



Covenant Marriage Wedding Ceremonies (Option One)



*For (Bride and Groom's Name)
Wedding Date & Time*

The wedding party should be dressed and ready for pictures 1 1/2 hours before music starts.

Groomsmen and ushers begin seating guests 35 minutes prior to seating of the family.
Prelude Music (Start at 35 minutes prior to seating family.) Instrumental Selections

<i>Special Music</i>	Instrumental Selections
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<i>Special Music</i> (Lighting of candles during this song) (4-5 minutes, or as needed to fill time during the final seating of guests)	Instrumental Selections

1. *Seating of family* (On the designated half-hour)

Processional of family:	Instrumental Selection
Seating of Groom's grandparents	
Seating of Bride's grandparents.	
Seating of Groom's parents. (Parents may light the candle on the right side of the unity candle and then be seated together on second row.)	
Seating of Bride's parents – mother only if her father is "giving her away." (Parents may light the candle on the left side of the unity candle and then be seated on second row.)	
2. *Special Music Selection*
3. *Processional of bridesmaids & groomsmen:*
Jesu, Joy of Men's Desiring (suggestion)
 Bach
 - Pastor(s), Groom and Best Man enter from side door
 - Bride's Maid (1) and Groom's Man (2) enter from the rear
 - Bride's Maid (3) and Groom's Man (4) enter from the rear
 - Bride's Maid (5) and Groom's Man (6) enter from the rear
 - Bride's Maid (7) and Groom's Man (8) enter from the rear
 - Bride's Maid (9) Groom's Man (10) enter from the rear
 - Maid of Honor enters and takes her place.
 - Ring Bearer and Flower Girl enter and take their place.

Placement of Wedding Party

Ministers

1 3 5 7 9 MH BF Bride Groom BM 10 8 6 4 2
Flower Girl Ring Bearer

4. *Processional of Bride*

The Wedding March from “Lohengrin” (Suggestion)
Wagner
Bride and father enter and take their place.

5. *Purpose* (Why we have gathered) Minister
[To the congregation] Dear friends and family, we have gathered here today in the presence of God to celebrate His activity in the uniting of (Groom’s full name) and (Bride’s full name) in Holy Matrimony.

[To the couple] Before the two of you were conceived God knew the events of this day would be taking place. So it is that He is present with us today, continuing that which He began before you were born.

The Bible teaches that marriage is to be a permanent relationship of one man and one woman freely and totally committed to each other as companions for life. It is a covenant relationship patterned after God’s covenant relationship with His People.

Our Lord declared that a man shall leave his father and mother and unite with his wife in the building of a home, and the two shall become one flesh. In this union God is providing an opportunity for the two of you to experience the greatest expression of His love through two human beings.

(Groom’s Name) as you stand before me in the presence of God and these who have gathered here today, you are saying to God and to the world that you believe He has His hand on this event. You are willingly joining God in the life of (Bride’s Name). You are saying that you desire to love her as Christ loves the church. He is patient and kind. He does not envy. He does not boast nor is He proud. He is not rude, nor self-seeking. He is not easily angered, nor does He keep a record of wrongs. He does not delight in evil but rejoices in truth. He always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. The Love of Christ never fails. You are saying that the love you have for (Bride’s Name) is a gift from God through you to her. And just as Christ laid down His life for the church, you are saying that you are willing to lay down your agendas, your desires, your needs in order to serve God through loving (Bride’s Name).

(Bride’s Name), God has laid out His plans for you since before you were born and He knew the event of this day would be taking place. As you recite your vows today you are saying, “Yes, Lord” to His offer to you to join Him in the life of (Groom’s Name). God has brought you alongside (Groom’s Name) to be his helpmate. God has given you a special love for (Groom’s name) that He has chosen you to be an instrument of His love to him.

He is calling you to submit to (Groom’s Name) as to the Lord. In other words, God is calling you to willingly submit to Him and His loving leadership through (Groom’s Name). Ephesians tells us that “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.” (Bride’s Name), God is calling you to serve Him through serving (Groom’s Name). God is also

providing you with an opportunity to demonstrate your love for Him through loving (Groom's Name)?

(Bride's Name), the same God who loved you before you were born and continued to loved you through your parents now expresses His love for you through (Groom's Name). But not only is He providing His love for you through (Groom's Name), He is also giving you to (Groom's Name) as an expression of His love for him. 1 John 4:12 says, "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." If God truly lives in each of you, then how you treat one another, you treat God. How you receive one another today and for the rest of your life, you receive Christ.

6. *Presentation of Bride*

Who now presents this bride to be married?

Father of the Bride responds . . . "I do." or "Her mother and I do."

(Wedding party moves to final positions. Flower Girl and Ring Bearer sit on the first row)

7. *Prayer*

Minister

(Option of having a grandparent voice

a prayer on behalf of the family. Introduce this option by saying – "In celebration of the activity of God through the generations, I would like to ask Bride's grandfather or grand mother to offer a prayer on behalf of the two families.)

8. *Devotional Thought/Challenge*

- (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name), what images come to mind when you hear the word marriage? You may picture loved ones or friends who are married – perhaps your parents. You may envision the two of you. How did God see marriage when he created it for mankind?
- The church at large considers marriage to be an institution. It is understood as having been instituted by God. It is His design and plan for the human race. In creation, God declared, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him." It was God who brought Eve to Adam after creating her, in effect pronouncing the first marriage union. In the New Testament, the husband and wife are said to be "joined together" by God. Jesus is seen as sanctioning marriage by his attendance at the marriage in Cana of Galilee.
- As a local Body of Believers, we hold to the belief that God views marriage as a covenant. In the Bible, marriage is spoken of as a covenant and therefore we accept this view as our own.
- A covenant marriage implies a freely chosen, lifelong, exclusive relationship between the husband and wife whose relationship is established and enabled by God with each other is founded on their covenant relationship with God. A covenant is the most solemn binding relationship into which two parties can enter. A covenant is based on unconditional love while a contract is based on works. A

covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur. A contract can be voided by mutual consent

- A covenant is freely entered into based on the gift of God’s covenant love for us. What each of you freely gives to the other cannot be resented by the other. In other words, (Groom’s Name), what you freely give to (Bride’s Name) cannot be taken back by her for it is not hers to take back and vice versa.
- How strong is the bond of the marriage covenant? The marriage covenant is to be one of total commitment, complete faithfulness, and permanence. Established and blessed by God, the marriage covenant is not to be broken. It is to be honored among all people. The Bible says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
- (Groom’s Name) and (Bride’s Name), today you must leave your parents and cleave to the spouse God has given you. With your spouse you will experience the strongest of all human bonds – the covenant of marriage.

9. *Vows* – And now we come to the most important part of this ceremony. The vows you are about to make are the most important commitment you will ever make to another person. I pray that you will remain faithful to the promises you make today all the days of your lives.

(Groom’s Name), believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to (Bride’s Name), your family, and your community, to remain steadfast in selfless, unconditional love for her and will you always seek reconciliation in times of trial? And, do you commit to remain sexually pure in mind and body while purposefully growing spiritually and personally in your covenant marriage relationship?

(Groom, “I do.”)

(Bride’s Name), believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to (Groom’s Name), your family, and your community to remain steadfast in selfless, unconditional love for him and will you always seek reconciliation in times of trial? And, do you commit to remain sexually pure in mind and body while purposefully growing spiritually and personally in your covenant marriage relationship?

(Bride, “I do.”)

_____ and _____ face each other and repeat these covenantal vows after me.

(Groom’s Name), repeat after me.

“I, (Groom), enter into this covenant of marriage with you, (Wife)./ I promise always to love you as my wife/ and to completely give myself/ and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you/ in sickness or in health./ I will honor and cherish you/

all the days of my life,/ whether our life circumstances/ are better or worse, richer or poorer./ I will strive to live before you/ a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

(Bride's Name), it's your turn.

I, (Bride), enter into this covenant of marriage with you, (Groom)./ I promise always to love you as my husband/ and to completely give myself/ and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you/ in sickness or in health./ I will honor and cherish you/ all the days of my life,/ whether our life circumstances/ are better or worse, richer or poorer./ I will strive to live before you/ a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ.”

10. *Unity Candle Lighting*

- Explanation - In the lighting of the unity candle you are symbolizing your belief in God's activity in your lives as individuals and as a couple.
- (Groom) and (Bride), the two outer candles have been lighted by your parents, representing your lives up to this moment. They are two distinct lights, each bright and shining on their own. To bring joy and fulfillment to your home, these two lights must merge into one. This is what the Lord meant when he said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one” (Matt. 19:5 RSV).
- While you will certainly remain unique persons, each with your own God-given spiritual gifts, personality, talents, and abilities, from this time forth, your thoughts shall be for each other rather than for your individual selves. The love He has given you for each other is part of His divine plan to draw you both closer to Him and to each other. It is also a part of His plan to draw others to Himself through you as a couple. _
- (Groom) and (Bride) in the lighting of this Unity Candle you are symbolically expressing the goals of your union; to glorify God in your marriage and to radiate his love to all whose lives you touch. (The couple should, at this time, take their respective candles and, together, light the unity candle. After it is lit, they should NOT extinguish their individual candles but rather hold them until directed to place them back in their holders.)
- Do not extinguish your individual candles; instead, place them, still lit, in their holders. God has not called you to extinguish you individual identities but rather to unite them. As you celebrate your oneness with each other and the Lord, your God-given, individual personalities will still exist and be used by God as His lights in this dark world.
- In your Covenant Marriage, encourage, support, and pray for each other that you may both become all that God intends for you as individuals. As a couple, join God where He calls you, to represent His light to the world, that others may come to know Him as a result of knowing you.
- In Matthew 5:14, Christ calls every Christian to be a light to the world. In 1 Thessalonians 5 Christians are called “the children of light.” Ephesians 5:8 says that we are to “walk as children of light.” As “children of light” you are affirming this day God's uniting your two lives together in order that His light may now shine through you as a Christian couple thus increasing the light of His presence in the world through your marriage.

Household of Faith is a suggested song to be sung while the couple either remains at the Unity Candle or kneels at the praying bench.

11. *Ring Ceremony*

The wedding ring is a symbol of marriage in at least two ways: the purity of the gold symbolizes the purity of your love for each other, and the unending circle symbolizes the unending covenant which you are entering, which may be broken honorably in the sight of God only by death. As a token of your covenant, you will now give and receive the rings.

(Groom's Name), you will place the ring on (Bride's Name) finger and repeat after me:

(Bride's Name), with this ring / I pledge my life / and love to you, / in the name of the Father, / and of the Son, / and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Bride's Name), you will place the ring on (Groom's Name) finger and repeat after me:

(Groom's Name), with this ring / I pledge my life / and love to you, / in the name of the Father, / and of the Son, / and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now will you look at each other and affirm your lifelong covenant with one another by repeating after me:

“Entreat me not to leave you / or to return from following you; / for where you go I will go, / and where you lodge I will lodge; / your people will be my people, / and your God my God. / Where you die, I will die/ and there I will be buried.” (Ruth 1:16-17, RSV)

12. *Prayer*

Minister

(At this time the bride's grandfather or grandmother may express a prayer of thanksgiving to God for what he has done and his continued blessing on what he has begun here today. Or, . . . a prayer of support and commitment on behalf of the families and friends.)

13. *Pronouncement of Marriage*

Minister

(Groom & Bride's Names) - God has invested in me the privilege of being one of His ministers. By that authority, I now pronounce you ~~most definitely~~, husband and wife.

(Groom's Name), you may kiss your bride.

14. *Presentation of Couple*

Minister

Now turn around and look upon the faces of those who are behind you. All of these people present here today have, in one way or another impacted your lives in the past, even until this very moment. Many of them represent ones who have come before

you. They as well as others will be with you as you grow into the future. They have witnessed this day the covenant you have entered into with each other.

(Address the congregation.) And to all of you, you have a commitment to make to (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name), to one another and to God. You are called by God to help them become all that God calls them to be as individuals and as a couple in order that God may bless them and others through them. It is your responsibility to set the example, support them, and to hold them accountable to their significant role in the Family of God.

And to you (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name), my final words are what Jesus says to all of us, "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

It is now my honor and privilege to present to you for the very first time, Mr. and Mrs. (Husband & Bride's first and last name). What God has given birth to this day, may you now nurture in the love and admonition of the Lord.

15. *Recessional*

Mendelssohn

- Husband and Wife exit
- Flower Girl and Ring Bearer exit
- Maid of Honor and Best Man exit
- Groom's Man (9) and Bride's Maid (10) exit
- Groom's Man (7) and Bride's Maid (8) exit
- Groom's Man (5) and Bride's Maid (6) exit
- Groom's Man (3) and Bride's Maid (4) exit
- Groom's Man (1) and Bride's Maid (2) exit
- Bride's Mother escorted by Groom's Man exit
- Groom's Mother & Father escorted by Best Man exit
- Bride's Grandparents escorted out
- Groom's Grandparents escorted out

16. Minister extends an invitation to reception and instructs congregation where to go for the reception

17. Ministers exit.

18. Organ music continue while crowd exits

19. Wedding party returns to sanctuary for pictures