

WED *by* Kez

Your Wedding Ceremony

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| AN INTRODUCTION TO GETTING MARRIED | 3 |
| WRITING THE CEREMONY | 5 |
| CEREMONY STRUCTURE | 6 |
| INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| PERSONALISING YOUR INTRODUCTION | 10 |
| REMEMBRANCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 11 |
| READING | 11 |
| MONITUM FROM THE MARRIAGE ACT | 11 |
| THE ASKING | 12 |
| PRE CURSER TO THE VOWS or READING | 13 |
| THE VOWS | 14 |
| PRECURSER TO THE EXCHANGING OF RINGS or READING | 15 |
| EXCHANGING OF RINGS | 15 |
| VERSICLE &/OR READING | 15 |
| THE DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE | 16 |
| SIGNING OF REGISTER & MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE | 16 |
| PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES | 16 |
| READINGS AND VERSES | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!

Ahead of you lies a myriad of decisions about dates, dresses, invites, reception venues, cakes and rings and to top it all off the wedding ceremony itself. The good news is there is no such thing as a “traditional wedding” anymore. How you get married is up to you and you have the option of being as creative and unique in the way you go about it as you want.

It's your wedding, and it should be done your way.

This booklet will help you create a wedding ceremony that celebrates your relationship while applauding your creative style, taste and individuality.

Using this booklet

Contained within are elements of wedding ceremonies that you may wish to include in your ceremony.

It's important to understand that there are compulsory elements for the marriage to be considered legal. Apart from that, the ceremony can be of your own design including readings, poems, songs or quotes of your choosing.

As a guide a wedding containing only the elements that legalise the union will take about 10 minutes. A typical ceremony which includes readings and vows can run between 20 and 25 minutes.

Wedbykez.com

Wedbykez.com has been designed to offer your additional resources, advice and support, not only in scripting your ceremony but also assisting with wedding preparation and ideas.

Online you will also find the Celebrant Code of Conduct and Wedbykez Privacy Policy which details how your personal information will be used.

Skype

If you have the technology a good session in front of the computer will mean that we can directly discuss and edit your introduction. Email me for a skype appointment or phone conference to finalise your introduction.

The important thing to remember is that this is YOUR day. If something doesn't read correctly, or you aren't happy with the words I have chosen - SPEAK up.

My job is to give you the ceremony you want.

Cheers

Kez

SHORT, SHARP & SWEET

We have all sat through weddings that go on and on for hours, leaving you to amuse yourself by mentally critiquing bridesmaid dresses or desperately eyeing off the bar. So it may come as a surprise that in order to legalise a marriage there are only a few things that have to happen, and the whole wedding could be over in about 10 minutes.

While there are traditional ways of going about getting married (i.e. Giving away the bride) these are by no means compulsory. As long as you include the following you are well and truly wed..

An authorised celebrant explains the nature of marriage

Otherwise known as the Monitum and is a passage from the Marriage Act 1961 explaining the legal and binding nature of marriage. It's not particularly romantic but must be read.

The Vows

Vows can be read, memorised or you can choose to be prompted by the Celebrant. The legally binding part is the beginning of the vow where the bride or groom (whoever is making their vow) begins "I call upon the persons here present to witness that I (name) take you (name) to be my lawful wedded husband/wife" .

Witnesses

The marriage must be witness by two people who are over the age of 18, can hear the wedding vows be spoken and are considered to be of sound mind. (Yes, even your Uncle with the Celine Dion back catalogue and pet rock farm counts)

Signing of the register and certificates

The Certificates of Marriage and the Marriage Register must be signed by the bride, groom both witnesses and the celebrant.

Marriage.. done. Who knew it was so easy?

Even so, it's not very personal so injecting some WOW into the ceremony is always considered a good idea. Whether it be a reading, music, or a short speech by one of your nearest and dearest it adds the personality into your day and celebrates the occasion.

MORE OF ME IN MATRIMONY

or to be more accurate more of 'us'. If you're know for your sense of humour, crazy antics and wacky turns of phrase then why shouldn't your wedding include that too? Alternatively if you're a quiet, down to earth couple then having a big floral speeches and massive declarations of love might not suit either.

There is no right or wrong way to say what you feel about your fiancé, so the rule of thumb is... **DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT!**

WRITING THE CEREMONY

Once you've decided what elements to include in your ceremony it's then a case of time in front of goggle and putting pen to paper to get it all down. But luckily, that's what I am here for.. You can be as involved in the creative process of your wedding as you want to be.

Either pick and choose the words that mean the most from the following examples, search for your own online or let's set a date and time for a scripting session to make sure the words on your wedding day are perfect.

CEREMONY STRUCTURE

The best way I can think of to explain how to create your own ceremony is to compare it to Cold Rock.

You start with the ice cream (the wedding basics explained on Page 3) and then you add your m&m's or your fudge or your cookie dough and you smash it all together to make something to suit your own tastes. Fortunately a wedding ceremony is not fattening.

So outlined below are the goodies that make your ceremony sweet and perfect for you.

Introduction

This is an explanation on how the couple view marriage and the commitment they are making. You may choose to use one of the prepared text, author your own, or ask a guest to give a brief overview of your relationship.

Remembrances and Acknowledgements

An opportunity for the families to remember those who have past or those who could not be present to share the day. There are options for lighting a candle or having a photo of a loved one on the signing table.

Reading

A verse, lyrics, or text of your choosing. A favourite song lyric or a poetic or great speaker could write something special and personal for you.

Monitum from the Marriage Act

It is compulsory by law to recite the Monitium from the Marriage Act.

Giving Away of the Bride

The celebrant acknowledges the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the bride and/or groom

The Asking

This is a promise made by one partner to the other answered with "I do". There are options for including all your guests, as well as any children that are going to make up the new family.

Pre-cursor to the Vows

An explanation on why we make vows, and what they mean.

Vows

The personalised promise between the couple

Prelude to exchanging of rings

A short passage on the significance of the rings in marriage

Ring Ceremony

A short recitation and the exchanging of rings.

Versicle and/or Reading

A short verse read to emphasise

Declaration of Marriage

The celebrant declares the couple husband and wife and the all important first kiss!

Signing of the Register and Certificates

The Bride, Groom and two witnesses sign the register and certificates. Both witnesses must be over the age of 18. Time to crank the stereo or the band for suitable song.

Presentation of Certificate and Couple

The Bride and Groom receive their certificate and are presented as husband and wife

INTRODUCTION

How do you want me to kick things off? It can range from the formal "Ladies and Gentlemen I have the pleasure of officiating at this, the marriage of BRIDE and GROOM" to the totally informal "Friends, lets kick back, enjoy the sun, a few vinos and celebrate the start of BRIDE and GROOMS life as a married couple". Who goes first, what gets said is up to you.... but here are some idea starters.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS, on behalf of BRIDE and GROOM I welcome you to their wedding. Marriage is a union of the heart, the mind, the body and the soul and in front of their loved ones BRIDE and GROOM are making a commitment to share all the future holds and to stand strong together.

TODAY BRIDE AND GROOM take the next step in their relationship. I welcome those present to witness the joining of two souls and their promise to each other to continue to grow in love, respect and mutual admiration so long as they both shall live.

BRIDE AND GROOM stand before you to make a lifelong commitment to each other. They show by their vows today that they are willing to give all that it takes to make a successful marriage. Laughter, support, friendship and above all love. BRIDE and GROOM will stand alongside each other, and by declaring their love BRIDE and GROOM also demonstrate their trust, faith and belief in each other. They are promising to work as one, accepting the other's weaknesses and faults just as their own have been accepted. This union has a foundation built on love and strengthened with respect.

WELCOME TO THE MARRIAGE of BRIDE and GROOM. Today is an affirmation of their commitment and love to one another in front of the people they love the most. In making this commitment, BRIDE and GROOM reap many rewards. A lifelong companion and friend, a confidant, a lover but also studies tell us by getting married they will live longer, be happier and even wealthier lives. I ask you now to join me in celebrating the marriage of BRIDE and GROOM.

BRIDE AND GROOM have invited you here today to be more that witnesses to their marriage. A witness just stands back and watches as things flourish or fall before them. As friends and loved ones of BRIDE and GROOM you are here to become part of the family that is being created by this wedding. A wedding is just a symbol of what marriage is really about. Marriage is the journey together, the promises to travel on the same path and to cherish each other, every day. A Marriage is founded on many things, laughter certainly, understanding definitely and love unconditionally. BRIDE and GROOM your friends and family are here in support and bring with them all their wishes for your life together

WE HAVE MUCH reason to celebrate today. We celebrate for BRIDE and GROOM because in about half an hour they will be man and wife but every person here has a reason to celebrate the fact. By the time this ceremony is over some of you will have a new member of your family, a new son or daughter, brother or sister in law, a new friend, an extra guest at your dinner parties or another brain to pick at trivia. So as life changing as today is for BRIDE and GROOM don't forget this occasion has significance for you too, and just like a pebble thrown into a lake causes ripples that makes waves in our community, our country and then the world. A little more love in the world is always a reason to party

WE HAVE COME here together to celebrate the marriage and the incredible joy of BRIDE and GROOM who have been given an incredible gift. To find that person to spend the rest of your life with is better than anything you unwrap under the tree at Christmas time. We celebrate because seeing two people in love makes us happy, it reminds us to treasure the love we have or to believe that this same miracle is waiting around the corner for us all. Marriages are miracles which is why on wedding days we dress up and we party. We laugh, dance, drink and we put all our good energies into making the start of BRIDE and GROOM's life together the best it can possibly be.

BRIDE and GROOM want me to welcome you and thank you for sharing their wedding day. Just by being here you are giving BRIDE and GROOM a precious gift. Your best wishes and good vibes are appreciated but it's your own experiences of love and marriage that are going to be most valuable to the newly wedded couple. Marriage starts with ceremony and words but like most things are expectations are nothing compared to the experience. BRIDE and GROOM, your friends and family are here today to celebrate with you, and so you know how much support you have as you undertake your new life together. On a day where you both are nervous, excited, scared and exhilarated it is the people standing here that are with you all the way. Offering their own love, support and friendship to you both. Just as you are lucky to have each other, you are even more blessed because you have them.

PERSONALISING YOUR INTRODUCTION

I think the best introductions to a wedding always speak about two things. The couple getting married, and what marriage means to them.

I am more than happy to write a personalised introduction for you but in order to do so need to know as much as possible about you. Anything that you can tell me about yourselves will help me to understand what you want from your wedding.

How did you first meet?

When did you first fall in love?

When did you decide that you wanted to be with one another forever?

What made you decide this?

What do you love about each other?

Why did you decide on the ceremony location?

Why did you decide on this type of ceremony?

What does the future hold?

REMEMBRANCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Unfortunately, not everyone can attend your wedding. This can be a blessing if it's one of the "compulsory invites" (normally a cousin or work mate that you feel compelled to invite) but melancholy if it's a loved one or close friend. The reason for including a remembrance or acknowledgement can be vary from remembering a loved one that has past, those that couldn't attend due to travel, the sick or even those about to have a child. If they are important in your life, then why not mention them on one of the most important days of your life?

BRIDE and GROOM have asked that we pause a moment to remember (NAME) love ones who could only be here in spirit to celebrate.

BRIDE and GROOM will now light a candle in honour of those past who cannot share today. We know that they join us in spirit with their love and blessing for the happy couple.

WE CALL FORTH WITH our hearts and remember (NAME) who joins BRIDE and GROOM in spirit today to watch over their union.

OUR BLESSINGS ARE with NAME who cannot share today's celebration as they are giving birth to their first child. We send our best wishes to them and their new baby.

OUR THOUGHTS AND wishes are with NAME who cannot join us today due to sickness. We ask for a speedy recovery back to full health.

READING

Sometimes it pays to let an expert speak for you. We are not all William Shakespeare. Using poems, songs and writings is great way to express what you are feeling on your wedding day and for your soon to be husband or wife. There is a huge collection of readings later in this booklet or else jump online at wedbykez.com or hit google.

MONITUM FROM THE MARRIAGE ACT

This is a compulsory inclusion in the ceremony and the piece from the Act cannot be altered. However, should you wish to acknowledge love, in all forms, we can work together on a small piece to follow the Monitum.

NOW I, KERRY N ATKINSON, a civil celebrant am duly authorised by law to solemnise marriages according to law.

Bride and Groom before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presences of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are about to enter.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of a woman and a man to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

THE ASKING

Time now to focus on the two of you and make your own personal promise to each other. Not to be confused with the opening statement of the vows this is not a legal inclusion in the ceremony. The response is typically "I do" and you can ask the same question of both the bride and groom or word it to the individual. If you choose to include the asking - think of this summing up your vows on marriage and your relationship in a nutshell - Are you peanut? Cashew? or M&M?

BRIDE DO YOU TAKE GROOM to be your lawfully wedded husband. Will you love him, comfort him and honour him in sickness and in health and forsaking all others keep only unto him as long as you both shall live?

BRIDE WILL YOU take GROOM to be your lawfully wedded husband. Do you promise to grow with him in love and respect? Will you share your life, being gracious and generous in the giving of yourself for the rest of your life?

BRIDE WILL YOU take GROOM to be your husband, your constant friend and companion, your partner in life and your true love? Will you work with him for a long and happy life full of respect, honour and above all love?

BRIDE WILL YOU take GROOM to be your husband? Will you do what is necessary in the day to day nurturing of your love? Will you be kind, trusting and giving of yourself to GROOM for all of your days?

BRIDE WILL YOU join with GROOM taking him as a husband and lifelong companion. Will you listen to him, care for him and give him the best of yourself in the building of your life together?

BRIDE DO YOU put GROOM above all others, drawing him to your side as a partner and confident. Do you promise to love him unreservedly so long as you both shall live?

PRE CURSER TO THE VOWS or READING

If you are choosing to have the ceremony and not providing an order of service this is a great way to introduce the wedding vows. The celebrant is not just the officiant for your marriage but an MC for the ceremony, so they explain to your guests what is happening next and what is required. In the precursor, should you choose to have one, you can talk specifically about instances in your relationship that have got to this point or more generally about the importance of the vows, what they mean to you and why you are here today getting married.

BRIDE and GROOM the hands that hold you now, will hold you forever. They will wipe tears of joy or sorrow from your eyes. They will be your strength in times of need. They are the hands of a best friend, the hands that will hold your children, the hands that will always reach for yours as you journey together through life. Hold tight to each other and make your vows.

BRIDE and GROOM the vows that you are about to share are as much about your willingness to be flexible and honest with your partner as they are a promise made between two people in love. They are not rigid like stone, but fluid like water, changing direction as your life changes direction, evolving and growing as you both grow together in love and friendship.

THE VOWS

If your shy and retiring this will bring you as much joy as it will cause you much sleep loss and worry. Public speaking is not a talent everyone possess, and nor should you have to. Here are a few misconceptions about vows

- You don't have to write your own
- You don't have to memorise them
- You don't have to give long winded speeches about life and love in the manner of William Shakespeare

In fact that only thing that your vow has to include (legally) is the following statement or words to the effect of

I CALL UPON PERSONS HERE PRESENT TO WITNESS THAT I, BRIDE, TAKE YOU, GROOM, TO BE MY LAWFUL WEDDED HUSBAND.

As your celebrant I can prompt you through the vows, you can read them or you can recite them. Whatever choice you make I recommend having them nearby and in writing so, should nerves overcome I can get you back on track. If you are at a complete loss check out wedbykez.com for ideas or don't forget your best friend, Google.

An example vow is written below. I haven't provided other examples because at this part of the ceremony, more than anywhere else, the words should be your own and mean something to you.

I call upon all persons here present to witness that I, BRIDE, take you, GROOM, to be my lawful wedded husband. I vow to always love you, to stand by you as a loving partner and a faithful wife. I am thankful for having met you and I promise to be grateful for your unconditional love. I will always be by your side, laughing with you, crying with you, sharing with you. My heart is your and will be yours for the rest of my life.

PRECURSER TO THE EXCHANGING OF RINGS or READING

Like the Precursor to Vows this is more of an introduction for your guests of what is to come. The Precursor to rings should reflect why you have chosen to exchange rings and what they symbolise in your married life.

A CIRCLE HAS NO beginning and no end. The wedding rings you exchange are a symbol that your love is endless, knowing no boundaries, overcoming all obstacles. Wear your rings with love and as a constant reminder of your vows that you have shared.

JUST AS THEY speak of their love, BRIDE and GROOM choose to symbolise it by the exchanging of rings. A wedding ring is a whole, just as the sun the moon and the universe are whole. This unbroken circle does not end and as such should remind BRIDE and GROOM that their love is never ending.

THE WEDDING RING is a reminder of the love and promises shared today. They should be worn with pride, BRIDE and GROOM when you look upon your ring know that you are loved and respect the commitment they symbolise.

EXCHANGING OF RINGS

Should you desire it what is spoken now can be as personalised as your wedding vows. It is generally accepted that both BRIDE and GROOM make the same statement when exchanging rings and you can add a line of acceptance after each ring is exchanged.

BRIDE WITH THIS ring I thee wed. With all that I am and all that I have, I honour you.

BRIDE TAKE THIS ring as a symbol of my love and fidelity. I pledge myself to you, to our marriage and to our life together.

BRIDE I COMMIT myself to you. Laugh, love and live with me always. With you at my side I am strong.

VERSICLE &/OR READING

Coming from religious ceremonies a Versicle is a short verse said or sung by the Priest with response from the Congregation. Hey, I'm willing to sing if you want me to!

In lieu of this, you can opt for another reading here - or skip it all together. See the section on Readings, Poems and Verses for some suggestions.

THE DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

Weird isn't it ? You are actually declared Man and Wife before you sign anything but an important moment none the less you are about to share your first kiss as man and wife.

FRIENDS, YOU ARE all witness to the commitment BRIDE and GROOM have made to each other. Now the celebrations begin. On behalf of the community I now declare you husband and wife.

BRIDE and GROOM you have declared your love before me and your friends and family. It is my great honour to declare you, husband and wife.

ONE TRADITION THAT should never be done away with at a wedding is the first kiss of a husband and wife. It my absolute pleasure to tell GROOM to kiss BRIDE and to tell you, their family and friends to cheer like mad as they do.

SIGNING OF REGISTER & MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

The saying goes that you don't get to sign your "married" name until you sign the cheque. This is true. On your wedding day, even if one of you is taking your partners name, or you are hyphenating, you still sign with your maiden name.

Now is the perfect time to hit play on the ipod with your favourite song, a romantic croon or just something classical. Best to have two songs just in case of timing

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

The BRIDE and GROOM are presented as "Mr. and Mrs. NAME" or presented to the guests as man and wife. Whichever is more appropriate for the couple. Champagne is popped, congratulations are offered and the two of you go forth to the reception in whatever shape it takes.

CEREMONY DONE!