

## CEREMONY PROGRAMS

Ceremony programs are printed documents showing the sequence of events during the ceremony. It's also a great way to explain certain wedding traditions or rituals. These programs add a personal touch to your wedding and are a convenient way of letting guests know who your attendants, officiant, and ceremony musicians are.

Ceremony programs come in many shapes and forms, from single sheets of paper outlining the ceremony events, to pamphlets that include song lyrics and full reading passages, to bound booklets with special notes to guests, maps, and pictures of the couple through the years. We love all of these ideas! However, keep this advice in mind: Guests should be able to read the program between the time they sit down and the time the ceremony begins, or they should be able to follow along as the ceremony progresses.

### SAMPLES:

*(These are ment to be used as guides and can be modified to meet your individual needs)*

### BASIC LAYOUT

The Marriage Ceremony Uniting  
 Bride and Groom Name  
 Date, Time, Venue, City and State  
 Prelude ..... "Song Title"  
 Solo ..... "Song Title"  
 Lighting of the Candles  
 Seating of the Mothers  
 Processional ..... "Song Title"  
 Invocation  
 Wedding Message .....name  
 Solo ..... "Song Title"  
 Exchange of vows  
 Exchange of rings  
 Announcement of marriage  
 Solo ..... "Song Title"  
 Presentation of the Bride and Groom  
 Recessional ..... "Song Title"  
 The order of the wedding party should be listed in this order:  
 Parents of the Bride (Names)  
 Parents of the Groom (Names)  
 Grandparents of the Bride (Names)  
 Grandmothers of the Groom (Names)  
 Maid of Honor (Names)  
 Matron of Honor (Names)  
 Bridesmaids (Names)  
 Junior Bridesmaid (Names)  
 Honorary Bridesmaid (Names)  
 Flower Girl (Names)  
 Best Men (Names)  
 Groomsmen (Names)  
 Ring Bearer (Names)  
 Officiant (Names)  
 Musician (Names)  
 Soloist (Names)



### CATHOLIC EXAMPLE

A Celebration of Marriage  
Bride's name and Groom's name  
Date, Name of Church/Chapel, City, State  
Celebrant - name  
Concelebrant - name  
Parents of the Bride - names  
Parents of the Groom - names  
Matron of Honor - name  
Best Man - name  
Ushers - names  
Ring Bearer - name  
Flower Girl - name  
Organist - name  
Soloist - name  
Musicians - name(s)

Prelude  
Processional – "Name of Song," Composer  
Bride's Processional – "Name of Song," Composer  
Liturgy of the Word  
Opening Prayer  
First Reading – Book of the Bible Chapter: verse, reader name  
Responsorial Psalm – Name of Psalm, reader name  
Second Reading – Book of the Bible Chapter: verse, reader name  
Gospel Acclamation  
Book of the Bible Chapter: verse, reader name  
Homily  
Sacrament of Marriage  
Exchange of Vows  
Blessing and Exchange of Rings  
Unity Candle – "Name of Song," name of singer  
Prayer of the Faithful, reader name  
Response: Lord Hear Our Prayer  
Presentation of the Gifts  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Lord's Prayer  
Nuptial Blessing  
Sign of Peace  
Communion – "Name of song," name of singer  
Presentation of flowers to the Blessed Mother – "Name of Song," Composer  
Final Blessing  
Recessional – "Name of Song," Composer

Thanks so much to all of our family and friends for your love and generosity. We are so grateful all of you were able to join us and share in our special day.  
Bride's name & Groom's name

### JEWISH EXAMPLE

Wedding of Bride's Name and Groom's Name  
Date, Temple Name, City, State

The Wedding Processional  
Rabbi  
Cantor



Name – Bride’s Grandparents  
Name – Groom’s Grandparents  
Bridesmaids: Names – Relation to the Bride  
Woman of Honor: Name – Relation to the Bride  
Groomsmen: Names – Relation to the Groom  
Best Man: Name – Relation to the Groom  
Groom’s Name will walk to the huppah with his parents,  
Father’s Name and Mother’s Name  
Bride’s Name will walk to the huppah with her parents,  
Father’s Name and Mother’s Name

#### Optional Jewish Ceremony Explanation Wedding Ceremony

A Jewish wedding is not merely between two individuals, or their families and circle of friends; it is a cause of celebration for the entire Jewish people. A wedding is not just about two people finding happiness; it’s more about the potential of this couple to make the world a better place by the virtue of being together as one. It is a Jewish belief that when two people who are destined for each other get married, they complete one another. The marriage of Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name was blessed at Temple Name on Date in a ceremony called aufruf during which Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name were called to the bimah and given honors before the Torah.

Prior to the ceremony, the civil marriage license was witnessed and signed by Witness’ Name and Witness’ Name. The ketubah (Jewish marriage document) was witnessed and signed by Witness’ Name and Witness’ Name. The ketubah was traditionally a revolutionary concept, protecting the bride’s rights and obligating the husband to look out for her welfare. Today, the ketubah reflects the equality of bride and groom and reflects their mutual obligations to each other.

The wedding takes place under the huppah, symbolic of the home Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name will build together. The huppah has no walls; the marriage begins with just a roof, and Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name will build the walls with love and friendship, based on a foundation of respect and trust. The huppah is open on all sides so that family and friends will always feel welcome.

A blessing of krikat erusin, or betrothal, is recited over the wine, followed by another in praise of God, who brought Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name together. Bride’s Name and Groom’s Name drink from the same cup of wine to represent the life that they will share from this day forth.

Next comes the giving and accepting of rings. Jewish custom requires that wedding bands be made of a single piece of metal with no adornments breaking the circle, representing the wholeness achieved through marriage and the hope for an unbroken union. Groom’s Name will place the ring on Bride’s Name’s right index finger to represent that marriage is an act of law, saying, “Behold, you are set apart for me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel.” After reciting his vow, he will transfer the ring to its permanent place on her left ring finger to represent that the marriage is an act of love. The bride does the same to the groom. The ketubah is then read and presented to Bride’s Name. After the chanting of the seven marriage blessings – shva b’rachot – the couple drinks from a second cup of wine.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Groom’s Name will step on a glass and break it. This ancient practice has many interpretations. One of the most traditional is that it reminds us of the destruction of the holy temple in Jerusalem and the many losses that have been suffered by the Jewish people. Another explanation is that love, like glass, is very fragile and must be protected because, once broken, it is hard to put back together again. A more contemporary interpretation is that the sound travels through time and



space to share their joy with all who have loved them, both those who are separated by distance and those separated by time. Immediately following the ceremony, Bride's Name and Groom's Name will leave the huppah and spend their first few minutes as husband and wife alone together in a private place. This is called yichud, or seclusion.

**LUTHERAN EXAMPLE**

Bride's name and Groom's name  
Date

Our wedding day, a new life has its start. We'll share with each other one love, one dream, one heart.

The Marriage Ceremony Uniting  
Bride's name and Groom's name  
Day of week, Date, Time  
Name of Church, City, State

Prelude  
Processional - "Name of song," Composer  
Bridal Processional - "Name of song," Composer  
The Invocation  
The Scripture Lesson - Book of Bible Chapter: Verse(s), reader name  
The Wedding Message, reader name  
The Marriage Vows  
The Exchange Rings  
Declaration of Marriage  
Lighting of the Unity Candle - "Name of song," Composer  
The Prayers  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Benediction  
Introduction of the Married Couple  
The Recessional - "Name of song," Composer

The Bridal Party  
Parents of the Bride - names  
Parents of the Groom - names  
Grandmother of the Groom - name  
Grandfather of the Groom - name  
Matron of Honor - name  
Bridesmaids - names  
Flower Girls - name  
Best Man - name  
Groomsmen - name  
Ushers - names  
Officiant - name  
Organist - name

Please join us at name of reception site following the ceremony. Cocktails begin at time the cocktail hour starts.

With Gratitude  
Thank you for joining us on this joyous day! Being surrounded by our loving family and friends has made this day what it is meant to be -- a celebration of love. Following the ceremony, we hope you can join us for dinner and dancing at name of reception site.

With Love,

Bride's name and Groom's name and our families



**BAPTIST EXAMPLE** The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage Uniting  
Bride's name and Groom's name  
Day of the week, Date  
Name of Church, City, State

The Wedding Party  
Parents of the Bride - names  
Parents of the Groom - names  
Grandparents of the Bride - names  
Grandparents of the Groom - names  
Matron/Maid of Honor - name  
Best Man - name  
Bridesmaids - names  
Groomsmen - names  
Pianist/Flutist - name  
Guitarist/Violinist/Soloist - name  
Cellist - name  
Trumpeter - name  
Officiating Ministers - names

The Marriage Ceremony  
The Musical Prelude  
Honoring the Grandmothers  
Seating the Mothers  
"Name of Song" Composer  
The Processional  
"Name of Song" Composer  
The Fanfare and Bridal Processional  
"Name of Song" Composer  
The Service of Worship  
Presentation of the Bride  
Homily  
Declaration of Intent  
Exchange of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
Celebration of Communion  
"Name of Song" Composer  
Prayer of Blessing  
Pronouncement of Marriage  
The Recessional  
"Name of Song" Composer

We are so honored and blessed to have each of you here this day to witness our wedding and to celebrate with us. It is in God's perfect timing and with His clear calling that we, with great joy, join our lives together. We wish to thank our parents who have unconditionally loved us, prayed for us, and supported us every step of the way. Outside of our personal relationships with Jesus Christ, they have played the greatest role in leading us and shaping us into the people we are today. This day is more wonderful because of their investment in our lives. We would also like to thank our families and friends. From our childhood to today, our memories with you bless us, make us laugh, and brighten our days. You are truly priceless treasures in our lives.  
With love, Bride's name & Groom's name



METHODIST EXAMPLE Bride's name & Groom's name  
Date, Name of Church

The Wedding Party:  
Parents - names  
Grandparents of the Bride - names  
Grandparents of the Groom - names  
Maid of Honor - name  
Best Man - name  
Bridesmaids - names  
Groomsmen - names  
Flower Girls - names  
Ushers - names  
Honorary Bridesmaid - name  
Ring Bearer - names  
Minister - name  
Musicians - names

The Wedding Ceremony:  
Prelude  
Seating of the Grandparents  
Seating of the Mothers  
"Name of Song," Composer  
Processional  
"Name of Song," Composer  
Entrance of the Bride  
"Name of Song," Composer  
The Marriage Ceremony:  
Statement of Propose and Prayer  
Reading of Scripture  
Book of the Bible Chapter: Verse  
Promissory Vows  
Giving of the Bride  
Reading  
Covenant Vows  
Exchanging of the Rings  
Lighting of the Unity Candle ("Name of Song," Composer)  
Pronouncement of Marriage  
Prayer and Blessing  
Introduction of the Couple  
Recessional  
"Name of Song," Composer

Thank you for sharing our special day with us!  
-- Bride's name & Groom's names

PRESBYTERIAN EXAMPLE Image of church (optional)  
Church Name  
Address  
City, State, ZIP  
Date/Time  
Welcome Family and Friends to the  
Celebration of Marriage Uniting

Bride's name and Groom's name



Wedding Party  
Maid of Honor - name  
Best Man - name  
Bridesmaids - names  
Groomsmen - names  
Flower Girls - names  
Parents of the Bride - names  
Parents of the Groom - names  
Leaders of Worship - names

The Service of Marriage  
Organ Prelude  
Bridal Processional "Name of Song" Composer  
"Name of Song" Composer  
Welcome/Statement of the Gift of Marriage  
Prayer  
The Consent  
Scripture Readings:  
Book of the Bible Chapter: Verse #  
Read by: Name  
Book of the Bible Chapter: Verse #  
Read by: Name  
Homily  
Exchange of Vows  
Giving and Receiving of Rings  
Lighting of the Unity Candle  
The Prayer  
Prayer of Thanksgiving  
Declaration of Marriage  
Benediction  
Recessional  
"Name of Song" Composer

Dear Family & Friends:  
We would like to thank you all for your love and support. Thank you for sharing in our special day. We would like to extend a special thanks to our parents for their unconditional love and guidance.  
With all our love,  
Bride's name & Groom's name

**HINDU EXAMPLE** Bride's name weds Groom's name  
Date

**BARAT**  
Groom's name arrives for the wedding with his family and friends. Bride's name's family and friends receive them.

**JAYAMALA**  
Bride's name greets Groom's name and acknowledges him as her betrothed in the presence of all assembled by garlanding him. Groom's name reciprocates.

**GANESH POOJA**  
The priest commences the marriage ceremony under the mandap by invoking God to accept the wedding prayers and to bless the assembly and the couple to be married. The parents of the bride are then asked to join the ceremony.

#### MADHUPARKA

Bride's name parents offer madhuparka (a mixture of yogurt and honey) to the groom who accepts it with a prayer that he may imbibe its purity and sweetness.

#### SHAKOCHAR

The priest invokes the memory and the blessings of the respective fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers of the bride and groom for the holy matrimony.

#### PANIGRAHAN AND KANYADAAN

In the Hindu way of life, a married woman is given special status and respect in society. This is a very special moment for the bride, as she accepts her change of status from an unmarried woman to a wife. The father of the bride gives away ("daan") his daughter ("kanya") to the groom, who affirms his commitment to the marriage.

#### GRANTHIBANDHAN

The priest ties the knot to bind Bride's name and Groom's name together for life. Throughout the ceremony, oblations are made to God to invoke His blessings in the form of a "Havan" (ceremonial fire). Samagree (crushed sandalwood, herbs, sugar, and rice), Ghee (clarified butter), Camphor, and Samidha (twigs) are offered into the Agnikunda (fire pit).

#### SHILAROHAN AND LAJAHUTI

Bride's name brother gives her "Kheel" (purified rice) and she offers it to God. The brother then assists Bride's name to step upon a rock, which symbolizes strength of purpose and firmness. Groom's name asks Bride's name to be firm like a rock, to resist foes, and to help thwart undesirable forces.

#### PARIKRAMA

Bride's name leads Groom's name three times around the Agnikunda, offering oblations to God each time. Groom's name then leads Bride's name four times around the Agnikunda.

#### SAPTAPADI

Groom's name stresses to Bride's name the need for harmony and devotion in life, while the couple walks together seven steps vowing:

With God as our guide let us take:

- The first step for prosperity
- The second step for strength
- The third step for wealth
- The fourth step for happiness
- The fifth step for progeny
- The sixth step for nature's bounty
- The seventh step for companionship

#### EXCHANGE OF WEDDING VOWS (VACHAN)

#### SHUAANG

Groom's name places sindoor (red powder), the traditional mark of a suhaagwati stree (married woman) in the parting of Bride's name hair.

#### AASHIRVAAD

The couple receives the blessing of all assembled and are showered with rice and flowers.

**MUSLIM EXAMPLE** The wedding of Bride's name and Groom's name

Date  
Location/Mosque  
City, State

**Baraat Welcome**

The groom arrives at the wedding venue with his baraat (procession of his family and friends). A band plays traditional music to announce their arrival. The groom shares a drink of "sherbet" (a juice drink prepared from fruits and/or flower petals) with the bride's brother. The bride's sisters play pranks and welcome the guests with flowers and sometimes sprinkle rosewater on them, symbolizing the purity and fragrance of the divine.

**Mahr**

The marriage gift (mahr) is a divine injunction. The giving of mahr to the bride by the groom is an essential part of the contract. "And give the women (upon marriage) their mahr as a (nikah) free gift." (Quran 4:4). Mahr is a token commitment of the husband's responsibility and may be paid in cash, property, or movable objects to the bride herself. The amount of the mahr is not legally specified; however, moderation according to the existing norm is recommended. On the day of the Nikah, the elder members of the two families decide the amount of mahr. The mahr may be paid immediately to the bride at the time of marriage, deferred to an alternate date, or a combination of both. The deferred mahr, however, becomes due in the event of death or divorce.

**Nikahnama**

One matrimonial party expresses willing consent to enter into the marriage and the other party expresses acceptance of the responsibility in the assembly of the marriage ceremony. For the contract to be legal, it must be signed by the groom, the bride, and their two respective witnesses. The written marriage contract (Agd-Nikah) is then publicly announced.

**Sermon**

The assembly of nikah is addressed with a marriage sermon by the Muslim officiant. Customarily, in marriage societies, a state-appointed Qadi (Muslim judge) officiates over the nikah ceremony and keeps the record of the marriage contract. However, any trustworthy practicing Muslim can conduct the nikah ceremony, as Islam does not advocate priesthood. The documents of the marriage contract/certificate are filed with the masjid (mosque) and local government for the record.

Prophet Muhammad made it tradition to have the marriage sermon delivered in the assembly to solemnize the marriage. The sermon invited the bride and the groom as well as participating guests in the assembly to a life of piety, love, kindness, and social responsibility.

The Khutbah-tun-Nikah begins with the praise of Allah. His help and guidance are sought. The Muslim confession of faith that "there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger" is declared. The three Quranic verses (Quran 4:1, 3:102, 33:70-71) and one hadith (prophetic saying) form the essential text of the marriage. This hadith says: "By Allah! Among all of you I am the most God-fearing, and among you all, I am the supermost to save myself from the wrath of Allah, yet my state is that I observe prayer to sleep too. I observe fast and suspend observing them, I marry woman also. And he who turns away from my Sunnah has no relation with me." (Bukhari)

The Muslim Officiant concludes the ceremony with Dua (prayer) for the bride, groom,

their respective families, the local Muslim community, and the Muslim community at large.

Nikah (marriage) is considered as an act of worship. It is considered virtuous to conduct it in a mosque, keeping the ceremony simple. The marriage ceremony is a social as well as religious activity. Islam advocates simplicity in ceremonies and celebrations.

#### Blessing the Groom

The groom receives blessings from the older women and offers them his salaam (Islamic greeting). The guests pray for the newlyweds.

#### Reception

Dinner is a lavish spread. The women and the men usually dine separately. After dinner, the newlyweds sit together for the first time. Their heads are covered by a dupatta while they read prayers under the direction of the maulvi (preist). The Quran is placed between the couple and they are allowed to see each other only through mirrors.

#### Postwedding Rituals

##### Rukhsat

The bride's family bids her a tearful farewell before she departs for her husband's house. The bride's father gives her hands to her husband and tells him to protect and take good care of her.

##### Welcoming the Bride

The groom's mother holds the Quran above the head of her new daughter-in-law as she enters her new home for the first time after the wedding.

##### Chauthi

The Chauthi is the fourth day after the wedding, when the bride visits the home of her parents. She receives a joyous welcome on this day.

##### Walima (The Marriage Banquet)

After the consummation of the marriage, the groom's family hosts a banquet. It is a joyous occasion that brings together the two families, their relatives, and other well-wishers.

*(These examples are ment to be used as a reference. Use them as a guide and add your own spin to make your big day a truly personal affair.)*