

Outline service for the marriage of *Bride's Full Name* and *Groom's Full Name at Not Yet Supplied*

This document is an aid to help you discuss your wedding ceremony with your Vicar. There are many more choices you could make about hymns and readings that are not offered through the online Ceremony Planner. Your Vicar is trained and experienced to advise you on your unique ceremony, so do discuss other options with them.

Because your Vicar knows your church building so well, and wants to get to know you and your preferences too, they may adapt the service in terms of some of the words used and the order of the service. You may find that your final order of service has variations from this outline, but this draft should be a good starting point for the three of you.

Wishing you God's blessing and all the riches of his grace for your forthcoming marriage!

Beginning the service

Traditionally, the bride and groom enter the church separately - the groom first with the best man, and the bride at the time set for the start of the service, on the arm of her father or another relative or friend (it does not need to be a man). However, the bride may enter alone if she wishes, or the couple may enter together.

The Vicar will welcome the congregation. Your family and friends have an important role to play as witnesses and supporters of your marriage.

A hymn can then be sung - you chose '*First hymn choice*' as your first hymn.

The Vicar will read an introduction explaining what Christians believe about marriage. He or she will also ask, as the law requires, if anyone knows any reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.

Declarations

You will be asked to promise before God, your friends and your families, that you will love, comfort, honour and protect your partner and be faithful to them as long as you both shall live. The Vicar will also ask the congregation to declare that they will support and uphold your marriage.

Your readings from the Bible (and other sources if you wish) come after the Declarations and a prayer. You chose 'Bible Reading'. This is the minimum number of readings you'll need for your church wedding. If you'd like more, talk to your Vicar about others you might like.

Talk or Sermon

A hymn may be sung - you chose '*Second hymn choice*' as your second hymn.

Vows

Turning to each other, the bride and groom take each other's right hand and make vows:

'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,
till death us do part'

Rings

The couple then exchange a ring or rings as a 'sign of their marriage' and a reminder of the vows:

'With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'

Proclamation

The Vicar will then declare that you are now husband and wife. The Vicar does not 'marry you'; you marry each other. The Vicar just directs you in this and then tells everyone that you have done it properly.

A hymn may be sung here - you chose '*Third hymn choice*' as your third hymn.

Prayers

In the prayers, God's blessing and help is asked for you. There may be a prayer for the gift of children,

but every couple will have their own feelings about this, so it's best to discuss the details with your Vicar. You may wish to help choose the prayers or to write your own.

Signing of the register

After you have exchanged your vows, the bride, groom and two witnesses must sign the register. This is a legal requirement and the minister will give you a copy of the marriage certificate.

Final Prayers

After the prayers a final hymn may be sung - you chose '*Fourth hymn choice*' as your fourth hymn.

The Dismissal

The Vicar says:

'God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
Defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
And the blessing of God almighty,
The father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.'

To the Vicar :

Thank you for taking the time to look though this Ceremony Planner, available on www.yourchurchwedding.org. This is a new development being piloted by the Archbishops' Council's Weddings Project. It shows couples the flexibility of a CofE wedding and encourages their involvement in making choices. It is also designed to provide you with helpful information about the couple's preferences, but emphasises that you are best placed to advise them on their unique ceremony. We'd be pleased to hear what you think about the Planner, and whether you and the couple found it helpful.

To find out more and send us your comments, visit www.yourchurchwedding.org/project.

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