with a great companion. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, GF is my husband, BF is my wife.

GF and BF, as you stand here today, I remind you of the serious nature of the relationship you are about to enter. Marriage is the voluntary and full commitment of two consenting adults to love each other for a lifetime. For a marriage to be successful, you must each be loyal to the other, stand firm in your defense of each other and be supportive of one another’s life goals and dreams. It is a solemn, binding, yet challenging relationship.

Often people feel that religious differences, between two people who are about to marry, may be an obstacle to their happiness. GF and BF disagree. They believe that all marriages are mixed marriages. They may differ in the way they spend money or the way they resolve conflicts or in their sleeping patterns. There is not one couple on this earth that would say that they agree on everything. Couples, who come together from different religious, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds acknowledge their differences immediately. They learn skills of negotiation to cope with their differences. And these are the exact skills that are needed in all marriages. Intercultural couples can be stronger than other couples who share similar backgrounds.

Often couples who share their ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds can be lulled into a kind of complacency because their differences may not be so obvious. The cultural life of an inter-faith married couple can also be more enriched than those who share the same backgrounds. Diversity keeps life interesting. The differences shared can be enjoyed. It takes special people who can learn to celebrate their differences — special people like the two of you.

GF and BF by coming here today, you have now taken the initial step in what hopefully will be a wonderful and lasting life together. Understand that a union between two people takes work. Just as Rome wasn’t built in a day, neither is a relationship ever complete. It needs constant nurturing. A good marriage is one that fosters respect, a devoted love, and a willingness to make sacrifices for each other. These are the foundation blocks of a newly formed union. Symbolically you have been brought together as one, yet are still two separate entities with unique ideas, talents and ways of being. Respect and value those differences, and your relationship will flourish.

GF and BF, as you stand here in the presence of God and these witnesses, I remind you, that love, loyalty and trust are the basis of a mature and fulfilling relationship. Marriage is a serious undertaking; it is intended to bind your lives together forever and is not to be taken lightly. Your engagement set into motion the interweaving of your lives – and we hope that you will continue to grow closer throughout your years together. None of us knows what the future will bring. Yet your love for one another, and trust in the strength of your union makes possible the act of faith you are making today. As you exchange the vows, which will start you on your journey together, know that our love and support go with you. As you make your promises to each other, we will remember promises we, too, have made and take this opportunity to make new, our own.

This is a new beginning for both of you and I’d like to offer some gentle reminders to ease your life-long task of living and growing together. Be kind to each other. And, when you disagree, do it respectfully. Be gentle and forgiving with each other. When you forgive, your hearts make room for a little more love, a little more understanding and a little more compassion.

Communicate with each other.  Share the joy that’s in your heart and the sorrow that burdens your soul. Open your hearts to each other and find the love.

A Holy Union between two people is a beautiful thing indeed. Something to be thankful for and something to never take for granted. Each morning when you awaken, give thanks for the gift that you have been given in each other and for your willingness to receive it. A Holy Union is a sacred trust given to you by God. God says, “Here. Here is my beloved child, and I am entrusting YOU with their care. I am entrusting you to love them, honor them, support them, cherish them, and hold their hand through thick and thin as I cannot do in human form except through you. You are being asked to serve in this capacity because you are willing, and able, and desiring of it.” Let it always remind you that God answers all prayers eventually.

Marriage is not a legal document. No pastor or priest or judge can create a marriage because a marriage, truly, is nothing except the promises made and kept by two individuals. Today GF and BF, your wedding day, is one brief day in time, and although your vows are spoken in a matter of minutes, they are promises that will last a lifetime.

Today, your wedding day, is one brief day in time, and although your vows are spoken in a matter of minutes, they are promises that will last a lifetime.

This moment is the anchor that holds your past and your future together. Tonight you are beginning a journey together that will last the rest of your lives. And like any journey, there will be highs and lows. An amazing journey can lead you to a mountaintop where you see all that is before you. Today hopefully being one such experience. Sometimes you will walk through valleys and have trouble finding your way. But no matter where you go, and no matter how long the journey is or how difficult, the person beside you will make your journey worthwhile. And let me just remind you that love and loyalty are the essence of a happy and enduring marriage. No other human ties are more tender, and certainly none are more sacred than those that you share with each other now.

The formal exchange of your wedding vows is the most ancient part of a wedding ceremony. These are the words that couples for centuries have spoken to one another and, while they are very simple words, they have extraordinary meaning and importance. As you speak them to one another, you will discover that these are truly sacred promises, and sacred promises must be kept forever. I am going to speak these words to you now, and ask that you speak them to each other.

GF and BF, life is given to each of us as individuals, and yet we must learn to live together. Love is given to us by our family or by our friends. We learn to love by being loved. Learning to love and living together is one of the greatest challenges of life – and is the shared goal of a married life. You are now taking into your care and keeping the happiness of the one person in all the world whom you love best. You are adding to your life not only the affection of each other, but also the companionship and blessing of a deep trust as well. You are agreeing to share strength, responsibilities and to share love. Today, your wedding day, is one brief day in time, and although your vows are spoken in a matter of minutes, they are promises that will last a lifetime. The formal exchange of your wedding vows is the most ancient part of a wedding ceremony. These are the words that couples for centuries have spoken to one another and, while they are very simple words, they have extraordinary meaning and importance. As you speak them to one another, you will discover that these are truly sacred promises, and sacred promises must be kept forever. I am going to speak these words to you now, and ask that you speak them to each other.

GF and BF, the vows that you are about to exchange serve as a verbal representation of the love you have promised to each other. For it is not the words that you speak today which will unite you together as one, but the inner sense of love and commitment that each of you feels within your soul.

This wedding ceremony is the public recognition of a commitment that GF and BF have already made privately in their hearts. But it’s also their commitment to all of you who know and love them.

By inviting you to bear witness to their vows this day, GF and BF have chosen to take you with them on the first step of their journey into marriage.

GF and BF know that this wedding is a celebration of the marriage that has already occurred in their hearts, a marriage that will grow, not without challenge and adversity, but with patience, love, and the belief that they have chosen wisely in choosing one another.

We’ve come to the point of your ceremony where you’re going to say your vows to one another. But before you do that, I ask you to remember that love – which is rooted in faith, trust, and acceptance – will be the foundation of an abiding and deepening relationship. No other ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than those you now assume.

If you are able to keep the vows you take here today, not because of any religious or civic law, but out of a desire to love and be loved by another person fully, without limitation, then your life will have joy and the home you establish will be a place in which you both will find the direction of your growth, your freedom, and your responsibility

GF and BF want this day to mean something special to you as guests.

Those who are married may want to silently renew and reaffirm your vows today by gently taking the hand of your partner during this ceremony. Others may want to also join hands and think about what it means to be a friend, for marriage is built first on friendship.

There are no ties on earth so sweet, none so tender as those you are about to assume. There are no vows so solemn as those you are about to make. There is no institution of earth so sacred as that of the union you will form, for the true home is not only the place in which you will live, but is also the dwelling place where each lives in the heart and mind of the other.

GF and BF, in a moment you will exchange your vows with each other.

These promises are meant to be a beautiful and sacred expression of your love for each other.

The beauty of these vows lie in the unknown. For you will be making promises about a future that you can’t be sure of, a life that you don’t know how it will turn out, and a marriage that you don’t know what it will face.

Your marriage is the coming together of your two souls for the purpose of manifesting your hearts’ desires and the truth of your being with one another. Marriage will bring to you all of the unlimited possibilities of consciously choosing to become all that you desire, giving you the opportunity to become your highest vision of yourself. This path is not only incredibly challenging but very rewarding as well; it brings to each of you the choices that you want to have for your own growth as well as the wonderful moments of diving blessing that you yearn for in your lives. Marriage is a path of divine humanness. It takes great courage and commitment to continue a conscious and loving union with one other. Through your commitment, the breath of human experience will be born, from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. This level of commitment to yourself and each other will open the door to receiving all that you desire, from the conscious to the unconscious. The very act of joining with each other will increase your potential for self-knowledge, joy, fulfillment, peace, and growth a hundred-fold because until you have fully committed to each other, the well-spring of God’s gifts have only a small river in which to flow through you. Marriage is the union of your souls, a divine process that your essence longs to experience. It is your nature, and the truth of who you are. By committing to each other, you commit to life more intimately. You no longer have the luxury of leaving when the going gets tough and the ugliness comes to the surface. Your lifelong commitment brings to you an opportunity for joy that would be unparalleled for each of you alone. The joys are that much stronger and the happiness that much richer. The wisdom is deeper and more developed, and the journey itself fuller and more beautiful. The path of true marriage is not for the meek. It requires courage and strength, as well as an open mind and a heart filled with hope and joy. Through the mirror of each other, marriage teaches you compassion, understanding, trust, commitment, love, gentleness, and patience. Within your marriage, all things are possible; all dreams, goals, and visions are possible within your Holy Union. Marriage denies you nothing, and only gives to you that which you truly desire. Your marriage is the coming together of friends into Union. It requires you to soften, enjoying the special qualities of your present moments. It can bring you comfort in times of need, solace when you despair, and safety when you are afraid. A lifelong, loving marriage brings to you more peace than a life filled with quietude and solitary meditation. It takes the peace of your connection with God into your relationship and into all that you say, think, and do. Because you have prayed for every gift available to you, your marriage leaves no stone unturned, enriching your lives beyond your wildest dreams, and making you greater than you ever imagined.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Vows**

I, GF, give myself to you BF completely as your husband. I accept you, as my wife, to live and to understand, to stay by your side in sickness and in health, at all times, for all the days of my life.

I, BF, give myself to you GF completely as your (wife. I accept you, as my husband, to live and to understand, to stay by your side in sickness and in health, at all times, for all the days of my life.

BF, I have chosen you alone from all the world to be my wedded 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 ‘til death do us part.

GF, I have chosen you alone from all the world to be my wedded 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 ‘til death do us part.

I, GF, take you BF to be my wife, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you. I will respect, trust, and help and care for you. I will share my life with you. I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live.

I, BF, take you GF to be my husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you. I will respect, trust, and help and care for you. I will share my life with you. I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live.

I will be your husband. I give you all my love without reservation. We have so many joyful times ahead of us—many decisions and many possibilities. I promise to place our personal growth and the continuous growth of our love above all other considerations. I will be honest with you. I will accept you as an equal and as a unique individual. I will be open with my affection and support. Together I know that we can build a life filled with satisfaction. I’m happy we found each other. I love you.

I will be your wife. I give you all my love without reservation. We have so many joyful times ahead of us—many decisions and many possibilities. I promise to place your personal growth and the continuous growth of our love above all other considerations. I will be honest with you. I will accept you as an equal and as a unique individual. I will be open with my affection and support. Together I know that we can build a life filled with satisfaction. I’m happy we found each other. I love you.

I, GF, take you BF, to be my wife; and I promise in the midst of our families and friends and God, to stand beside you and with you always; in times of celebration and times of sadness; in times of pleasure and times of anger; in times of pain and times of health; I will live with you and love you as long as we live.

I, BF, take you GF, to be my husband; and I promise in the midst of our families and friends and God, to stand beside you and with you always; in times of celebration and times of sadness; in times of pleasure and times of anger; in times of pain and times of health; I will live with you and love you as long as we live.

BF, I take you to be my wife. To laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

GF, I take you to be my husband. To laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

I love you BF, you are my best friend. Today, I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you, and to always hold you in highest regard. These things I give to you today, and all the days of our life.

I love you GF, you are my best friend. Today, I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you, and to always hold you in highest regard. These things I give to you today, and all the days of our life.

I, GF, take thee to be my wife BF. To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, in joy and sorrow, and I promise my love to you.

I, BF, take thee to be my husband GF. To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, in joy and sorrow, and I promise my love to you.

BF, I take you to be my wife, to be faithful to you alone, to share all that is to come, encompassing all sorrows and joys, all hardships and triumphs, all the experiences of life, a permanent commitment made in love, kept in faith, alive in hope, and eternally made new.

GF, I take you to be my husband, to be faithful to you alone, to share all that is to come, encompassing all sorrows and joys, all hardships and triumphs, all the experiences of life, a permanent commitment made in love, kept in faith, alive in hope, and eternally made new.

Today, BF, I join my life to yours—not merely as your husband, but as your friend, your lover, and your confidant. Let me be the shoulder you lean on, the rock on which you rest, the companion of your life. With you, I will walk my path from this day forward.

Today, GF, I join my life to yours—not merely as your wife, but as your friend, your lover, and your confidant. Let me be the shoulder you lean on, the rock on which you rest, the companion of your life. With you, I will walk my path from this day forward.

All that I am and all that I have, I offer to you in love and in joy. From this day forward, I will love you and comfort you, hold you close, prize you above all others, and remain faithful to you all the days of our lives.

All that I am and all that I have, I offer to you in love and in joy. From this day forward, I will love you and comfort you, hold you close, prize you above all others, and remain faithful to you all the days of our lives.

I, GF, take you, BF, as my friend and love, beside me and apart from me, in laughter and in tears, in conflict and tranquility, asking that you be no other than yourself, loving what I know of you, trusting what I do not yet know, in all the ways that life may find us.

I, BF, take you, GF, as my friend and love, beside me and apart from me, in laughter and in tears, in conflict and tranquility, asking that you be no other than yourself, loving what I know of you, trusting what I do not yet know, in all the ways that life may find us.

I will take joy in you and in our life together. You are to me the whispering of the tides, the seduction of summer’s heat. You are my friend, my lover. Grow old and wise with me. I look forward to the life before us, of rainbows and sunsets and a willingness to share all things. I love you. I adore you.

I will take joy in you and in our life together. You are to me the whispering of the tides, the seduction of summer’s heat. You are my friend, my lover. Grow old and wise with me. I look forward to the life before us, of rainbows and sunsets and a willingness to share all things. I love you. I adore you.

I, GF, take you, BF, to be my lawfully wedded wife, my constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I, BF, take you, GF, to be my lawfully wedded husband, my constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I, GF, take you, BF, to be my beloved wife, to have and to hold you, to honor you, to treasure you, to be at my side in sorrow and in joy, in the good times, and in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, for all the days of my life.

I, BF, take you, GF, to be my beloved husband, to have and to hold you, to honor you, to treasure you, to be at my side in sorrow and in joy, in the good times, and in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, for all the days of my life.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Readings**

From *Union* by Robert Fulghum

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes, to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making commitments in an informal way. All of those conversations that were held in a car, or over a meal, or during long walks – all those conversations that began with, “When we’re married”, and continued with “I will” and “you will” and “we will” – all those late night talks that included “someday” and “somehow” and “maybe” – and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, “You know all those things that we’ve promised, and hoped, and dreamed – well, I meant it all, every word.”

From *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran

Love one another

But make not a bond of love.

Let it rather be a moving sea

Between the shores of your souls

Fill each other’s cup

But drink not from the same cup

Sing and dance together and be joyous,

But let each one of you be alone

Even as the strings of the lute are alone

Though they quiver with the same music

Give your hearts

But not into each other’s keeping

For only the hand of life

Can contain your hearts

And stand together

Yet not too near together

For the pillars of the temple stand apart

And the oak tree and the cypress

Grow not in each other’s shadow.

From *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* by Louis de Bernires

Love is a temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have become so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, and it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being in love which any of us can convince ourselves we are. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. It is having roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from the branches, you will find that you are but one tree, not two.

From *The Art of a Good Marriage* by Wilferd Arlan Peterson

A good marriage must be created.

In 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 having a mutual sense of values, and common objectives.

It is standing together and facing the world.

It is forming a circle that gathers in the whole family.

It is speaking words of appreciation, and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is not only marrying the right person — it is being the right partner.

From *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. We pardon to the extent that we love.

Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And the great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

*Sonnet 116* by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

which alters when it alteration finds,

or bends with the remover to remove:

O no! It is an ever-fixed mark

that looks on tempests and is never shaken;

it is the star to every wandering bark,

whose worth’s unknown, although his height be taken.

Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

within his bending sickle’s compass come:

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

but bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never write, nor no man ever loved.

*Love* by Roy Croft

I love you not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you. I love you, not only for what you have made of yourself, but for what you are making of me. I love you for the part of me that you bring out.

I love you for putting your hand into my heaped-up heart and passing over all the foolish, weak things that you can’t help dimly seeing there, and for drawing out into the light all the beautiful belongings that no one else had looked quite far enough to find.

I love you because you are helping me to make the lumber of my life not a tavern but a temple – out of the works of my every day not a reproach but a song. I love you because you have done more than any creed could have done to make me good – and more than any fate could have done to make me happy.

You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign – you have done it by being yourself. Perhaps that is what being a friend means, after all.

From *Gift from the Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is impossible. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides."

From *The Irrational Season* by Madeleine L'Engle

But ultimately there comes a moment when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take…It is indeed a fearful gamble…Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created, so that, together we become a new creature.

To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take…If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation…It takes a lifetime to learn another person…When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling, and which implies such risk that it is often rejected.

*Apache Marriage Blessing*

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be the shelter for each other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be the warmth for the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before. Go now to your dwelling place to enter into the days of your life together. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship - as they threaten all relationships at one time or another - remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives - remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

*Blessing for a Marriage* by James Dillet Freeman

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another - not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.

May you want one another, but not out of lack.

May you entice one another, but not compel one another.

May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces.

May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another's presence - no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities.

May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

From *The Bridge Across Forever* by Richard Bach

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.

*I Promise* by Dorothy Colgan

I promise to give you the best of myself

and to ask of you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person

and to realize that your interests, desires and needs

are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention

and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you,

to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears

and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you,

to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad,

with all I have to give and all I feel inside in the only way I know how.

Completely and forever

*From How do I love thee? Let me count the ways* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

my soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's

most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with a passion put to use

in my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

with my lost saints; --- I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- And, if God choose,

I shall love thee better after death.

*These* *I Can Promise*

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine

I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold

I cannot promise you an easy pathway

that leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion

a smile to chase away your tears of sorrow

a love that's ever true and ever growing

a hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

*The One*

When the one whose hand you're holding

Is the one who holds your heart

When the one whose eyes you gaze into

Gives your hopes and dreams their start,

When the one you think of first and last

Is the one who holds you tight,

And the things you plan together

Make the whole world seem just right,

When the one whom you believe in

puts their faith and trust in you,

You've found the one and only love

You'll share your whole life through.

From *The Irrational Season* Madeleine L'Engle

Ultimately there comes a time when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created. To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take. If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation. It takes a lifetime to learn another person. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.

*Benediction of the Apaches*

Now you will feel no rain,

For each of you will be a shelter to the other.

Now you will feel no cold,

For each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there is no more loneliness for you.

For each of you will be a companion to the other.

Now you are two bodies,

But there is only one Life before you.

Go now to your dwelling place,

To enter into the days of your togetherness.

And may your days be good and long upon the earth

*Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of Its Love* Edmund O'Neill

Marriage is a commitment to life, to the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other human relationship can equal; a joining that is promised for a lifetime. Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. There may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; memories are fresher; commitment is stronger; even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life. When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential, made in the hearts of two people who love, which takes a lifetime to fulfill.

*Sonnet XLIII*, from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints, -- I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! -- And, if God choose,

I shall love thee better after death."

*Sonnet 18* William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou are more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimmed;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;

Nor shall death brag thou wand 'rest in his shade

Which in eternal lines to time thou grow'st

So long as men can breathe and eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

*Blessing of the Hands*

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy. These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Deuteronomy 24:5

If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

Isaiah 62:5

As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Matthew 19:4-6

Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Mark 10:6-9

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

1 Corinthians 7: 1-16

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church- for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Colossians 3:18,19

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Hebrews 13:4-7

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

**Introduction to the Exchanging of Rings**

*The Introduction to the Exchange of Rings prepares the bride and groom by explaining the symbolism & meaning behind the giving of the rings.*

The ring is an ancient symbol, so perfect and simple. It has no beginning and has no end. It is round like the sun, like the moon, like the eye, like arms that embrace. It is a circle; for love that is given comes back round again. Your rings are precious because you wear them with love. They symbolize your commitment in marriage. They remind you of who you are, where you’ve been, and where you’re going. As you wear them through time, they will reflect not only who you are as individuals, but also who you are a couple.

These rings are made of precious metals; purified by the heat of many fires. They are a symbol of the wealth that resides inside each of you and the purity of your love for one another.

Though we have heard the vows, which have been shared by GF and BF, words, once spoken, are carried away on the wind. Therefore, the wedding ring is a visible symbol of the promises that have been made.

The circle has frequently been used to symbolize eternity. The ring, like the circle, is a reminder of the perfection and endurance of GF and BF’s commitment to and love for one another.

These rings represent the vows and promises you’ve willingly exchanged. They reflect the commitment those words inspire and all your hopes and dreams for the future. May these rings symbolize your inherent wholeness and unity with one another, giving you the strength to happily honor your commitments to each other. May they remind you that marriage is not a destination but a journey, with no beginning and no end, just a moment to moment opportunity to love and be loved to the best of your ability.

Throughout human tradition, when you make a pledge, it has been deemed good to have a token to remind you of that pledge. For this purpose you have chosen rings. They are appropriate to the task because they are circles never ending, like the promises you make to each other today. And they are made of precious metal, never to be tarnished, like the love you have expressed before me and these witnesses. Please take these rings and honor each other in their giving.

A circle is the ancient symbol of wholeness and peace. It also represents the boundaries beyond which the special-ness of a particular relationship does not extend. In the form of a ring the circle is the accepted token of a marriage covenant. As these rings are fashioned from one of the earth’s most precious materials, so may your love, nourished and sustained by the love of God, be the most precious and durable of the values you share. In giving and receiving these rings, you again acknowledge that your lives remain joined in one unbroken circle, wherever you go, you will always return to your shared life together.

The wedding ring is a symbol of married love, the precious metals show that your love is your most precious possession, and the unending circle symbolizes that your love may never cease.

Marriage is a state in which two people come together and create a union that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is difficult to express in words the profound relationship that is love. Since the beginning of time, the ring has been an emblem of the sincerity and permanence of a couple’s love for one another and regard for their marriage. As the circle can begin anew at any point, so a good marriage can pick any point to renew itself. These rings are symbols of your eternal love.

The ring is a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end, no giver and no receiver for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May these rings always remind you of the vows you have taken.

I hold in my hand two beautiful rings, symbolic of a binding contract, to be given and received as bonds of never-ending love and devoted friendship, circles of life and circles of love. May these rings be blessed as the symbol of this affectionate unity.

Bless, O Lord, these rings to be signs of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other. Amen.

May the Lord bless these rings which you give as your sign of love and devotion. Amen.

From the earliest of times, the circle has been a symbol of completeness, a symbol of committed love. An unbroken and never-ending circle symbolized a commitment of love that is also never ending. As often as either of you looks at this symbol, I hope that you will be reminded of these commitments to one another, which you make today. May these rings be blessed by God as the changeless symbol of this affectionate unity.

The giving and receiving of rings is the most important part of a marriage ceremony, because the rings are made in the symbol of that which is eternal. There is no beginning and no end, and as you place these symbols on each other’s finger, it signifies that there shall be no end to your marriage, and no end to the happiness that you will both share together. But let me remind you that these are also the special symbols you will wear before the world, certainly when you go back to your family, and friends, and co-workers. In fact, you will notice the response when you walk away from this beautiful place tonight. For when people look at you, they will look at your hand and notice the ring on your finger. They will know that you belong to someone special and that someone special belongs to you. Every day for the rest of your lives, every time you wash your hands or reach out to touch each other, these rings will be there to remind you of the great love that you share and of the wonder that the person standing in front of you loves you as much as you love them. So when you place these rings upon each other’s fingers, wear them with love and with honor.

Wedding rings are an outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace and the unbroken circle of love, signifying to all the union of this man and this woman in marriage.

These rings mark a new beginning in your journey together, filled with wonder, surprise, laughter, tears, celebration, grief and joy. Let us pray: Bless, O god, the giving of these rings, that they who wear them may live in your peace and realized potential. Amen.

These rings are made of precious metal, but they are made more precious by your wearing them, for they will adorn your loving hands. May they be a symbol of your eternal love for one another. As you wear them, may they be a constant reminder to you of one another, and of the deep bond of faith, trust and love which they represent.

These rings are very large in their significance. They are made of precious metal, which symbolizes that your love is the most precious element in each other’s life. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolizes that the love between the two of you will never cease.

Let us pray. Bless, O Lord, the giving and receiving of these rings. May GF and BF abide in Thy peace and grow in their knowledge of Your presence through their loving union. May the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of their endless love and serve to remind them of the holy covenant they have entered into today to be faithful, loving, and kind to each other. Dear God, may they live in Your grace and be forever true to this union. Amen.

The ring is the symbol of the commitment which binds these two together. There are two rings because there are two people, each to make a contribution to the life of the other, and to their new life together. Let us pray: Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings, that they who wear them may abide together in your peace and grow in one another’s eyes.

Father, bless these rings which GF and BF have set apart to be visible signs of the inward and spiritual bond which unites their hearts. As they give and receive these rings, may they testify to the world of the covenant made between them here. Amen

The circle has long been a symbol of God. Without beginning or end and with no point of weakness, the circle is a reminder of the eternal quality of God and of unending strength. Let the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love. Your wedding rings are most special because they say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bonded, to allow the presence of another human being to enhance who you are.

At this time, will you take out the rings you have for each other. As you wear these things, they will speak to the community you live in, the people you work with, and strangers you run across. The ring is a symbol which proclaims to the world that you share a love with another and that you are deeply connected in the bond of marriage. We know what it means when other people see your wedding ring, but before you exchange your rings, I want you to listen to what these rings will speak to you. As you go from this celebration with the ring on your finger, allow it to remind you of this day. Allow it to awaken the deep passionate feelings that are stirring in your hearts at this moment. Let it remind you of the love that you have just professed with your vows. But also allow it to speak of more than just symbolism. Your ring should not only remind you of what you already feel. Hear the ring’s plea for action. Hear how it whispers to once again profess your love to your spouse. Listen to its call to live out your love by doing romantic acts, thoughtful gestures, and caring deeds. Let it be a reminder that love needs to be offered and not just felt. When others see the ring, they will know you’re married. When you see your ring and when you feel it on your hand, you should be reminded that your love needs to be displayed and conveyed in action.

At this time will you take out the rings you have for each other. GF and BF, you have just made promises of love and devotion to each other. These rings are symbols of the vows you have just spoken. Words are intangible and difficult to hold onto, so the ring becomes a vessel which will hold the words you have given to one another. The words of “loving and cherishing,” “for better and for worse,” “honor and respecting,” are now encased in the ring. It is a physical way to hold on to the promises made to you. When you first put on a new ring it feels unnatural. You feel the weight and you hear it clank against objects. It’s a foreign object on your hand. But then there is a shift that happens. You become comfortable with the ring. It begins to mold your finger and feel comfortable until the day it just becomes a part of your hand. The ring is no longer a piece of jewelry that you wear. It becomes an extension of your hand. So this ring that embodies your vows…your promises eventually becomes an extension of your hand. In other words, you become your ring….you become your vows. At first, the ring is a symbol of the vows you have made…it contains them, but during that change when the ring begins to mold to your finger, you become the ring, because you begin to embody the vows. Instead of the ring being only a symbol of the promise “to love and cherish” you become the love and you display the action of one who cherishes. You are no longer holding onto promises of sticking around through better and worse, but you begin to live it out….You hold on…you work through. You take on the process of honoring and respecting that you said you would. As you place the rings on each other’s finger, the ring is a symbol, a promise, that one day…many days…many years… you will fulfill.

At this time will you take out the rings you have for each other, for these rings will be a visible sign of the vows you have made. The hand you place this ring on will not stay the same. In time, wrinkles will form, calluses will come and go, and different scars may appear. Not only will each of you change physically over time, but internally you will change as well. Your ideals, values, hopes may evolve. Things that are important to you today may not be the same over time. In 10, 20, 30 years you will change, but your rings, which represent your vows, will be constant. The promises to love, cherish, and respect one another no matter what life brings or what paths you take will always be worn around your finger. Your love will be constant as you walk together into the unknown. Your rings and your vows will cling to your finger and hold you together no matter what may come

The wedding ring is justly regarded as a fitting emblem of the purity and perpetuity of marriage. It is symbolic of the circle of eternity, as it is so fashioned as to have neither beginning nor end; while gold is so incorruptible that it cannot be tarnished by use or by time. So may this marriage, at this time celebrated, be incorruptible in its purity and more lasting than time itself.

And so we come Bride and Groom, to the presentation of rings by which you symbolize and bind your love. The circle has long been a symbol of spirit and the power of God. The sky and the earth are round. The wind in its greatest power whirls. The sun and moon, both round, come forth and go down again in a circle. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. Without beginning or end and with no point of weakness, the circle is a reminder of the eternal quality of God and of unending strength. Let the seamless circle of these rings become the symbol of your endless love and unending faithfulness.

Your wedding rings are most special because they say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bonded, to allow the presence of another human being to enhance who you are. Your rings carry a potent double message: We are individuals and yet we belong; we are not alone. As you wear them through time, they will reflect not only who you are but also the glorious union that you are now creating. God, bless these rings and the two who exchange them. Fill them with your Holy Presence. Keep them safe in the circle of your protection and love.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Blessing of the Rings**

Words or blessings of the rings from the Officiant before the rings are exchanged.

Heavenly Father, bless these rings. Grant that GF and BF may wear them with deep faith in each other. May they do your will and always live together in peace, love, and abiding joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly father, bless these rings. Grant that GF and BF may wear them with deep faith in each other. May they always live together in peace, love, and abiding joy. Amen.

These rings mark the beginning of a long journey filled with wonder, surprises, laughter, tears, celebration, grief, joy. May these rings glow in reflection of the warmth and love which flow through the wearers today.

These rings have no beginning and no end. They set forth the eternal nature of real love. They will represent the love and trust that GF and BF promise to each other this day.

The circle is the symbol of the sun, earth, and universe. It is the symbol of peace. Let this ring be the symbol of unity and peace in which your two lives are joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, return unto one another and your togetherness.

Although you each wear only one of them, these rings essentially belong to you both. For they are a symbol of the love you share and the promise that it will be a strong and lasting love. Throughout the years, they will speak softly of your vow to grow along with one another, to face the challenges of life, to remain one another’s first priority and keep your relationship rich and full. They will give you strength and comfort in times of uncertainty and heighten life’s joys as you share them. Never again do you walk alone for your love will always be with you.

From the earliest times, the circle has been a sign of completeness. The rings that you have chosen to wear have neither beginning nor end, much like your love for one another. They are a symbol of the words that you speak today. May these rings be from this day forward, your most treasured adornment, and may the love they symbolize, be your most precious possession. As you wear these rings, may they be constant reminders of these promises you are making today.

Wedding bands are visible, tangible symbols of a couple’s commitment and of their emotional and spiritual connection. Many people talk about rings as being a perfect circle, having no beginning and no end. But we all know that these rings have a beginning. Rock is dug up from the earth. Metals are liquefied, forged, cooled, and polished. Something beautiful is made from simple, raw elements. Love is like that. It comes from humble beginnings, made by imperfect beings. It is the process of making something beautiful where there was once nothing at all. Atalia and Matthew, let these rings serve as a reminder of the feelings you have in your hearts at this very moment. When you look at your wedding bands, remember the great gift that you have been given and all that you have in one another. Remember that you have someone to share this life with and never again will you walk alone.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Exchange of Rings**

*The promise each person makes to the other as they place the rings on each other’s finger. This will begin with the Officiant inviting each person to take a ring and place on the others finger:*

***Groom***

GF will you take this ring and place it upon BF’s finger, and as you do, repeat to her, after me, these words:

And now, as a token of your love and your deep desire to be forever united in heart and soul, you GF, may place a ring on the finger of your bride, and as you do, repeat to her, after me, these words:

The wedding ring is a symbol of eternity. It is an outward sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two hearts in endless love. And now as a token of your love and of your deep desire to be forever united in heart and soul, you GF, may place a ring on the finger of your bride.

Choice of words to say to each other during the ring exchange:

BF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my eternal love. As you wear it, may it be a reminder of how much I love you, not only on this precious day, but every single day of your life.

BF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

BF, wear this ring as a sign of my life and the giving that will last the rest of my life.

BF, I give you this ring as a symbol of the love I have for you. Wear it now as a sign of the love we share together.

I give you this ring, as I give of myself, with love and affection.

I, GF, give you, BF, this ring as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you.

BF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and with all that I have, and with it, I marry you and join my life with yours.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Bride***

BF will you take this ring and place it upon GF’s finger, and as you do, repeat to him, after me, these words:

And now, as a token of your love and your deep desire to be forever united in heart and soul, you BF, may place a ring on the finger of your groom, and as you do, repeat to him, after me, these words:

The wedding ring is a symbol of eternity. It is an outward sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two hearts in endless love. And now as a token of your love and of your deep desire to be forever united in heart and soul, you BF, may place a ring on the finger of your groom.

Choice of words to say to each other during the ring exchange:

GF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my eternal love. As you wear it, may it be a reminder of how much I love you, not only on this precious day, but every single day of your life.

GF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

GF, wear this ring as a sign of my life and the giving that will last the rest of my life.

GF, I give you this ring as a symbol of the love I have for you. Wear it now as a sign of the love we share together.

I give you this ring, as I give of myself, with love and affection.

I, BF, give you, GF, this ring as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you.

GF, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and with all that I have, and with it, I marry you and join my life with yours.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer or Blessing on This New Union**

*After the ring exchange, the Officiant may say a prayer asking God to bless this new union. You may use a prayer or substitute a poem to be read by the Officiant, a friend, or family member. You can also include a unity ritual. All can be tailored to fit your ceremony.*

*Marriage Blessing* by Joanna Fuchs

May your marriage always be blessed with the purse and profoundly loving feelings drawing you so closely together now: extraordinary communication, listening and understanding, putting yourselves in the other’s place, as well as expressing you own needs; eagerness to compromise, because you love so much, you want to give whatever is needed, wanted, for happiness; and deep commitment to do whatever it takes to maintain the strong bond present on your wedding day. May your marriage always be blessed, now and forever.

Most gracious God, Thou hast kindled in these hearts the fire of a divine love. Wilt thou keep it aflame upon the altar of their souls. Wilt thou make the inward aspirations of their hearts the outward reality of their home. Wilt thou make that home a place of light and truth, a place of beauty, a place of joy and happiness all the days of their lives. Amen.

*1 Corinthians 13:4-13*

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy; it does not boast. It is not proud; it is not rude. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. And now, faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love.

*Love, Joy, Understanding, Friendship, Courage*

In joining your lives may God grant you both: Love—to afford each other a special quality of time together. Joy—in the accomplishments of one another. Understanding—that your interests and desires will not always be the same. Friendship—based on mutual trust. Courage—to speak of a misunderstanding and to work on a solution before the setting of the sun. Compassion—to comfort each other in pain and sorrow. Foresight—to realize rainbows follow rainy days. Imagination—to keep with you part of the child you used to be. Mirth—from your sense of humor. Awareness—to live each day with the knowledge that there is no promise of tomorrow. May God bless you and keep you in the Palm of His hand.

*Why Marriage?* by Mari Nichols-Haining

Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person, with all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body. Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me, who won’t hold them against me, who loves me when I’m unlikeable. Who sees the small child in me and who looks for the divine potential of me. Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night with someone who thanks God for me, with someone I feel blessed to hold. Because marriage means opportunity to grow in love in friendship. Because marriage is a discipline to be added to a list of achievements. Because marriages do not fail, people fail when they enter into marriage expecting another to make them whole. Because, knowing this, I promise myself to take full responsibility for my spiritual, mental, and physical wholeness. I create me, I take half of the responsibility for my marriage. Together, we create our marriage. Because of this understanding, the possibilities are limitless.

*1 Corinthians 13 & 1 John 4*

GOD IS LOVE

May you have His kind of love for each other.

LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND

May you be able to lovingly overlook each other’s faults and weaknesses.

LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR BOASTFUL

May you seek praise for each other and not for yourselves.

LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT OR RUDE

May you give of yourselves for each other’s needs and treat one another with utmost respect.

LOVE DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY

May you genuinely listen to each other with a willingness to be wrong yourselves.

LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE OR RESENTFUL

May you be tolerant of each other’s moods, always ready to forgive, never holding a grudge.  
LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONG BUT REJOICES IN THE RIGHT

May you experience happiness because of each other’s triumphs and successes.

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS

May you see to understand each other’s differences, knowing you will stick together through it all.

LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS

May you always expect the best in each situation, regardless of temporary setbacks.

LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS

May you never give up your commitment to work on improving your relationship.

LOVE NEVER ENDS

May you spend the rest of your lives together, enjoying His love.

*What Greater Thing* by George Eliot

What greater thing is there for two human souls,   
than to feel that they are joined for life-   
to strengthen each other in all labor,   
to rest on each other in all sorrow,   
to minister to each other in all pain,   
to be one with each other   
in silent unspeakable memories.

The vows you have just taken, pledging love, mean far more than mere words ever can. May their gentle spirit move in you. May your years fulfill the beauty of the feelings expressed today, and may you always put these vows above the things that make life smaller. May God always be with, protect, and guide both of you, now and forever.

*Traditional Irish Wedding Blessing*

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

May God be with you and bless you;

May you see your children’s children.

May you be poor in misfortune,

Rich in blessings,

May you know nothing but happiness

from this day forward.

May the road rise to meet you

May the wind be always at your back

May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home

and may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,

May blue be the skies above you,

May pure be the joys that surround you,

May true be the hearts that love you.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Unity Ritual**

**Unity Sand Ceremony**

*All wording can be changed to reflect your ceremony, whether it be religious, non-religious, a civil union, or vow renewal. All wording can be mixed and matched and tailored to fit your desires. You may choose a ceremony just like it is or perhaps you would like to combine them. We are happy to tailor them to fit you.*

***Sand Ceremony Option 1:***

You need: A large keepsake vase, two smaller vases filled with two different colors of sand. One for each partner

GF and BF may your love always be as constant as the never-ending waves, flowing endlessly from the depths of the sea. Just as the waters touch and nourish the many shores of the earth, may your love be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Just as there will never be a morning without the ocean's flow, there will never be a day without your love for each other. You have just sealed your relationship by giving and receiving rings.

This beautiful union is symbolized through the combining of these two individual containers of sand. The first represents you, GF (GF pours a portion of his sand in vase) and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, and the other representing you BF (BF pours a portion of her sand on top GF’s sand), and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

Each one holds its own unique beauty, strength, and character. They can stand on their own and be whole, without the need of anything else. When the two are blended together they represent an entirely new and extraordinary love relationship. Each grain of sand brings to the mixture a lasting beauty that forever enriches the combination.

Please pour the sand into this common container to symbolize the union of your two lives.

(Both GF & BF together pour their remaining sand in the central vase)

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual vases, so will the love and bond between the two of you render you inseparable.

***Sand Ceremony Option 2:*** *Simple Sand Ceremony*

Now we shall celebrate GF and BF’s union as it is symbolized through the pouring of two individual containers of sand. One represents GF (GF pours a portion of his sand in vase) and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

The other represents BF (BF pours a portion of her sand on top GF’s sand) and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

As the two vials of sand are poured into the third keepsake vase, (both GF & BF together pour their remaining sand in the central vase) the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, as they are now joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual vases, so will the love and bond between the two of you render you inseparable.

***Sand Ceremony Option 3:***

GF and BF, today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other.

Your relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand; one, representing you, GF (he pours a portion of his sand in vase) and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, and the other representing you, GF, (she pours a portion of her sand on top GF’s sand) and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

Each one holds its own unique beauty, strength, and character. They can stand on their own and be whole, without the need of anything else. When the two are blended together they represent an entirely new and extraordinary love relationship. Each grain of sand brings to the mixture a lasting beauty that forever enriches the combination. (Both GF & BF together pour their remaining sand in the central vase)

As you each hold your sand the separate containers of sand represent your lives to this moment; individual and unique. As you now combine your sand together, your lives also join together as one. The life that each of you have experienced until now, individually, will hereafter be inseparably united, for the two shall become one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your union be.”

*Of course, if you prefer, a poem can be read instead.*

*All ceremonies can include children or other family members. All can be changed to personalize your ceremony as you desire.*

***Sand Ceremony Option 4:*** *Includes Children*

We are all members of one family, God's family. (This line is optional) Today as BF and GF have sealed their commitment to each other with the exchange of rings they make a commitment to their. We recognize the significant role that CC play in this marriage celebrated today. They will now join BF and GF in this commitment to each other by contributing a part of each individual person into one blended family. Today, this relationship is symbolized through the pouring of this sand, each representing a member. As each individual’s sand is poured into the family's one united container, the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will become the bond with your family

From this day forth, you shall be more than one couple or two individuals – you shall be a loving and united family. Today your family is complete. You are a family drawn together by love and held together by devotion.

*(While pouring the sand the Officiant could read “What is Family” poem)* BF and GF can also have the option of pouring some sand first as in the traditional sand ceremony then adding this wording on.

You may choose to have the officiant read a poem while everyone pours their sand. Here is an example of one about family. Remember you may choose any poem you like.

What is a Family?"

Author Unknown

A family is.....

The sweetest feelings

The warmest hugs

Trust and togetherness

Unconditional love

The stories of our lives written on the same page

The nicest memories anyone has ever made

Treasured photos

Thankful tears

Hearts overflowing with all the years

Being there for one another

Supporting and caring

Understanding, Helping, Sharing

Walking life's path together

And making the journey more beautiful because.....

We are a family.....And a family is Love.

**Unity Canvas Painting Ceremony**



*A fun alternative to the traditional*[*unity candle ceremony*](http://www.officianteric.com/candle-lighting-unity-ceremony/)*or*[*sand ceremony*](http://www.officianteric.com/sand-ceremony/)*, the Unity Canvas Painting Ceremony lets the couple celebrate their unity ceremony in an artistic way that truly represents themselves.*

***Unity Canvas Painting Ceremony 1***

Every marriage starts out as a blank canvas and every day is a splash of color.

This blank canvas represents the day of the wedding, and a new beginning.

The paint colors signify the experiences that lie ahead; colors of joys and sorrows, blessings and heartache.

The colors represent BF and GF’s milestones, their celebrations, tribulations, passions and dreams.

They are the moments that become the days that make-up the years.

There will be places on the canvas when the colors blend and mix, flowing together, creating a new color of experiences shared.

There will be places when the colors stay separate and stand out alone and independent… yet, still a compliment to the bold color by its side.

And there may be places of contrast.

Parts of the canvas that look dark or messy and not at all to the couples liking.

While another spot remains blank and bare.

However, when you step back and look at the canvas in its entirety, you will see that it clearly is “An Original Masterpiece” unlike anything you’ve ever seen before.

Each color, contrast, shadow, blend as unique and beautiful as BF and GF.

***Unity Canvas Painting Ceremony 2***

We will now participate in another symbolic act of love and unity.

BF and GF, this blank canvas symbolizes the start of this new journey together, the new family that you are now forming and are dedicated to build together.

Your canvas represents the passion, love and tenderness at the core of this new family, and which will be the building block of your new life as one.

May you remember the commitment of love that lies at the foundation of your new life together.

***Unity Canvas Painting Ceremony 3***

On this special day as two become one, your faith and love and hope and joy will be yours forevermore. What’s in your minds and hearts will be yours to share so at this time I ask you to paint together as one with the love in both of your hearts.

We will now participate in another symbolic act of love and unity.

**Rose Ceremony**

*The Rose Ceremony is simple yet moving. BF and GF exchange two roses, symbolizing the giving and receiving of their love for each other throughout their entire married life. The Rose Ceremony also conveys how to use the rose and its symbolism in difficult times in order to forgive each other. You may choose to have the Officiant hand BF and GF their roses, or the Officiant can invite the bride and grooms’ mothers up to give their children the roses. All wording can be changed to fit your desires. Feel free to “mix and match” from each option if you like.*

***Rose Ceremony Option 1 (Long version)***

*(Officiant hands each a red rose bud/or invites mothers to present the roses)*

Your gift to each other for your wedding today has been your wedding rings - which shall always be an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect; and a public showing of your commitment to each other. You now have what remains the most honorable title which may exist between a man and a woman - the title of "husband" and "wife. For your first gift as husband and wife, that gift will be a single rose.

In the past, the rose was considered a symbol of love and a single rose always meant only one thing - it meant the words "I love you. So it is appropriate that for your first gift - as husband and wife - that gift would be a single rose. Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife.

In some ways it seems like you have not done anything at all. Just a moment ago you were holding one small rose - and now you are holding one small rose. In some ways, a marriage ceremony is like this. In some ways, tomorrow is going to seem no different than yesterday. But in fact today, just now, you both have given and received one of the most valuable and precious gifts of life - one I hope you always remember - the gift of true and abiding love within the devotion of marriage.

I would ask that where ever you make your home in the future that you both pick one very special location for roses; so that on each anniversary of this truly wonderful occasion you both may take a rose to that spot both as a recommitment to your marriage - and a recommitment that this will be a marriage based upon love.

In every marriage there are times where it is difficult to find the right words. It is easiest to hurt those who we most love. It is easiest to be hurt by those who we most love. It might be difficult some time to be able to express the words "I am sorry" or "I forgive you" or "I need you" or "I am hurting". If this should happen, if you simply cannot find these words, leave a rose at that spot which both of you have selected - for that rose will say what matters most of all and should overpower all other things and all other words.

That rose says the words: "I still love you. The other should accept this rose for the words which cannot be found, and remember the love and hope that you both share today.

GF and BF if there is anything you remember of this marriage ceremony, remember that it was love that brought you here today, it is only love which can make it a glorious union, and it is by love which your marriage shall endure.

***Rose Ceremony Option 2 (shorter version)***

Your first gift to each other for your wedding today has been your wedding rings - which shall always be an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect and a public showing of your commitment to each other. In addition, you both have given and received one of the most valuable and precious gifts of life - one I hope you always remember - the gift of true and abiding love within the devotion of marriage.

You now have what remains the most honorable title that exists between a woman and a man - the title of "wife" and "husband” It is now my great privilege to be the first to address you as wife and husband and for your first gift as wife and husband, that gift will be a single red rose bud.

(*Officiant hands each a red rose bud/or invites mothers to present the roses*)

The rose is considered a symbol of love and a single rose always means only one thing - it means, "I love you." So it is appropriate that for your first gift - as wife and husband - that gift would be a single rose bud.

Please exchange the rose buds as your first gift to each other as wife and husband.

Within these rose buds, if given proper loving care, is the potential for an even more beautiful expression of Life and Love in the form of the mature flower. And so it is with your marriage. At this point your marriage is like these rose buds - ready, with proper loving care - to unfold into a very beautiful expression of life.

GF and BF, if there is anything you remember of this marriage ceremony, it is that it was love that brought you here today, it is only love which can make it a glorious union, and it is by love which your marriage shall endure. Whatever the situation, love, understanding, acceptance and forgiveness can make everything right.

***Rose Ceremony Option 3***

After the exchanging of rings, your first gift to each other, as husband and wife, is a single rose. The rose is a symbol of love so it is appropriate that it is your first gift.

Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife. *(GF GIVES A ROSE TO BF)*

*(Repeat after officiant these words)*

GF: BF I give you this rose as a symbol of my love. It began as a tiny, tightly closed bud and blossomed into this perfect rose that opened with the warmth of the sun, just as my love for you has grown in the warmth of your soul.

*(BF GIVES A ROSE TO GF)*

BF: GF I give you this rose as a symbol of my love. It began as a tiny, tightly closed bud and blossomed into this perfect rose that opened with the warmth of the sun, just as my love for you has grown in the warmth of your soul.

GF and BF, in remembrance of this day, as a reaffirmation of your love and of the vows you have spoken here today please give each other a single red rose each year on your anniversary. In the best of marriages there are difficult times. There are times of hurtful words, times of neglect, times when we must wait patiently to be together again. Those may be times when the words you really need to speak are difficult. I ask that you remember this moment and that when words fail you, that you place a single rose on your spouse's pillow as a way to say, "I remember our vow," and "I love you". Let this exchanging of roses be the beginning of a lifelong tradition of unspoken love.

***Rose Ceremony to Honor Mothers***

We gather here today, in the presence of God and friends to join GF and BF in matrimony. We celebrate the coming together in love of this woman and this man. We remember that marriage is a time when growing love is made public, when two people share mutual promises before God and before us. We join in our support of them as they offer themselves to each other. We celebrate their joy, their love and their expectations.

GF and BF would like to thank each one of you for sharing this happiest of days with them. They would also like to acknowledge those who are here in spirit today, especially GF and BF, whose love and support will be felt by GF and BF always.

Let us pray

God, for the joy of this occasion we thank you. For the meaning of this wedding day we thank you. For this important moment in an ever growing relationship we thank you. For your presence here and now and for your presence at all times, we thank you.

GF and BF, today you stand before us ready to share the rest of your lives together as a married couple.

But long before today your parents provided you with a foundation of love and caring which has brought you to this point.

At this time GF and BF would like to acknowledge the love and sacrifice that each mother has made to make their children who they are today….a man and a woman who are ready to be committed, in a loving marriage of their own… They honor their mothers with the symbolic gift of beauty, the giving of a rose.

*(GF and BF each present a rose to their mother-then return in front of officiant)*

**Tree Planting Ceremony**

*Just like the unity candle and unity sand ceremony. The unity tree planting ceremony can be used to symbolize the joining together of two individuals or the joining of two families.*

*The ceremony is conducted in much the same way as other unity ceremonies are. You set up a separate table near the altar. On this table you would have a potted tree/sapling, something perhaps with special meaning to the couple or taken from a special place. You would also have two small buckets of dirt, two gardening trowels as well as a small watering can placed on the table. If you choose to have the ceremony symbolize the joining together of both family’s then upon the entrance of the mothers, each mother goes to the table and scoops in a small amount of dirt. Then they take their seats. During a specific reading or song, the couple will each add the remainder of dirt and water the plant together. After the ceremony, the couple plants the tree in their home or a special location to symbolize the putting down of roots, longevity and strengths in their marriage. Here is an example of some wording the Officiant may say during the planting (all wording can be mixed/matched and tailored to your wishes):*

***Tree Planting Ceremony Option 1***

GF and BF will now take part in a Tree Planting Ceremony, to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as they become each other’s family today.

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love richens our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and change.

Let your relationship and your love for each other be like this tree you plant today. Let it grow tall and strong. Let it stand tall during the harsh winds and rains and storms, and come through unscathed. Like a tree, your marriage must be resilient. It must weather the challenges of daily life and the passage of time. And just like the tree you are planting, marriage requires constant nurturing and nourishment.

After the ceremony, the couple plants the tree in their home or a special location to symbolize the putting down of roots, longevity and strength in their marriage.

***Tree Planting Ceremony Option 2***

GF and BF will now take part in a Unity Tree Planting Ceremony, to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as they become each other’s family today.

GF and BF, today you stand before us ready to share the rest of your lives together as a married couple. But long before today your parents provided you with a foundation of love and caring which has brought you to this point. We will start by adding dirt from Bride's childhood home and dirt from Groom’s childhood home. This dirt symbolizes their individual families, it has been through their years of love and support that have helped shape who Bride and groom are today, a man and a woman who are ready to be committed, in a loving marriage of their own… (GF and BF add dirt from childhood home-or perhaps the mother will add it-whatever you want)

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and change.

At this time, Bride’s brother (or friend, or family member, or the officiant) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would like to offer a reading.

From *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* by Louis DeBernieres

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes

and then subsides. And when it subsides you have

to make a decision. You have to work out whether your

roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable

that you should ever part. Because this is what love is.

Love is not breathless, it is not excitement,

it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,

and that is both an art and a fortunate accident. Those that truly

love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the

pretty blossoms have fallen from the branches, they find that they are one tree and not

two.

GF and BF, would you please plant the sapling. *GF & BF plant the sapling.*

Let your relationship and your love for each other be like this tree you plant

today. Let it grow tall and strong. Let it stand tall during the harsh winds

and rains and storms, and come through unscathed. Like a tree, your marriage

must be resilient. It must weather the challenges of daily life and the passage

of time. And just like the tree you are planting, marriage requires constant

nurturing and nourishment.

GF and BF, would you please water the sapling. *GF & BF water the sapling*.

Remember to nourish each other, with words of encouragement, trust, and love.

This is needed on a daily basis so you each can grow and reach your fullest potential - just like this tree.

***Tree Planting Ceremony Option 3***

GF and BF will now take part in a Unity Tree Planting Ceremony, to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as they become each other’s family today.

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and change.

GF and BF together plant your tree

As they plant their tree the Officiant will read:

Tree of Love by Sandra E. McBride

From the seed of this day

Let their love grow

as the tree grows.

Reaching down, to build

strong roots,

Reaching out to provide

Comfort and sustenance

Reaching up, to seek

the grace of God

Let their love grow

As the tree grows

Deeper, wider, stronger

with each passing year.

**Jumping the Broom Ceremony**

*You may purchase decorated brooms online. Many couples decorate their own. Any kind of broom will do. The straws of the broom represent family; the handle represents the Almighty; the ribbon represents the tie that binds the couple together. This ceremony dates back to the 1600s, and can be traced back to many diverse cultures. The most well-known, is the traditional jumping of the broom that derives from Africa. Jumping the broom or in some cases jumping over an imaginary line is an African ritual, or tradition still being practiced in some parts of West Africa. Jumping the broom is not associated with slavery. Enslaved Africans, as an affirmation of their cultural heritage practiced it during slavery in North America. Jumping the broom together has been part of weddings for couples who want to honor that tradition. It also has deep roots in the Celtic culture (including Welsh, Celtics, Druids and Gypsies). The "Jumping the Broom" is a ceremony in which the bride and groom, 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 wife and husband. At the conclusion of the ceremony, one of the attendants produces the broom or 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. Couples celebrate this rich cultural heritage, irrespective of race, religion, and nationality. The most important thing is its significance; Honoring and respect of your ancestors, their legacy, and your family heritage. The coming together of both families. The commitment to each other as wife and husband. It represents strength, love, togetherness, loyalty, and respect which is essential for a successful marriage. Jumping the Broom ceremony wording. This element is a closing to the ceremony and is done after the pronouncement. Couple faces guests, the maid of honor hands the bride her bouquet.*

***Jumping the Broom Ceremony Option 1***

GF and BF have chosen to conclude their ceremony with the African tradition of jumping the broom. As our bride and groom jump, they physically and spiritually cross the threshold into the land of matrimony. It marks the beginning of their making a home together. It symbolizes the sweeping away of the old and the welcoming of the new. It is also a call of support for the marriage from the entire community of family and friends. The bride and groom will now begin their new life together with a clean sweep!

*(Broom is laid in front of couple)*

Everyone please count with me 1, 2, 3... Jump!

*(Couple jump)*

Ladies and gentlemen may I present Mr. and Mrs.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!"

*(Couple kiss again and exit to greet their guests!)*

***Jumping the Broom Ceremony Option 2***

GF and BF have chosen to conclude their ceremony with the tradition of jumping the broom. Today we honor and celebrate the transition from two separate lives into one life united by love. We place a broom for jumping, which symbolizes the entrance of the couple into a new life together.

*(At this point designated person-parent, family member best man…whomever you wish, places broom on ground in front of couple)*

Sharing a life with another person requires many “leaps of faith.” The leap they take together over the broom is also symbolic. By taking the leap, they make a gesture of dedication to working together through the tough times ahead, as well as the easy times. They leave behind the past and jump into the future together secure in their love.

Everyone please count 1, 2, 3… Jump! Together with me now, and shout with joy as they perform their first act of working together as husband and wife;

1, 2, 3, jump!

*The couple jumps over the broom, and then kisses. Immediately, the music begins and the couple recesses down the aisle to the cheers of family and friends!*

**Beer Ceremony**

*This is a great option for the beer lovers out there. After exchanging vows you will combine your two favorite beers together symbolizing the joining of your lives.*

***Beer Ceremony Option 1***

You have just committed yourselves to one another through sacred vows. Your unique selves have found one another and have become one.  
  
In honor of your uniqueness, in a moment I will be inviting \_\_\_\_\_\_ to bring forward two beers. One for you GF, and one for you BF. Each can will represent your individual lives, family, and your individual selves. It is important to remember that you are still an individual, however, you are now part of a stronger indestructible team backed by a very powerful emotion known as love.  
  
Here’s the thing, Water is the essence of life, but when water is combined with grains, hops, and yeast, the outcome is glorious beer. So too shall be the product of your union. It is an unselfish union between beer’s basic ingredients that make the finished product truly magical. It is an unselfish union of beer’s ingredients that make beer truly magnificent. So too will be your marriage. Love is the water of your beer. Trust is the grain that will give your marriage its character and strength. Passion, like hops, will add fragrance and spice to your life together. Your commitment to one another is the yeast that acts as the catalyst to make this glorious union—this metaphysical wonder—possible.  
  
Now that the yeast has been added and the fermentation of your love has begun, there are vast changes ahead. Open your hearts wider than they have ever been opened before and rise up to meet these changes.  
  
As you drink your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (type of beer) consume these changes. Let them fill your spirits and intoxicate your souls. Abandon all previous disappointments and past events that may have held you back and look toward your future with one fresh spirit, with one fresh love, with one fresh beer. As you pour your beers together you will be representing your two individual selves becoming one, creating a life that is richer and more magnificent than your lives alone.

***Beer Ceremony Option 2***

In lieu of candles, GF and BF will celebrate their new marriage with a unity beer. Their parents will now bring up their chosen beers.

GF, fittingly, has a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (example: raspberry beer which is sweet, fun, and generally liked by everyone.)

BF has a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (example: barrel-aged stout, an acquired and unusual taste. Also it's dark, like John's soul — I mean, sense of humor.)

These beers are great on their own, but mixed together, they create something new and delicious. Just as these two beers have been combined together and are now impossible to separate, so may your marriage be. You will now be united for a lifetime.

**LoveLock Ceremony**



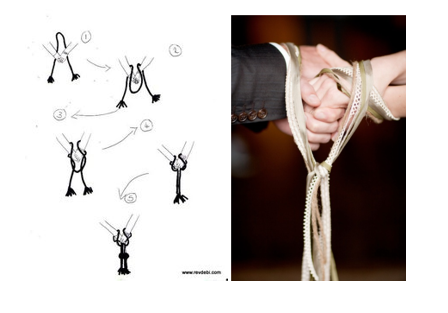
The ritual GF and BF are about to make symbolizes the joining of their two separate journeys into a singular path and honors the spiritual commitment this couple is making today. The idea of “locking your love” together for eternity with this LoveLock represents the commitment you make to each other today.  May this keepsake be displayed in your home or pulled out for special occasions to remind you of the vows that were pledged today. The message engraved on your LoveLock is the promise of love, acceptance and unity.   Locking a LoveLock to the Tree of Life is a reminder of the reason you have come together.  This lock will lock ONE time only, there is no key, which symbolizes the commitment you are making to each other for eternity.  As life unfolds in its many directions, the branches will bear its celebrations of life to come. Connecting your two hearts together…and symbolizing that your love will be forever!

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**Handfasting Ceremonies**

*Handfasting is a beautiful element incorporated into a wedding ceremony where the couple’s hands are symbolically bound in marriage. This ancient Celtic custom has been practiced all over Europe including Scotland and The British Isles. Hand fasting also has its roots in Pagan and Wiccan ceremonies. The term “Tying the Knot” comes from the tradition of Handfasting.*

*The beautiful words and symbolism of Handfasting have become a popular element to include in today’s modern wedding ceremony. You can buy cords in many stores including online stores such as Etsy. You can also make your own Handfasting cord. There are no rules to this ceremony; you can tailor it to fit your desires.*



***Handfasting Ceremony Option 1***

GF and BF have chosen to incorporate the ancient Celtic ritual of handfasting in their wedding ceremony today. Handfasting is a declaration of intent where the couple clearly states that they are marrying on their own free will.

GF and BF, know now before you go further that since your lives have crossed in this life, you have formed eternal bonds. As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real ideals that give meaning to this ceremony and to the sanctity of marriage. With full awareness, know that within this circle you are declaring your intent before your friends and family as witnesses.

The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union and will cross the years and lives of each soul’s growth. Do you seek to enter this ceremony?

*GF and BF:* Yes.

GF and BF, please look into each other’s eyes.

(*Hold hands, one partner with his or her left hand and the other with his or her right hand.)*

HANDFASTING CEREMONY

GF, will you share in BF’s pain and seek to alleviate it?  
*GF:* I will.  
BF, will you share in GF’s pain and seek to alleviate it?  
*BF:* I will.  
And so, the binding is made.GF, will you share in BF’s laughter and look for the brightness and the positive in her?GF: I will.

BF, will you share in GF’s laughter and look for the brightness and positive in him?

BF: I will.And so the binding is made.

GF, will you share in BF’s burdens so that your spirits may grow in this union?

GF: I will.BF, will you share in GF’s burdens so that your spirits may grow in this union?

BF: I will.And so the binding is made.

GF, will you share in BF’s dreams?

GF: I will.BF, will you share in GF’s dreams?

BF: I will.And so the binding is made.

GF, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

GF: I will.  
BF, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

BF: I will.  
And so the binding is made.

GF, will you honor BF as an equal in this union?

GF: I will.  
BF, will you honor GF as an equal in this union?

BF: I will.  
And so the binding is made.

GF and BF, as your hands are bound together now, so your lives and spirits are joined in a union of love and trust. The bond of marriage is not formed by these cords, but rather by the vows you have made. For always you hold in your own hands the fate of this union. Above you are stars and below you is earth. Like stars your love should be a constant source of light, and like the earth, a firm foundation from which to grow.

May these hands be blessed this day. May they always hold each other. May they have the strength to hang on during the storms of stress and the dark of disillusionment. May they remain tender and gentle as they nurture each other in their wondrous love. May they build a relationship founded in love, and rich in caring. May these hands be healer, protector, shelter, and guide for each other. (*The Hands of the Couple*, Traditional Handfasting Prayer, unknown)

***Handfasting Ceremony Option 2***

As this knot is tied, so are your lives now bound.

Woven into this cord, imbued into its very fibers, are all the hopes of your friends and family, and of yourselves, for your new life together.

With the fashioning of this knot do I tie all the desires, dreams, love, and happiness wished here in this place to your lives for as long as love shall last.

In the joining of hands and the fashion of a knot, so are your lives now bound, one to another.

By this cord you are thus bound to your vow.

May this knot remain tied for as long as love shall last.

May this cord draw your hands together in love, never to be used in anger.

May the vows you have spoken never grow bitter in your mouths.

As any child discovers when they are learning to tie their own shoes, the first move is to cross the ends.

As your hands are bound by this cord, so is your partnership held by the symbol of this knot.

May it be granted that what is done before the gods be not undone by man.

Two entwined in love, bound by commitment and fear, sadness and joy, by hardship and victory, anger and reconciliation, all of which brings strength to this union.

Hold tight to one another through both good times and bad, and watch as your strength grows.

***Handfasting Ceremony Option 1***

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other.

As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be hand fasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to your creative higher powers.

The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul’s growth.

Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?  
GF and BF say, “Yes, we seek to enter.”

In times past it was believed that the human soul shared characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigned virtues to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home. The heat of the heart’s passion. The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake. The swift excitement of the river. The refreshing cleansing of the rain. The all-encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North. Firm foundation on which to build. Fertility of the fields to enrich your lives. A stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

I bid you to look into each other’s eyes.

GF, Will you cause her pain?  
GF says, “I May.”

Is that your intent?  
GF says, “No.”

BF, Will you cause him pain?  
BF says, “I may.”

Is that your intent?  
BF says, “No.”

Will you share each other’s pain and seek to ease it?  
GF and BF say, “Yes.”

First cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the first binding is made. Join your hands

BF, Will you share his laughter?  
BF says, “Yes.”

GF, Will you share her laughter?  
GF says, “Yes.”

Will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?  
GF and BF say, “Yes.”

Second cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the second binding is made.

BF, Will you burden him?  
BF says, “I may.”

Is that your intent?  
BF says, “No.”

GF, Will you burden her?  
GF says, “I May.”

Is that your intent?  
GF says, “No.”

Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?  
GF and BF say, “Yes.”

Third cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the third binding is made.

BF, will you share his dreams?  
BF says, “Yes.”

GF, will you share her dreams?  
GF says, “Yes”

Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes?  
GF and BF say “Yes”

Fourth cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the fourth binding is made.

GF, will you cause her anger?  
GF says, “I May.”  
Is that your intent?  
No

BF, will you cause him anger?  
BF says, “I may.”

Is that your intent?  
BF says, “No.”

Will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?  
GF and BF say, “We Will.”

Fifth chord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the fifth binding is made.

BF, Will you honor him?  
BF says, “I will.”

GF, Will you honor her?  
GF says, “I will”

Will you seek to never give cause to break that honor?  
GF and BF say, “We shall never do so.”

Sixth cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the sixth binding is made.

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making of breaking of this union.

The cords are removed and placed on the altar.

***Handfasting Ceremony Option 4***

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other.

As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?  
GF and BF say, “We do.”

*Blessing of the Hands*  
These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes: tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will comfort you in illness, and hold you when fear or grief racks your mind.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.

These are the hands that will give you support and encourage you to chase your dreams. Together, everything you wish for can be realized.

*Prepare the cords*  
Back in earlier years, the hands would be bound with whatever was available – vines, colorful cords, or scarf. Today we will use these cords to symbolize the binding, or promises.

The first promise  
GF, Will you be BF’s faithful partner for life?  
GF says, “I will.”

BF, will you be GF’s faithful partner for life?  
BF says, “I will.”

Will you be each other’s constant friends and one true love?  
GF and BF say, “We will.”

First cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the first binding is made.

The second promise  
BF, do you promise to love GF without reservation?  
BF says, “I will.”

GF, do you promise to love BF without reservation?  
GF says, “I will.”

Will both of you stand by one another in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want?  
GF and BF say, “We will.”

Second cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the second binding is made.

The third promise  
BF, will you stand together with GF during your times of joy and sorrow?  
BF says, “I will.”

GF, will you stand together with BF during your times of joy and sorrow?  
GF says, “I will.”

Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?  
GF and BF say, “We will.”

Third cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the third binding is made.

The fourth promise  
GF will you always be open and honest with BF, for as long as you both shall live?  
GF says, “I will.”

BF, will you always be open and honest with GF, for as long as you both shall live?  
BF says, “I will.”

Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes for this marriage?  
GF and BF say, “We will.”

Fourth cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the forth binding is made.

The fifth promise  
BF, Will you honor this man?  
BF says, “I will.”

GF, Will you honor this woman?  
GF says, “I will.”

Will you both seek to cherish and strengthen that honor?  
GF and BF say, “We will.”

Sixth cord is draped across GF and BF’s hands  
and so the fifth binding is made.

Binding of all promises  
The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.

*The cords are removed and placed on altar*

**Ring Warming Ceremony**

*If you are looking for a unique element to add to your wedding ceremony here is a beautiful idea, add a ring warming! This is when your friends and family “warm” your wedding bands prior to you exchanging them by holding them and silently blessing them with their wishes for your marriage. This is a perfect way to include your guests in your ceremony; after all they are there to witness your love and commitment to one another and to add their blessings and best wishes to your marriage. There are a couple of ways to do this.*

*• You can pass your rings amongst the bridal party to warm them before you exchange them.*

*• You can have your closest family members -your parents and immediate family members in the first rows warm them.*

*• You can pass them amongst all your guests. You can begin the ceremony with the officiant announcing that the rings will be passed around and to please add your blessings on them. Then when the guests are finished the best man and get them and pass them amongst the bridal party ending with the officiant saying a blessing on them before you exchange them. You may want to tie them together with a decorative bow or in a pouch or find something unique.*

*If you have many guests you can use ushers at the end of the rows just like ushers in church do when passing the collection plates.*

Here is an example:

Exchange of rings:

As a symbol of their love and commitment GF and BF will exchange wedding rings.

Although you each wear only one of them, these rings essentially belong to you both. For they are a symbol of the love you share and the promise that it will be a strong and lasting love. Throughout the years they will speak softly of your vow to grow along with one another, to face the challenges of life, to remain one another's first priority and keep your relationship rich and full. They will give you strength and comfort in times of uncertainty and heighten life’s joys as you share them. Never again do you walk alone for your love will be with you always.

Ring Warming:

It is widely believed that precious metals hold energy. The more enduring the object the more the energy will be absorbed.

At this time, I would like to invite the wedding party to pass the rings between one another and to warm the precious metal with your wishes, prayers, and blessings for GF and BF. As they do this I ask that all present say a silent wish or prayer for this couple, for their marriage, and their future.

*(Rings are passed amongst the wedding party and then handed to the officiant)*

GF and BF these rings now contain in their precious metal, that which is more precious and yet priceless, the love and support of your family and friends.

(Continue with ring exchange…)

**Wine Ceremony**

*This additional ceremony element is typically done after the ring exchange. Blending of wine to symbolize two lives blending together as one. You will need two carafes, one with white wine, and the other with red wine, and one glass (the common cup).*

***Wine Ceremony Option 1***

Now we shall celebrate GF and BF blending of your two lives into one, as it is symbolized with a wine ceremony.

One carafe contains red wine representing the deep richness of the love in their hearts and the robust energy which keeps their loving relationship going. The other carafe contains white wine, fermented in oak barrels, it represents the strength of a loving marriage and a lingering taste in their soul for the love they feel for each other. They will combine some of the two wines into the common cup, creating a rosé, which is symbolic of their blending together through a committed relationship in marriage. Some of the wine will remain in their individual carafes which represents that each of them remain separate individuals

GF and BF, you will now pour some of the wine from your carafe into the Common Cup.

The couple each add wine from their carafe into the common cup.

This cup is a sign of your unity. Although you are two distinct persons, both respecting the equal dignity of the other, you have chosen to unite your lives and to seek your happiness together. You drink from the same cup to be reminded that from this day forward you will share all that is to come, encompassing all sorrows and joys, all hardships and triumphs, all the experiences of life,

Drink now, and may the cup of your lives be sweet and full to overflowing.

*Officiant hands the Common Cup to the couple they take turns drinking from it.*

*\*\*Note-The couple may toast each other as they drink with, "Now our lives are one" or "To our lives together” or “To us” and drinks from the glass.*

*They place the wine glasses back and turn back to the officiant*

May the robust energy, strength, and rich love you have for each other be with you always.

***Wine Ceremony Option 2*** *– A simple toast at the end of the ceremony-after the pronouncement. It is said as a benediction. A sendoff/final blessing*

Wine is the symbol of joy and celebration.

Throughout history, in nearly all cultures and traditions, the sharing of a cup of wine has been used as a universal, central moment of sharing during significant moments. For many it symbolizes the celebration of the harvest, the changing seasons of life, or the ultimate personal sacrifice which others have made on our behalf.

Wine is, after all, the result of years of hard work, the tender care of the grape, a thoughtful mix of ingredients, the patient fermenting, and the unique flavors of each year.

So, it is fitting that GF and BF take their first cup of wine as a married couple, to not only celebrate all that has taken pace in their lives to this point, but as an expression of hope and faith in the harvest of their lives, the commitment they make, and the sacrifice of all whom has made this moment possible.

GF and BF, will you each pick up your glass and bring to mind your promises, the honor and integrity with which you have made them and your shared hopes and dreams… and toast to one another?

GF and BF raises their glasses toast and drink

**Box Wine and Love Letter Ceremony**

*Box sets can be found online.*

*The officiant asks the couple getting married to find a strong wooden box that will hold two bottles of wine and two wine glasses. The couple is then asked to each write a letter to one another, expressing their thoughts about the good qualities that they found in their future partner and their reasons for falling in love with each other. Under no condition can they read each other’s letter. They are to seal them and put them in the box with the wine and glasses. Upon finalizing the wedding ceremony, the officiant will announce to the guests that she had asked the couple to write letters to each other and put them in the box with the wine and glasses. The officiant will explain that should the couple ever find their marriage in serious trouble, before making any irrational decisions, they must open the box, drink wine together, and read the letter that they wrote to one another to reflect on why they fell in love with each other in the first place. The hope is that there will never be a reason to have to open the box, unless of course, it is for an anniversary celebration!*

GF and BF have chosen as a couple to perform a Love Letter & Wine Box ceremony.

This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other. The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry. The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written. You have created your very own "romantic" time capsule to be opened on your 5th wedding anniversary.

I recommend that you keep the box in a place of honor prominently displayed in your home as a constant reminder of your commitment to each other.

GF and BF should you ever find your marriage enduring insurmountable hardships, you are to as a couple, open this box, sit and drink the wine together, then separate and read the letters you wrote to one another when you were united as a couple in marriage. By reading these love letters you will reflect upon the reasons you fell in love and chose to marry each other here today.

The hope is, however, that you will never have a reason to open this box. And if this is the case, you are to open this box to share and enjoy on your 5th year wedding anniversary!

Officiant: GF and BF, you may now seal the box. (Boxes come with pre drilled holes and nails or a lock)

**Love Letter and Wine Box Ritual**

*A love letter exchange is a romantic ceremony that will serve as a lasting reminder of the commitments made to one another. Heartfelt letters, encapsulating your thoughts and feelings are locked away in a wine box to be revealed several years into your marriage.  Whiskey, Scotch or Tequila can easily be switched out for the wine.*

***Love Letter and Wine Box Ritual 1***

GF and BF have chosen as a couple to perform a Love Letter & Wine Box ceremony. This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other. The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry. The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written. Should GF and BF ever find their marriage facing hardships, they will open this box, sit and drink the wine together, then read the letters they wrote to one another to be reminded of the reasons why they are together. The hope is, however, that GF and BF will never have a reason to open this box.

And if this is the case, they are to open this box to share and enjoy on their 5th year wedding anniversary, replenish and open on their 10th anniversary, and so on.

***Love Letter and Wine Box Ritual 2***

GF and BF have chosen as a couple to perform a Love Letter & Wine Box ceremony. This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other. The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry. The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written. You have created your very own “romantic” time capsule to be opened on your 5th wedding anniversary. I recommend that you keep the box in a place of honor prominently displayed in your home as a constant reminder of your commitment to each other. GF and BF, should you ever find your marriage enduring insurmountable hardships, you are to as a couple, open this box, sit and drink the wine together, then separate and read the letters you wrote to one another when you were united as a couple in marriage. By reading these love letters you will reflect upon the reasons you fell in love and chose to marry each other here today. The hope is, however, that you will never have a reason to open this box.

And if this is the case, you are to open this box to share and enjoy on your 5th year wedding anniversary! GF and BF, you may now seal the box.

***Love Letter and Wine Box Ritual 3***

Like good wine, a great love will deepen and mature with age.

As a part of today’s ceremony, GF and BF have captured their thoughts leading up to this day in personal notes to each other. Also, they have asked their parents (or best man / maid of honor or other loved ones) to compose notes as well, containing their thoughts and their most important piece of advice to the couple as they journey through life together. These notes will now be sealed in this box to be opened and shared together with a bottle of wine on a future anniversary celebration. It is at this time I would ask the parents to come forward and place their note and a bottle of wine inside this box. These messages and wine will be shared by GF and BF on their 1st and 5th anniversaries. And I now ask that GF and BF place their notes to each other with a bottle of wine they have selected to share on their 10th anniversary celebration. On that joyous day INSERT DATE they will get to reflect on the events and emotions they shared on this wonderful day.

They can also reminisce about all of the wonderful memories they will have made over the last ten years and dream of all of those yet to come.

I will now seal the box.

***Love Letter and Wine Box Ritual 4***

At this time, GF and BF would like you to witness an untraditional tradition.

The fact that it is untraditional is probably why it appeals to them so much.

Here’s how it works: GF and BF have written love letters to each other.

In these letters they have detailed why they fell in love and what they truly admire about the other person. These letters were sealed before they each could read what the order wrote. The letter will be placed in this box along with a good bottle of wine. They will then nail the box closed. The idea is that if ever they find their marriage has hit a rough spot, they will bring out the box, they will open it, share the wine, and read the letters reminding them of the love that brought them together and the promises they made to each other here today. It is their hope and belief that they will not need the box except in celebration of an anniversary.

They hope to hold out until their INSERT ANNIVERSARY DATE, but if they do need it, it’s there. This may not seem like the most romantic thing to do on a wedding day–to think about the days when things will be hard–but it’s important to GF and BF that their ceremony and promises to each other be realistic. They know that marriage is hard. They know it is a lot of work. They mean every word that they have said here today and they do not take lightly the words as long as we both shall live. GF and BF, you may now seal the box.

**Cord of Three Strands Ceremony - "God's Knot"**

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12

This passage from Ecclesiastes illustrates the importance of Christian companionship. Two Christians that are bound together in Christ are stronger than the individuals themselves. We believe that Christian marriage is about more than the union of one man and one woman. The Bible teaches us that God performs a miracle in our marriage, uniting us together in a covenant relationship with Him as one. The Cord of Three Strands is a symbol of that sacred union created on your wedding day.

The cord of three strands ceremony (often called "God's Knot" or the Unity Braid Ceremony) symbolizes the joining of one man, one woman, and God into a marriage relationship. It adds a truly unique element to your ceremony that friends and family will remember. The cord of three strands ceremony is a great addition to a wedding ceremony. Couples with strong spiritual beliefs may want to add this short ceremony toward the end of the wedding ceremony. Keeping God at the center of your wedding ceremony will also help you keep God at the center of your marriage. Every time you think back on your wedding ceremony it will remind you of how God is intimately involved in your marriage. The Cord of Three Strands is a symbol of that sacred union created on your wedding day. Marriage takes three; you, your soon to be spouse, and God. It was God who taught us to love. By keeping Him at the center of your marriage, His love will continue to bind you together as one throughout your marriage.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cordof3Strands |  | **The cord of three strands ceremony is a great addition to a wedding ceremony. It adds a truly unique element to your ceremony that friends and family will remember.** |



Today, GF and BF have chosen to braid three strands together into a single cord. Each strand has a significant meaning. The **gold** strand represents God and His majesty. The **purple** strand represents the groom and his life. The **white** strand represents the bride and her life. In braiding these three strands together, GF and BF have demonstrated that their marriage is more than a joining of two lives together. It is a unity with God as well. They have chosen to allow God to be at the center of their marriage, woven into every aspect of it.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reads, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Today, GF and BF have been woven together by God as ONE in marriage! One man, one woman, and God. It was God who taught us to love. By keeping Him at the center of your marriage, His love will continue to bind you together as one throughout your marriage.

**Other Ritual**

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Pronouncement/Declaration**

In as much as you, GF, and you Bf, have thus consented in holy matrimony and have witnessed the same before God and these friends, by virtue of the authority vested in me as an Officiant and the laws of this state, I now pronounce you husband and wife. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

In as much as you GF, and you BF, have thus consented in matrimony and have witnessed the same before family and friends, by virtue of the authority vested in me as an Officiant and the laws of this state, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Because GF and BF have pledged their love and faith to each other, sealed their vows in the giving and receiving of rings and have expressed their complete and pure dedication to one another before God and our gathering, it is in accordance with the laws of this state and the authority vested in me as officiant of this joyous occasion, that I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Your two hearts now beating as one, your two souls now deeply joined anew - walk forward together, forever hand in hand, May your marriage be a lifelong celebration of love! Now that the rituals are complete, you have made your promises, and exchanged your rings. May your lives together be filled with love and laughter. By the power vested in me as an Officiant and the laws of this state, I now pronounce you husband and wife!

GF and Bf, you have pledged your love and faithfulness to each other, sealed your vows in the giving and receiving of rings, and have expressed your complete and pure dedication to one another, it is in accordance with the laws of this state and the authority vested in me as officiant of this truly Joyous Occasion, that I now pronounce you husband and wife.

For as much as BF and GF have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their trust each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands and by giving and receiving a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In as much as GF and BF have declared their love and devotion to each other, I now pronounce that they are husband and wife.

Everyone has advice for newlyweds.  GF and BF. I offer these good wishes to you on this special day. May your life together be blessed with prosperity and good health.  May you always share open and honest communication between each other.  May you respect each other’s individual talents and gifts and give full support to each other’s professional and personal pursuits. May you cherish the home and family you will create together.  May all the years to come be filled with moments to celebrate and renew your love.  May your love be a life-long source of excitement, contentment, affection, respect, and devotion for one another. GF and BF, you have come here today in the presence of family and friends and declared your love and commitment to each other. You have given and received a ring as a symbol of your promises. By the power of your love and commitment to each other, and by the power vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Kiss**

GF, you may kiss your bride.

May your first act as a married couple be one of love. You may now kiss each other for the first time as husband and wife.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

Congratulations! Friends and family, I now present to you the newly married couple, Mr. and Mrs. GF and BF GL!

Congratulations! Friends and family, I now present to you the newly married couple, Mr. and Mrs. GF GL!

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you Mr. and

Mrs. GF and BF GL!

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you Mr. and

Mrs. GF GL!

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Including Children in the Ceremony (Optional)**

**Invite Child (or Children) to stand with their parent(s).**

Let it be known that GF and BF do not enter this commitment alone. Bride/Groom brings with her/him an amazing and vibrant son/daughter, [Child(ren)’s name(s)], will you please come forward and stand between your mother/father and \_\_\_\_\_. Over the years, the three of you have gotten to know each other; sharing meals, hanging out, and just spending time together. You have successfully melded into a modern-day family. Today [Child(ren)’s name(s)], your support to this marriage is clear. \_\_\_\_\_ joins this family circle as your mother/father’s partner, as a friend you can count on and as a woman/man who loves both of you very much.

**Introduction of the child/children through the words of parent and partner.**

I would like to tell all of you some things that GF and BF think all of you should know about this amazing young person, [Child’s name].

Your mother/father tells me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and [Partner] shared with me that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Commemorative Gift (bestowed on the child/children by the couple—Examples: necklace with birthstone, bracelet, family heirloom, etc.)**

As a way to commemorate this momentous occasion, you mother/father and \_\_\_\_\_ have a gift for you, and they would like to present it to you now. *Parents give gift to their children; if jewelry, put it on them. Whatever it is, tell the guests.*

**Vows: to Child from Both Adults (Parent/Partner will need to write these.)**

GF, BF and [Child(ren)’s name(s)] would you please join hands to form your family circle?

GF or BF repeat after me… [Child(ren)’s name(s)], I want you to know how lucky I feel every day just knowing you. You are the energy that flows through my veins. You inspire me and I can't imagine the woman/man that I would have become without you in my life. Thank you for accepting GF/BF into our world. Nobody knows more than you how she/he has been there for us. You are an amazing and honorable human being(s) that I am proud to call my child(ren). I love you.

GF or BF repeat after me… [Child(ren)’s name(s)], you and your GF/BF are the people who know me best in this world, the people I eat with every day, the first people I see in the morning and the last at night. The two/three/four of you are my strength and my world. We are the fearsome group, and I consider you to be one of the most important people in my life. I love you.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Vows: Three Promises—Adults and Child**

Would the three *(or however many)* of you please join hands to form your family circle? I am going to ask all of you 3 questions. I would like all of you to answer each of them with, "I Promise!"

Do you promise to love, respect and protect each other from this day forward?

All 3: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to always try to be the best person you can be?

All 3: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being a family, and encourage, and support each other in your new life together?

All 3: "I Promise!"

**Family Blessing *(Close the ritual with blessings for the family and a group hug before asking the child/children to return to their seats.)***

I ask that your home be a place of happiness for all who enter it, and a place where the old and the young are renewed in each other’s company, a place for growing, a place for music and celebration, a place for laughter and goofing off. And when life seems to be too much or you just had a rough day, may your home always be a place of refuge where every one of you can find the comfort of always knowing that you will be accepted and loved unconditionally.

**A simple sentence acknowledgement.**

This moment in time is truly a cause for joyous celebration for we are gathered here to witness not only the beginning of a new marriage, but also the beginning of a new family.

**Or include the child’s name:**

This moment in time is truly a cause for joyous celebration for we are gathered here to witness not only the beginning of a new marriage, but also the beginning of a new family with (child(ren)’s names).

**Longer version:**

This moment in time is truly a cause for joyous celebration for we are gathered here to witness not only the beginning of a new marriage, but also the beginning of a new family. GF and BF, would like to take this moment to recognize the significant role that (\*\*say children’s names) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, play in this marriage celebrated today, by presenting them each with a gift. From this day forth, you shall be more than one couple or two individuals – you shall be a loving and united family. Today your family is complete. You are a family drawn together by love and held together by devotion.

**Include children’s name in prayer *(nice to add this on to any of the other options or add to the final prayer at the end of your ceremony)***

God, we pray that you guide GF and BF as parents to raise and teach (child/children’s names) with love and respect; and that you protect this new family and keep them always in your care..."

**Include children *(this can be good if you already have children together—but is also works if you are both bringing children to the marriage)***

GF and BF prior to this moment you each walked a separate path. Now you shall embark together on a shared path. Yet the journey is not yours alone, for you have already been blessed with a beautiful daughter/son/children, (Children’s names here) and it is the strength of your love that shall nourish you all together as a family.

Let us say a prayer of blessing upon this new marriage. Heavenly Father, we pray that you guide GF and BF as parents to raise and teach (Children’s names) with love and respect; and that you protect this family and keep them always in your care. You have kindled in their hearts the fire of a divine love. Will you keep it aflame upon the altar of their souls. Will you make the inward aspirations of their hearts the outward reality of their home. Will you make that home a place of light and truth, a place of beauty, a place of joy and happiness all the days of their lives. Amen.

**Acknowledgement of children by name and include a poem if you like.**

GF and BF you have just made a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other, yet the journey is not yours alone, for you have been blessed with beautiful children, and it is the strength of your love that shall nourish you all together as a family. GF and BF would like to take this moment to recognize the significant role that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (say children’s names) play in this marriage celebrated today. You are a family drawn together by love and held together by devotion.

*You could also add a sand ceremony or unity candle ceremony here and the officiant reads a poem as the family mixes sand/lights candles—just let me know and I will supply sample wording for you.*

**Poem**

I would like to share a poem that has been chosen by GF and BF for this special moment

What is a Family?"

Author Unknown

A family is.....

The sweetest feelings

The warmest hugs

Trust and togetherness

Unconditional love

The stories of our lives written on the same page

The nicest memories anyone has ever made

Treasured photos

Thankful tears

Hearts overflowing with all the years

Being there for one another

Supporting and caring

Understanding, Helping, Sharing

Walking life's path together

And making the journey more beautiful because

We are a family

And a family is Love.

**Sand Ceremony to include Children**

We are all members of one family, God's family. (This line is optional) Today as BF and GF have sealed their commitment to each other with the exchange of rings. They too make a commitment to their children. We recognize the significant role that (all of children's names) play in this marriage celebrated today. They will now join BF and GF in this commitment to each other by contributing a part of each individual person into one blended family. Today, this relationship is symbolized through the pouring of this sand, each representing a member. As each individual’s sand is poured into the family's one united container, the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will become the bond with your family

*(While pouring the sand the Officiant could read “What is Family” poem) ~ Bride and Groom can also have the option of pouring some sand first as in the traditional sand ceremony then adding this wording on.*

**Acknowledge children with a gift.**

This moment in time is truly a cause for joyous celebration for we are gathered here to witness not only the beginning of a new marriage, but also the beginning of a new family. GF and BF, would like to take this moment to recognize the significant role that (say children’s names) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, play in this marriage celebrated today, by presenting them each with a gift. From this day forth, you shall be more than one couple or two individuals – you shall be a loving and united family. You are a family drawn together by love and held together by devotion.

**Include the children in your pledge or vows.**

Now I would like to invite GF and BF to exchange vows today for their future as a couple and a family.

BF, I promise to be a good and faithful partner to you, and also a patient, loving father to Johnny and Susan, caring for and providing for them as my own. I promise to be their strength and their emotional support, loving them with all my heart forever.”

GF, I promise to be a good and faithful partner to you, and also a patient, loving mother to Jane and David, caring for and providing for them as my own. I promise to be their strength and their emotional support, loving them with all my heart forever.”

As an important part of a loving blended family do you, (children’s names) promise to love and respect your parents and the lifetime commitment that they have made this day? Do you promise to support their relationship and this new family? Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being their children, and to do everything in your power to help this family to grow and thrive over time? If this is your intention please answer now “We do.”

Children: “We Do.”

**Ring or Jewelry ceremony for children.**

Often marriage is viewed as the union of two people. Yet marriages not only unite the couple, it unites the families. With the changing structure of what a family is in today's world we are offered unique and wonderful opportunities to simply increase the number of loving caring relationships we have in our lives. During a wedding ceremony rings are exchanged with a promise. It is the promise of a safe haven free from judgment that offers unconditional love and support under any and all circumstances.

Therefore, GF and BF thought it appropriate that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ should also receive a token of their promise to him/her/them this day. They wanted to find a way to let him/her/them know how special and wonderful he/she/they is/are, and how blessed they feel to be his/her/their parents. They also wanted Child or Children to have a physical reminder for the future that as he/she/they grows and becomes a young adult.

*Spoken to the child or children:* Your parents will always support you. There may come times when there are things going on in your life that you may feel they won't understand, but there is nothing you can ever say that will not be met with unconditional love.

*Spoken to all:* So, the bond of trust GF and BF has established with one another is extended to Child or Children on this day (parents present ring/jewelry to the child).

**Blended Family Ceremony Option**

There are children who will share in this marriage. The gathering of this new family will have a deep influence upon them. It will both complicate and enrich their lives. They will also have much to contribute to this new family. We realize that in order for the home to be a happy one, it is essential that there be love and understanding between the children and the adults being married.

Officiant to BF and GF: Is your love for each other broad enough to include \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name the child/children) and deep enough to honor their/her/his presence in this marriage and to pledge yourselves to love and care for them/her/him?

BF and GF: We will.

Officiant to Child/Children**:** You are a vital part of this new marriage. GF and BF give you their unconditional love and honor your presence in their lives.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, you will have a share in this union, for your life/lives will be touched by the covenant being made here today. Your participation is requested to help develop the bonds of a new family.

As GF and BF have exchanged their pledges in holy union, we ask from you also a pledge, that you will join together to weave a fabric of mutual help and comfort, of challenge and support, and that you will help create a home and a way of life in which all of you may grow into the fullness of the best people you can be. Will you now pledge to do your best to help make a happy and successful home for all of you by your love and cooperation?"

Child/Children: I will or We will.

Officiant: And so it is.

**Other**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer/Blessing within the ceremony (optional)**

Let us pray.  God, we ask for your blessings upon GF and BF, as we celebrate this momentous occasion in their lives. Grant them happiness and contentment as they establish their new home, create a new family and explore the depths of their love for one another and for you. Bless their families and friends and the relationships, which have supported, strengthened and sustained them throughout their lives. Bless their home as a place of love and of peace. And if times grow hard and tempers grow short, help them to look into their hearts and remember the love that brought them here today. Amen.

God, as you join us today, we ask for your blessings upon GF and BF as they unite in marriage. Let all their days together be happy and all their words to each other be sweet. Though their paths are intertwined, let them be aware of each other’s separateness. Bless their home and allow it to be a place of joy and serenity. Remind them to nurture each other’s body with mutual love, honor and respect.  Let their spirits dwell within. As they learn from one another, may they grow stronger as individuals and closer as a couple. And as their wedded life begins today with prayer, so may they continue it, praying for and with each other. Amen.

Gracious God, spirit of life and love, we ask all blessings upon GF and BF in their life together. May they be blessed with patience, to see them through times of tensions or conflict. May they be blessed with kindness, to enable them to nurture and care for one another in times of pain or sorrow. May they be blessed with a spirit of play and joyfulness that they may participate fully in the beauties and pleasures of creation. May they be blessed, finally, with a knowledge of the ever-flowing presence of love in the world, that they may be channels of this love to one another and to all whom they meet in their life’s journey. Amen.

Heavenly Father, we know Your presence is with all of us here this special day of GF and BF’s wedding and we give thanks. We ask Your blessing and love be with us during this ceremony and to especially fill the hearts of GF and BF as they pledge their love to one another. May the wisdom and spirit of all-giving and all-understanding Love pervade all the words spoken and all the love given here today, that these vows offered will remain strong and true and abiding in the presence of love all the days of their lives. May all of us present feel the strength and depth of GF and BF’s love and experience a rebirth of the power of love in our own lives. We ask these things in Your Name and give thanks that it is so. Amen.

Faithful God, we dare to invoke Your name in this glad moment, because we know you are the Creator of humanity in your image and in all our diversity. You are the Author of love, the Source of passion, the Model of commitment. You stand with us, through all of life’s experiences, worries, defeats, and victories. So we pray for your presence now, confident that divine blessing comes to rest wherever hearts are woven together with fidelity and live. Bless this hour for GF and BF, and let Your peace uphold all who love them and who witness this sacred moment. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

May God bless you [May you be blessed] with Hope enough to keep sunshine in your love, and Fear enough to keep you holding hands in the dark; May God bless you with Unity enough to keep your roots entwined, and Separation enough to keep you reaching for each other; May God bless you with Harmony enough to keep romance in your song, and Discord enough to keep you tuning your love so it becomes sweet music to all who may hear it.

Oh Lord, our hearts are filled with joy on this wedding day, as GF and BF come before You pledging their hearts and lives to one another. Grant that they may ever be true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring shame or heartbreak into their marriage. Temper their hearts with kindness and understanding. Rid them of all pretense and jealousy. Help them to remember to be each other’s sweetheart, helpmate, best friend, and guide, so together they may meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. May the home they are creating today truly be a place of love, peace, and harmony, where Your Spirit is always present. Bless this marriage we pray, and walk beside BRIDE and GROOM throughout their lives together. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Cherokee Prayer  
God in heaven above, please protect the ones we love. We honor all You created as they pledge their hearts and lives together. We honor mother-earth and ask for their marriage to be abundant and grow stronger through the seasons. We honor fire and ask that their union be warm and glowing with love in their hearts. We honor wind and ask that their sail through life safe and calm as in their Father’s arms. We honor water to clean and soothe their relationship that it may never thirst for love. With all the forces of the universe You created, we pray for harmony and true happiness as their forever grow young together. Amen.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Dinner Blessing**

Dear Heavenly Father, we gather in this place in a spirit of celebration and gratitude. Thank you for the blessing of bringing GF and BF together in marriage today. We ask you to bless their marriage, their family, and all of their relationships. Help them stay strong in any adversity, and to treasure and protect the joy of marriage. May we, as their family and friends, commit to uphold and encourage them to the best of our ability. Please bless this food we are about to receive. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, we are excited to witness and be a part of this special day in the lives of GF and BF. Thank you for uniting this couple and for the marriage vows they have shared between them. Help them keep every promise they made today. We ask your blessing on this their first meal as husband and wife. We ask that you bless this celebration with lots of smiles, joy and laughter. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Dear Heavenly Father, as we sit at Your table, the table that You have filled with the earth's bounty for this celebration, bless us all and the food that we are about to share with BF and GF in their first meal together as Husband and Wife. As food nourishes the Body, so does love nourish the soul. May our conversation this day remind us of how true this is and may we offer one another strength and support. Grant that this meal enriches us with wisdom and laughter enough that its memory shall last for the rest of our days. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Dear Lord, we are excited to witness and be part of this great day. Thank you Lord for uniting this couple and for the marriage vows they have shared between them. Help them keep every promise and stay faithful to your word. May they raise God-fearing children and maintain rich family values. We ask your blessing upon this special dinner in your name we pray. Amen.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_