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# Introduction

## *Selection #1*

Out of affection and honor for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, we are here today, before God, to witness their vows, which will unite them in marriage. To this moment they bring the fullness of their hearts as a treasure to share with one another. They bring the spark and spirit which is uniquely their own, and out of which has grown for some time, and will continue to grow, deepen, and strengthen, the precious reality of their life together.

We share joy with them this special day in their lives. This day they affirm and declare each other as life partners in a celebration of love, which will bring empowerment to their life's path together.

Let us all give our blessing and love to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ during this ceremony as they pledge their love to one another. May the wisdom and spirit of all-giving and all-understanding Love pervade the words spoken and the love given here today, that these vows offered will remain strong and true in the presence of love all the days of their lives.

May all of us present feel the strength and depth of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_'s love and experience a rebirth of the power of love in our own lives.

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. While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by. They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey. It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

## *Selection #2*

If it were possible to begin this ceremony by gathering together all the wishes of happiness for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from all present here. . . if we could gather together those precious wishes of affection and our very fondest hopes and turn them into music, we would be listening now to a most inspiring anthem, composed of the most harmonious notes possible to produce.

Even though this is not possible, just speaking of it should assure \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that our hearts are attuned to theirs in these moments so meaningful to all of us. For what greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labor, to Officiant to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness.

Marriage is an act of faith and a personal commitment as well as a moral and physical union between the parties. Marriage has been described as the best and most important relationship that can exist between two human beings; the construction of their love and trust into a single growing energy of spiritual life. It is a moral commitment that requires and deserves daily attention since no earthly happiness exceeds that of a reciprocal satisfaction in the conjugal state. Marriage should be a life-long consecration to the ideal of loving kindness, backed with the will to make it last.

## *Selection #3*

Dearly beloved, We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now, or else for every hold your peace.  
(Said to the wedding couple) I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's Word, you do now confess it.

*Selection #4*

Before God we have come together today, for marriage is one of the most sacred of His wishes, and now, through me, He joins you together in one of the holiest of bonds.

*Selection #5*

Dear family and friends we have gathered here today to joyfully acknowledge the wedding of \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. They have requested your presence on this memorable occasion in order that you might share with them the pledging of their everlasting love on this day of commitment. Let us pray in silence as we wish them all the happiness in their new life together.

*Selection #6*

We have gathered here today, in the presence of family and friends to join \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ in Matrimony.

*Selection #7*

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and their families extend a warm welcome to all of you. They are elated that you could be here today for this joyous marriage celebration.

(To bride and groom)

We have come together this day to uphold you, \_\_\_\_\_, and you, \_\_\_\_\_, as you exchange your vows of marriage. We celebrate with you the love you have discovered in each other, and we support your decision to continue your life's journeys together as husband and wife.

(To congregation)

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ came together from different backgrounds and experiences. Through their marriage they do not leave those things behind, but instead form a new family that will broaden the circle of love and understanding in the world.

Whatever source of spiritual guidance you follow, I'm sure you will agree that as inhabitants of Planet Earth, we are one family.

With that in mind, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have asked me honor you - their immediate and extended families - by combining both of their individual spiritual traditions into this ceremony. The principles and sentiments expressed today will be very familiar to you all.

*Selection #8*

Marriage is a supreme sharing of experience, and an adventure in the most intimate of human relationships. It is the joyous union of two people whose comradeship and mutual understanding have flowered in love. Today \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ proclaim their love and commitment to the world, and we gather here to rejoice with and for them, in the new life they now undertake together.

The joy we feel now is a solemn joy, because the act of marriage has many consequences, both social and personal. Marriage requires "love", a word we often use with vagueness and sentimentality. We may assume that love is some rare and mystical event, when in fact it is our natural state of being. So what do we mean by love? When we love, we see things other people do not see. We see beneath the surface, to the qualities that make our beloved special and unique. To see with loving eyes, is to know inner beauty. To be loved is to be seen, and known, as we are known to no other. One who loves us, gives us a unique gift: a piece of ourselves, but a piece that only they could give us.

We who love, can look at each other's life and say, "I touched his life, " or, "I touched her life, " just as an artist might say, "I touched this canvas." Marriage is to belong to each other through a unique and diverse collaboration, like two threads crossing in different directions, yet weaving one tapestry together.

The secret of love and marriage is similar to that of religion itself. It is the emergence of the larger self. It is the finding of one's life by losing it. Such is the privilege of husband and wife - to be each himself, herself and yet another; to face the world strong, with the courage of two.

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. While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by. They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey. It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

#### *Selection #9*

We are gathered here today to unite \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage. This celebration is but an outward sign of an inward union of heart, mind and spirit. This is a celebration of the joining of two souls already attuned to each other. When such a true bond already exists between a man and a woman, it is fitting that an outer acknowledgment be made. We are here to bear witness to the entry into the closer relationship as husband and wife of these beloved friends who are already one in spirit.

#### *Selection #10*

Dear family and friends, we have gathered here today, together in the sight of God, to witness and celebrate the marriage of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

They have requested your presence on this memorable occasion in order that you might share with them the pledging of their everlasting love on this day of commitment. Mutual love is one of the richest experiences and most precious gifts we know. Marriage is both a threshold and a continuing process in that experience. The relationship must continue to grow with care, nurture, and an unending awareness of each other's needs and feelings. It requires a solemn commitment, which is to be entered into reverently, but also with joy and celebration. In this we now share.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, I charge you with the responsibility to keep alive; to grow, to change, to maintain the capacity for wonder, for spontaneity, for humor; to remain pliable, warm and sensitive. I charge you to give fully; to show your real feelings, to save time for each other, no matter what demands are made upon your day. I charge you to see the meaning of life through the changing prism of your love; to nurture each other to fullness and wholeness, and in learning to love each other more deeply, learn to love the creation in which the mystery of your love has happened.

#### *Selection #11*

We come together not to mark the start of a relationship, but to recognize a bond that already exists. This marriage is one expression of the many varieties of love. Love is one, though its expressions are infinite.

It is fitting to speak briefly about love. We live in a world of joy and fear and search for meaning and strength in the seeming disorder. We discover the truest guideline to our quest when we realize love in all its magnitudes. Love is the eternal force of life. Love is the force that allows us to face fear and uncertainty with courage. For the giving of our self in love is difficult, for you must learn to give of your love without total submission of yourself. Therefore, in your giving, give your joy, your sadness, your interest, your understanding, your knowledge – all expressions that make up life. But in this giving, remember to preserve yourself – your integrity, your individuality. This is the challenge of love within marriage.

Although you will be sharing one life, never forget, you are two separate people. Cherish and affirm your differences. Love each other. Keep your commitment primary. Together you will laugh and cry, be sick and well, be happy and angry, share and grow. Grow, sometimes together, sometimes separately. But never remain stagnant. Love and life are always changing, always new.

If you will insure a healthy lasting marriage, always, always value each other. Although you will disagree, remember to respect each other's feelings, needs and wants.

So it is our hope for you both that in all areas of your life together you will weave a durable fabric of mutual consolation and support and of help in time of trouble. May each of you achieve the ability to give of yourselves freely so that you will each live better lives and become greater persons.

*Selection #12*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the relationship that you have nourished together stands for love that will blossom and grow with each passing day. Before you knew love, you were friends, and it was from this seed of friendship that is now your destiny. Marriage is the clasping of hands, the blending of hearts, the union of two lives as one. Marriage is caring as much about the welfare and happiness of your marriage partner as your own. It is not total absorption into each other. It is looking outward in the same direction together. Marriage makes burdens lighter because you divide them. It makes joys more intense because you share them. It makes you stronger, so that you can be involved with life in ways you dare not risk alone. To make your relationship work will take love. This is the core of your marriage and why you are here today. It will take trust, to know in your hearts that you truly want the best for each other. It will take dedication, to stay open and honest with one another – and to learn and grow together. It will take faith, to go forward together without knowing exactly what the future brings. And it will take commitment, to hold true to the journey you both promised today to share together. An intimate and secure relationship is not based on promises, but rather on trust, respect, faithfulness and the ability to forgive. A lasting marriage is based on all of these, bound together by love.

*Selection #13*

We must give ourselves in love, but we must not give ourselves away. As Saint Exupery said, "Love does not consist in gazing into each other's eyes, but in looking together in the same direction." That is why love must always say no to live in a closed world with just the perfume of the beloved and no other essences from nature or humanity.

So it is on this summer eve, let us rejoice yet know that we are here not just to observe but to participate in this marriage ceremony. May we all remember that the path of love is meant to be walked together with God and with all of humanity. No persons in a love relationship can have meaning apart from their family, their friends and their community.

Who gives their blessing to this marriage, and in the giving who says an enthusiastic "Yes!" to this new relationship?

*Selection #14*

A marriage between mature people is not an escape but a commitment shared by two individuals that becomes part of their commitment to themselves and society. Yet to love is also to accept the mystery of the loved one, and to refuse to violate that mystery.

# Opening Blessing

## *Selection #1*

Divine Spirit (Father, Lord), we know Your presence is with all of us here this special day of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_'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 \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_'s love and experience a rebirth of the power of love in our own lives.

We ask these things in the Name of the Divine Spirit and give thanks that it is so.

## *Selection #2*

I invoke Thee, Who art the greatest of all, Who created all, Who generated it from thyself, Who sees all and is never seen. We ask Your blessing for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ tonight as they enter into this cherished covenant. We ask You to bless this community of friends and family who pledge their love and support of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_'s marriage.

Infinite One, fly ahead of them

Open the way

Prepare the path

Spirit of the sun

Mother of the light

Come to them!

Amen.

*(excerpt from Greek prayer to Ayrón and Hopi Hymn)*

## *Selection #3*

Let us pray: Dear God, One who gives us the longing for love and the capability of loving, we give thanks to You for (2) and (1), for their open hearts and willing spirits, and for the love that they embody here in our presence. Be with them on this joyous occasion as two become one, and be with us, their community, as we rejoice in what is said and witnessed here. Amen.

# Handfasting Ceremony

*The expression "tying the knot" refers to the traditional early Celtic and later Scots and Welsh marriage ritual of handfasting. Though clearly pagan in origin, the symbolism of this ritual was so visually expressive and appealing that it even found its way into the liturgy of some factions of Catholicism practiced in Britain after the rise of Christianity. What follows is the script for a particularly elaborate, beautiful and historically accurate "six-chorded" handfasting ceremony. There are many other simpler variations of the ceremony, using a single chord (the old spelling of "cord") or a family clan tartan, which are much less lengthy and detailed.*

## **Handfasting Ceremony #1**

Officiant: Know now that since your lives have crossed, you have formed ties between each other. The promises you make today and the ties that are bound here will cross the years and will greatly strengthen your union. With full awareness, know that you declare your intent to be handfasted before your friends and family. Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Bride & Groom: Yes, we seek to enter.

I bid you look into each other's eyes.

[Bride's Name], will you honor him?

I will.

[Groom's Name], will you honor her?

I will.

[To Both] Will you seek never to give cause to break that honor?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. Join your hands. (First chord is draped across the bride and groom's hands.)

[Bride's Name], will you share his dreams?

I will .

[Groom's Name], will you share her dreams?

I will .

[To Both] Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. (Second chord is draped across the couple's hands.)

[Bride's Name], will you share his laughter?

I will .

[Groom's Name], will you share her laughter?

I will .

[To Both] Will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. (Drape third chord across the couple's hands.)

[Bride's Name], might you ever burden him?

I might...

Is that your intent?

No.

[Groom's Name], might you ever burden her?

I might...

Is that your intent?

No.

[To Both] Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. (Drape fourth chord across the couple's hands.)

[Bride's Name], might you ever cause him pain?

I might...

Is that your intent?

No.

[Groom's Name], might you ever cause her pain?

I might...

Is that your intent?

No.

[To Both] Will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. (Drape fifth chord across the couple's hands.)

[Bride's Name], might you ever cause him anger?

I might...

Is that your intent?

No.

[Groom's Name], might you ever cause her anger?

I might...

Is that your intent?



No.

[To Both] Will you together take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

Yes.

And so the binding is made. (Drape sixth chord across the couple's hands. Tie chords together while saying:)

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords, but rather by your vows. For as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union. (Once chords are tied together they are removed and placed on altar.)

## **Handfasting Ceremony #2**

(1) and (2) have chosen to perform a handfasting ceremony. This is a symbolic binding of the hands dating back to Celtic traditions that may have inspired the terms "Bonds of Holy Matrimony" and to "Tie the Knot". Rings were only for the very rich, so the hands of the bride and groom were bound as a sign of their commitment to one another. The cord is a symbol of your marital vows. It is strong enough to hold you together during times of struggle yet flexible enough to allow for individuality and personal growth. As your hands are bound together, so shall your lives be bound as one.

Officiant wraps the ribbon around the couple's joined hands.

I would like to share the words of Anne Morrow Lindbergh:

Love does not consist in gazing at each other. But in looking outward together in the same direction. For in fact, man and woman are not only looking outward in the same direction, they are working outward. Here one forms ties, roots, a firm base... Here one makes oneself part of the community of men, of human society. Here the bonds of marriage are formed. For marriage, which is always spoken of as a bond, becomes actually, in this stage, many bonds, many strands, of different texture and strength, making up a web that is taut and firm. The web is fashioned of love. Yes, but many kinds of love: romantic love first, then a slow-growing devotion and, playing through these, a constantly rippling companionship. It is made of loyalties, and interdependencies, and shared experiences. It is woven of memories of meetings and conflicts; of triumphs and disappointments. It is a web of communication, a common language, and the acceptance of lack of language too, a knowledge of likes and dislikes, of habits and reactions, both physical and mental. It is a web of instincts and intuitions, and known and unknown exchanges. The web of marriage is made by propinquity, in the day to day living side by side, looking outward and working outward in the same direction. It is woven in space and in time of the substance of life itself.

Remove ties or has them tie infinity knot.

# Declaration of Intent

## *Selection #1*

Will you \_\_\_\_\_, have this man/woman from this day forward to be your wedded wife/husband, to live together (in God's love) in the sacred state of matrimony?

Do you promise to love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and cherish her/him, in sickness and health, in trying times and smooth, in lean times and full, all the days of your lives? If so, say, "I do."

## *Selection #2*

\_\_\_\_\_, will you have this man/woman to be your wife/husband to live together in the covenant of marriage?

Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live? If so, say, "I do."

## *Selection #3*

\_\_\_\_\_, will you take \_\_\_\_\_, to be your wedded wife/husband, to love, to cherish, to continually bestow upon her your heart's deepest devotion? If so, say, "I will."

## *Selection #4*

\_\_\_\_\_, do you take \_\_\_\_\_, for your lawfully wedded wife/husband, to love and cherish from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health? If so, say, "I do."

## *Selection #5*

Will you, \_\_\_\_\_ have this man/woman from this day forward to be your wedded wife/husband, in times of celebration, in times of sadness, in times of pleasure and in times of pain, in times of sickness and times of health? If so, say, "I will."

## *Selection #6*

The apostle Paul compared the relationship between husband and wife to that between Christ and the church. Marriage is a decision of two individuals to share the same type of pure, Christian love described by Paul in I Corinthians 13:4-8 - 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 selfish, 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, and is always ready to endure whatever comes. Love never fails...

Two lives, shared with this kind of love, can hold more fulfillment and happiness than either life alone.

\_\_\_\_\_, are you ready to enter into marriage with \_\_\_\_\_, believing the love you share and your faith in each other will endure all things? If so, say, "I am."

## *Selection #7*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as you come this day to affirm your love and commitment, may you always remember to value each other as special and unique individuals, and that you respect each other's thoughts, ideas and feelings. May you be able to forgive and to forget when wronged, and live each day that you may share it together – as from this day forward you will be each others' home, comfort and sanctuary.

\_\_\_\_\_, will you embrace/take \_\_\_\_\_ as your wife/husband; As your companion and best friend for life? Will you treat her/him with love and devotion, honor and respect? Will you stand by her/him in the triumphs and tragedies of life, as a faithful and caring wife/husband? If so, say, "I will."

## *Selection #8*

\_\_\_\_\_, will you love \_\_\_\_\_ when you are together and when you are apart; when life is peaceful and when it is disordered; when you are proud of her/him and when you are disappointed in her/him; in times of leisure and in times of work; will you honor her/his goals and dreams and help her/him fulfill them? If so, say, "I will."

## *Selection #9*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, of all the people you know, you have chosen one another as life partners. Are you ready to be married? If so, say, "we are."

## *Selection #10*

Do you (1) take (2) to be your husband/wife – to live together after God’s ordinance – in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honor and keep him/her, in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, in sadness and in joy, to cherish and continually bestow upon him your heart’s deepest devotion, forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him/her as long as you both shall live? If so, say, “I will.”

*Selection #11*

From this day onward, I choose you, \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wife/husband, my best friend and my only love.

To live together, play together and laugh together;

To work by your side and dream in your arms;

To fill your heart and feed your soul;

To always seek out the best in you;

Always loving you with all my heart, until the end of our forever.

\_\_\_\_\_, with these words spoken, and all those as yet unspoken, do you wish to marry \_\_\_\_\_ and join your life with his/hers? Say, “I do!”

# Parent's Consent

## *Selection #1*

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

## *Selection #2*

Who gives this man and woman to be married to each other?

## *Selection #3*

Our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us about marriage when he said in the Book of Mark, Chapter 10, "For from the very first He made man and woman to be joined together permanently in marriage; therefore a man is to leave his father and mother, and he and his wife are united so that they are no longer two, but one." Within the spirit of this scripture, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ would like to receive the blessing of their parents on this holy union.

Parents please rise. Do you give your blessing to this man and woman to be married to each other?  
Parents say, "We do."

## *Selection#4*

Being assured that your love and your choice of each other as lifelong companions is in God's will and that you have your families' blessings, I now ask: Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

## *Selection #5*

This wedding is also a celebration of family. It is the blending of two families that have been separate up to this moment, but united from this day forward – blending their different traditions, strengthening the family tree. To honor this uniting of the families, ((1) and (2)) wish to ask their parent's blessing.

### *(To (1) Mom and Dad)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ do you offer this couple your goodwill? Do you welcome (groom) as a member of your family and give him your love and affection? PARENTS SAY: We do.

### *(To (2) Mom and Dad)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, do you offer this couple your goodwill? Do you welcome (bride) as a member of your family and give her your love and affection? PARENTS SAY: We do.

# A Reading from Scripture

## **Thessalonians 3:13, Ephesians 3:18**

Lord, cause us to increase and abound in love for one another. A love whose breadth and length and height and depth can not be comprehended. Let our love reflect the unity of our hearts and souls which we celebrate today.

## **Genesis 2:18-24**

The Lord God said: "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

## **A Reading From The Book Of Sirach**

Happy the Husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days;  
A worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life.  
A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the Lord;  
Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face.  
A gracious wife delights her husband; her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;  
A gift from the Lord is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.  
Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste person.  
Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

## **A VIRTUOUS WIFE proverbs 31:10**

- 10) Who[a] can find a virtuous[b] wife?  
For her worth is far above rubies.
- 11) The heart of her husband safely trusts her;  
So he will have no lack of gain.
- 12) She does him good and not evil  
All the days of her life.
- 20) She extends her hand to the poor,  
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.
- 25) Strength and honor are her clothing;  
She shall rejoice in time to come.
- 26) She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
And on her tongue is the law of kindness.

Ephesians 5:

*King James*

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

*Living Bible*

Honor Christ by submitting to each other. You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord. For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of his body the church. (He gave his very life to take care of it and be its Savior!) So you wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the church obeys Christ.

And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the church when he died for her. That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as parts of themselves. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favor and loving himself when he loves

his wife! (That the husband and wife are one body is proved by the Scripture which says, "A man must leave his father and mother when he marries, so that he can be perfectly joined to his wife, and the two shall be one.") So again I say, a man must love his wife as a part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband - obeying, praising and honoring him.

#### *Lamsa*

Submit yourselves one to another in the love of Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to our Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it. So should men love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own body, but nourishes it and cherishes it, even as Christ does for His church. For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Nevertheless, let every one of you so love his wife as himself, and the wife see that she reverences her husband.

#### *Modern English*

You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the Lord, for the husband is the "head" of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the Church and savior of his body. The willing subjection of the Church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands. But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the Church, when He sacrificed Himself for her. Men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their own bodies. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of his love for himself to enfold her. Nobody ever hates or neglects his own body; he feeds it and looks after it. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, And shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh.

In practice what I have said amounts to this: let every one of you who is a husband love his wife as he loves himself, and let the wife reverence her husband.

#### *New American Standard Bible*

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her: that He might sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water, with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

#### **I Corinthians 7: 3-4**

##### *King James*

Let the Husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

##### *Modern English*

The husband should give his wife what is due to her as his wife, and the wife should be as fair to her husband. The wife has no longer full rights over her own person, but shares them with her husband. In the same way the husband shares his personal rights with his wife.

##### *Living Bible*

The man should give his wife all that is her right as a married woman, and the wife should do the same for her husband: for a girl who marries no longer has full right to her own body, for her husband then has his rights to it, too; and in the same way the husband no longer has full right to his own body, for it belongs also to his wife.

### *Lamsa*

Let the husband give to his wife the love which he owes her; and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife has no authority over her own body, but her husband; and likewise also the husband has no authority over his own body, but his wife.

### *Jewish New Testament*

The husband should give his wife what she is entitled to in the marriage relationship, and the wife should do the same for her husband.

The wife is not in charge of her own body, but her husband is; likewise, the husband is not in charge of his own body, but his wife is.

### **I Corinthians 13:**

#### *King James*

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love in my heart, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love in my heart, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love in my heart, I gain nothing.

Love is long-suffering and kind; love does not envy;  
Love does not make a vain display of itself, and does not boast,  
Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked,  
Thinks no evil; rejoices not over iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;  
Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;  
Whether there be tongues, they shall cease;  
Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.  
For we know in part and we prophesy in part.  
But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child;  
But when I became an adult, I put away childish things.

And now abide faith, hope & love; but the greatest of these is love.

#### *Phillips Modern English*

If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal. If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing.

This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience - it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails.

Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.

For if there are prophecies they will be fulfilled and done with, if there are "tongues" the need for them will disappear, if there is knowledge it will be swallowed up in truth. For our knowledge is always incomplete and our prophecy is always incomplete.

When I was a little child I talked and felt and thought like a little child. Now that I am an adult my childish speech and feeling and thought have no further significance for me.

In this life we have three great lasting qualities - faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love.

#### *Living Bible*

If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages, without learning them, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making noises. If I had the gift of prophecy and knew all about what is going to happen in the future, knew everything about *everything*, but didn't love others, what good would it do? Even if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, I would still be worth nothing at all without love. If I gave everything I have to poor people, and if I were burned alive for preaching the Gospel but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatever.

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever. Someday prophecy, and speaking in unknown languages, and special knowledge - these gifts will disappear.

It's like this: when I was a child I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child does. But when I became a man my thoughts grew far beyond those of my childhood, and now I have put away the childish things. There are three things that remain - faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love.

#### *New American Standard Bible*

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous: love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly: it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth: bears all things, believes all things hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

But now abide faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love.

#### *Selection #5*

A reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Set your mind on the higher gifts. And now, I am going to put before you the best way of all. Though I command languages both human and angelic - if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains - if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned - if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is always patient and kind; Love is never jealous; Love is not boastful or conceited, It is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, It does not take offense or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; And if knowledge, it will be done away with. For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, see things as a child does and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways. Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known. As it is, these remain: faith, hope, and love, The three of them; And the greatest of them is love.

#### *Selection #6*

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I am nothing.



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, 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. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease. Where there are tongues, they shall be stilled; Where there is knowledge, it shall pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

And now these three remain; faith, hope & love. But the greatest of these is love.

#### *Selection #7*

Love is patient; love is kind.  
Love is not envious or boastful  
or arrogant or rude.  
It does not insist on its own way;  
it is not irritable or resentful;  
it does not rejoice in wrong doing,  
but rejoices in truth.  
Love bears all things,  
believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things  
And now faith, hope, and love abide,  
and the greatest of these is love.

#### **Hosea 2:19**

And I will betroth you unto me forever;  
I will betroth you unto me in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.  
I will betroth you unto me in faithfulness...

#### **Song of Songs 8:6**

Wear me as a seal upon your heart  
As a seal upon your arm;  
For love is infinitely strong...  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
No flood can sweep it away.

#### **Song of Songs 4:9**

You have captured my heart,  
My own, my bride,  
You have captured my heart  
With one glance of your eyes...

#### **Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12:**

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

#### *New King James Version*

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a three fold cord is not quickly broken.

#### *King James Version*

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

*Lamsa*

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls; for there is none to lift him up. Again, if two sleep together, they will be warm; but how can one be warm alone? And if one is too strong for him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

*The Living Bible*

Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one, for the results can be much better. If one falls, the other pulls him up; but if a man falls when he is alone, he's in trouble.

Also, on a cold night, two under the same blanket gain warmth from each other, but how can one be warm alone? And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple braided cord is not easily broken.

**Colossians 3:12-17**

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved; compassion, kindness, humility, and patience.

And above all these virtues put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let peace reign in your hearts... And be thankful.

Let love dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom...

Sing gratefully to God from your hearts.

And whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of love.

**Ruth 1: 16 & 17**

*New King James Version*

Entreat me not to leave you

Or to turn back from following after you;

For wherever you go, I will go;

And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;

Your people shall be my people,

And your God, my God.

Where you die, I will die,

And there will I be buried

The Lord do so to me, and more also,

If anything but death parts you and me.

*Lamsa*

Where you go, I will go; and where you dwell, I will dwell; your people shall be my people, and your God my God: Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried; may the Lord do so to me, and more also, if even death can separate me from you.

*Living Bible*

Don't make me leave you, for I want to go wherever you go, and to live wherever you live, your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. I want to die where you die, and be buried there.

May the Lord do terrible things to me if I allow anything but death to separate us.

*King James Version*

Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, If ought but death part thee and me.

**Matthew 19:4-6**

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

# Preparation for the Vows

## *Selection #1*

Marriage is not a legal document. No pastor or priest or justice of the peace can create a marriage because a marriage, truly, is nothing except the promises made and kept by two individuals. Today \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ stand before us to publicly declare their love and to share with us their marriage promises.

## *Selection #2*

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.

## *Selection #3*

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 amazing experiences on mountaintops, 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.

## *Selection #4*

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.

## *Selection #5*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, 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.

## *Selection #6*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, 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.

# Vows

## *Selection #1:*

I \_\_\_\_\_, take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

## *Selection #2*

In the Name of God, I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

## *Selection #3*

\_\_\_\_\_, you are consecrated to me now as my wife/husband this day forward, to love and to cherish, to have and to hold, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in sadness and in joy, to share together as long as we both shall love.

## *Selection #4*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ - choose you, \_\_\_\_\_ - above all others - to share my life. I pledge to share my life openly with you - to speak the truth in love - and to accept your truth - as you share with me. I will be your companion and friend in life. I will give you respect - understanding - and the freedom to grow - in your learning and fulfillment.

I promise to offer you freely from my heart,  
my trust,  
my devotion,  
my tenderness,  
and my love.

## *Selection #5*

I \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_, treasure of my heart and dearest companion, to be my wife/husband, lover and friend, to journey through life with, beyond the road's end. I will love, comfort and honor you, through good times and bad, all of my days.

## *Selection #6*

I \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_ to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and cherish; and I promise to be faithful to you until we are parted by death.

## *Selection #7*

I take you \_\_\_\_\_ this day as my husband/wife, and I promise to walk by your side forever, as your best friend, your lover, and your soul mate.

## *Selection #8*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I chose to marry you this day and I want to grow old with you. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life. This is my solemn vow.

## *Selection #9*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take you \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wife/husband  
I will cherish our friendship/  
And love you today, tomorrow and forever/  
I will trust you and honor you/  
I will love you faithfully/  
through the best and the worst/  
What may come I will always be there/  
I come into this union/  
Letting go of my deepest fears/  
And embracing all my faith/  
And if I doubt/  
I will remember this time/  
And why we came together this day/

As I have given you my hands to hold/  
So I give you my life to keep

*Selection #10*

As I have come of my own free will, I promise to love and respect you, laugh with you, share my life openly and honestly with you, support you in times of sadness, and share your joy in times of triumph. I also promise to honor and cherish you all the days of our lives.

*Selection #11*

I, -----, take you, -----, to be my wedded husband/wife. I will love you today, tomorrow, and forever. I promise to trust you, laugh with you, and share my life openly and honestly with you. I will support you in times of sadness, and share your joy in times of triumph. I promise to love, comfort, and honor you all the days of my life.

*Selection #12*

\_\_\_\_\_, I promise to always love you, treasure you, and adore you. I will celebrate the joys of life with you and I will offer you courage and strength through all endeavors. I promise to do everything in my power to keep our love as vibrant as it is today. For as long as I shall live, I will be honored to be your wife/husband.

*Selection #13*

\_\_\_\_\_, you are my companion in life and my one true love. I will treasure our friendship and love you today, tomorrow, and forever. I will trust and honor you, I will laugh and cry with you. With unfailing love I will stand by you through the best and the worst, through the difficult and the easy. As I have given you my hand to hold, so I give you my life to keep.

*Selection #14*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, to love and to cherish you, to honor and to comfort you, to stand by you in sorrow or in joy, in hardship or in ease, to be both your lover and your closest friend.

*Selection #15*

These vows come from my heart. I pledge to love you forever; to be open, honest, and faithful to you. I promise to be your best friend – to laugh, cry, sing and dance with you; to nurture your spiritual growth and to support your dreams; to allow you freedom and room for personal growth to become the person you are yet to be. I promise to help create a home filled with reverence for learning, loving, generosity, and serenity; to bring gentleness to the relationship. I promise to listen – and honor your words and feelings; to work through the conflicts and to resolve our problems. I promise to comfort and to challenge you and to nurture your sexual being and to be your romantic lover.

*Selection #16*

I love you.

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.

*Selection #17*

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

#### *Selection #18*

I take you as my partner, my friend and my love.

My hopes and dreams will now be intermingled with yours.

I will seek to balance my needs with those of our community and family.

I will openly draw from our combined experience and feelings in our search for truth and meaning.

I will strive for harmony through compromise and understanding.

I will be forgiving, but not complacent.

From this day forward, I take shared responsibility for our marriage, family, community and myself, regardless of our successes or failures.

I promise to be faithful and true to you in mind, body, and spirit; to cherish you and respect you; and to be a source of comfort and encouragement, free and bound by our love, as long as we shall live.

#### *Selection #19*

I marry you because everything reminds me of you.

I marry you because I like you best.

I marry you because in holding you I am held.

I marry you because I enjoy you.

I marry you because we can grow, not together, but very nearby.

I marry you because you are my favorite person to goof off with.

I marry you because when you smile, I forget where I am, and it takes me longer each time to remember again.

I marry you because you are strong enough to be weak.

I marry you because I need to be cared for but, more importantly, I need to care.

I marry you because you make me laugh heartily and often, reminding me not to take myself or my life overly serious.

I marry you because you know me better than I know myself.

# Blessing of the Hands:

Please hold hands, palms up, so that you may see the gift they are to you.

THESE are the hands of your best friend and full of love, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as he promises to love you all the days of his life!

THESE are the hands that will work along side yours as you build your future together, as you laugh and cry, as you share your innermost secrets and dreams.

THESE are the hands that will massage tension from your neck and shoulders in the evenings after you both had a long hard day.

THESE are the hands that will comfort you in illness, and help you to hold you up in times of struggle.

THESE are the hands that will lift your chin as they raise your face to look into his eyes. Eyes that are filled completely with his overwhelming love for you!

Please hold hands palms up, where you may see the gift that they are to you.

THESE are the hands of your best friend, loving, caring that are holding yours on your wedding day, as she pledges her love and commitment to you all the days of her life.

THESE are the hands that will welcome you home after a very long day.

THESE are the hands that will wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of Joy!

THESE are the hands that will hold you tight when you struggle through difficult times.

THESE are the hands that will comfort you when you are sick and console you when you are grieving

THESE are the hands that will love you and cherish you throughout the years for a lifetime of happiness.

THESE are the hands that will give you support knowing that together as a team everything you wish for can be realized.

May your hands always be held by one another.

May they have the strength to hold on during the storms of stress and the darkness of disillusionment. Keep them tender and gentle as they nurture each other in wondrous love.

May you both see your four hands as healer, protector, shelter and guide, for a lifetime.

**Bride and Groom Love Poem** (They face each other, holding hands)

With your hand in mine

We walk together,

our love so strong

yet so tender and free.

Our hearts beat as one and

our thoughts are beautiful

for as my eyes meet yours

there is no doubt

our lives have touched

and throughout all eternity

the beauty shall be there

as sure as the wind

as sure as we care

as sure as we love

# Readings

## **Shakespeare Sonnet CXVI**

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.

## **Excerpt from the I Ching**

But when two people are as one  
In their innermost hearts,  
They shatter even the strength  
Of iron or of bronze.  
And when two people understand each other  
In their innermost hearts,  
Their words are sweet and strong  
Like the fragrance of orchids.

## **Prophet - Kahlil Gibran**

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.  
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.  
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.  
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,  
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

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 one cup.  
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.  
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,  
Even as the strings of a 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.

## **Khalil Gibran**

Then Almitra spoke again and said,  
And what of Marriage, Master?  
And he answered saying:  
You were born together,  
and together you shall be forevermore.  
You shall be together when  
the white wings of death scatter your days.  
Ay, you shall be together even in  
the silent memory of God.  
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,  
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For the pillars of the temple stand apart,  
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

### **A Little Something**

Love is the greatest gift that we can offer to one another. That is what makes marriage so very special, and a cause for joy and celebration for all of us who have come here today to share in this event. It is my personal hope and prayer that those of you who have already taken the vows of marriage will witness the love of these two people, and as you listen to them share their vows, perhaps it will strengthen for you the memory of your happy day, and remind you of the meaning of the vows you yourselves once took. Perhaps it will even strengthen just a little bit the bond of love that has been growing between you, and if any of this should happen, it would certainly be the greatest gift that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ could offer all of us on their wedding day.

### ***Rilke's letter to a young poet #7***

It is also good to love: because love is difficult. For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation. That is why young people, who are beginners in everything, are not yet capable of love: it is something they must learn. With their whole being, with all their forces, gathered around their solitary, anxious, upward-beating heart, they must learn to love. But learning-time is always a long, secluded time, and therefore loving, for a long time ahead and far on into life, is: solitude, a heightened and deepened kind of aloneness for the person who loves. Loving does not at first mean merging, surrendering, and uniting with another person (for what would a union be of two people who are unclarified, unfinished and still incoherent?) It is a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself, to become world, to become world in himself for the sake of another person; it is a great, demanding claim on him. Something that chooses him and calls him to vast distances. Only in this sense, as the task of working on themselves ("to hearken and to hammer day and night"), may young people use the love that is given to them. Merging and surrendering and every kind of communion is not for them (who must still, for a long, long time, save and gather themselves); it is the ultimate, is perhaps that for which human lives are as yet barely large enough.

### **True Love (Author Unknown)**

True love is a sacred flame that burns eternally,  
And none can dim its special glow or change its destiny  
True love speaks in tender tones and hears with gentle ear,  
True love gives with open heart and true love conquers fear.  
True love makes no harsh demands it neither rules nor binds.  
True love holds with gentle hands the hearts that it entwines.

### **Swami Omkaranada**

Love has wisdom that can solve every problem. It possesses the great patience which waits until, drop by drop, an ocean is formed. Love is royal in dignity, brave in spirit, unbreakable in substance, and divine in nature. It does not complain, does not judge. It transforms everything that it touches. It rules everything to which it presents its own Light. It understands and yields only to conquer fully. Love has numberless resources and inexhaustible energies.

### **Diane Ackerman, A History of Love**

Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful it has altered the flow of history,

calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable?...Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots stretching deep into dark and mysterious days...

The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving and being loved.

### **Why Marriage? (Author Unknown)**

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 unlikable,  
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.

### **The Key to Love**

The key to love is understanding ...  
The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,  
but those unspoken gestures,  
the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness ....  
to accept each others faults and pardon mistakes,  
without forgetting, but with remembering  
what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing ...  
Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;  
both conquering problems, forever searching for ways  
to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving ...  
without thought of return,  
but with the hope of just a simple smile,  
and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect ...  
realizing that you are two separate people, with different ideas; that you don't belong to each other,  
that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all ...  
It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients  
that will take you to its threshold;  
it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work ... but the rewards are more than worth the  
effort ...  
and that is the key to love.

**Anon**

### **Oh, My Love!**

Oh my love!  
How very like a rose you are,  
My regal, fragrant, floral star;  
I truly love you, love you, love!

Oh my love!  
When in the sun's reflecting hues  
You bask, no task may I refuse  
Because I love you, love you, love!

Oh my love!  
Should I, by chance, be severed free  
Of senses made to smell and see,  
I'd feel your nearness next to me  
As one hand feels another darkly there  
And presses to another as in prayer;  
I'd know that feel of kinship's care  
As I now know this heart of mine  
Shall ever love you, love!

Oh my love!  
Should that axe of ages activate  
To prematurely untogether all,  
All aspirations must, like dreams, abate  
Until horns of Michael call;  
Yet, when two lives are merged, as we,  
And each becomes the other's me,  
Then, servitude's the highest free  
And, in oneness, we shall be  
Together everlasting!  
Such a trite catastrophe  
Could never mar our unity  
Because my spirit loves the love of loving you!

### **Fenton Johnson**

"But in love  
something miraculous happens.  
In loving someone,  
we give them  
an ideal against which  
to measure themselves.  
Living in the presence  
of that ideal,  
the beloved strives to fulfill  
the lover's expectations.  
In this way,  
Love makes of us  
the bravest and best persons  
that we are capable of being."

### **Jean Marie Rilke**

Understand, I'll slip quietly  
Away from the noisy crowd  
When I see the pale  
Stars rising, blooming over the oaks  
I'll pursue solitary pathways  
Through the pale twilight meadows  
With only this one dream,

You come too.

### **Shakespeare**

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 writ, nor no man ever loved.

### **e.e. cummings**

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)  
I am never without it (anywhere I go you go, my dear;  
and whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling)  
I fear no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet)  
I want no world (for beautiful you are my world, my rue)  
And it's you are whatever a moon has always meant  
And whatever a sun will always sing is you

Here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;  
which grows higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)  
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart  
I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)

### **e.e. cummings**

somewhere I have never traveled, gladly beyond  
any experience, your eyes have their silence:  
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me, or which I cannot  
touch because they are too near  
your slightest look easily will unclose me  
though I have closed myself as fingers,  
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens  
(touching skillfully, mysteriously) her first rose  
or if your wish be to close me, I and  
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending;  
nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals  
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture compels me with the  
colour of its countries, rendering death and forever with each breathing

(I do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens; only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands.

### **Eternity Of Your Love** by Millette Addison

Your love is... an ocean,  
Where sand meets the sea,  
Waves of love rolling over me,

Your love comes to me,  
As the tide comes to the shore,  
Wanting and needing to embrace me more,

Your love is... the moon,  
Shining across the shimmering sea,  
Deep, wide, strong, and calm.  
Always there to carry me.

Your love is... my shelter,  
My compass, my true north,  
Where ever I go, your love is guiding me forth,

Your love is... the fresh ocean breeze,  
Gently sweeping across my face,  
Touching me from place to place,

Your love is...  
The salty air I smell,  
Clearing my thoughts and thinking,

Your love is...  
The life preserver that keeps me from sinking,

When I go there to the sea,  
I am not alone, for your love is with me,

I feel you all around,  
The beauty, the wind, the mystery,

Your love engulfs me,  
Takes my breath away,  
Holds me in wind's arms,

When I close my eyes,  
Dancing memories of your charms,  
Never escape my deepest memory,

So if ever our souls part to say goodbye,  
Meet me there, where the sea meets the sky,

Your love will forever be with me,  
Where the sands touch the sea,

Our love lives on,  
Our love flows back out into all eternity.

### **What is REAL?**

"What is REAL?" asked the rabbit one day, when they were laying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you

get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real, you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

*Love Takes time. It needs a history*

of giving and receiving, laughing and crying ...

Love never promises instant gratification,  
only ultimate fulfillment.

Love means believing in someone, in something.

It supposes a willingness to struggle,  
to work, to suffer, and to rejoice.

Satisfaction and ultimate fulfillment are  
by-products of dedicated love. They  
belong to those who can reach  
beyond themselves; to whom giving  
is more important than receiving.

Love is doing everything you can to help  
others build whatever dreams they have.

Love involves much careful and active  
listening. It is doing whatever needs to  
be done, and saying whatever will promote  
the other's happiness, security, and  
well-being. Sometimes, love hurts.

Love is a constant journey to what others  
need. It must be attentive, caring, and open,  
both to what others say and to what  
others cannot say ...

Love says no with empathy and great compassion.

Love is firm, but when needed it must be tender.

When others have tried and failed, love is  
the hand in yours in your moments of  
discouragement and disappointment.

Love is reliable.

Love is a choice and commitment to others'  
true and lasting happiness. It is dedicated  
to growth and fulfillment. Love is  
not selfish.

Love sometimes fails for lack of wisdom  
or abundance of weakness, but it forgives,  
knowing the intentions are good.

Love does not attach conditions ... Genuine  
love is always a free gift.

Love realizes and accepts that there will be  
disagreements and disturbing emotions ...  
There may be times when miles lie between,  
but love is a commitment. It believes,  
and endures all things.

Love encourages freedom of self. Love shares  
positive and negative reactions to warm  
and cold feelings.

Love, intimate love, will never reject others.  
It is the first to encourage and the last  
to condemn.

Love is a commitment to growth, happiness  
and fulfillment of one another.

### **"Love Is A Great Thing" by Thomas à Kempis**

Love is a great thing; a great and thorough good.

By itself it makes that is heavy light; and it bears evenly all that is uneven.

It carries a burden which is no burden; it will not be kept back by anything low and mean

It desires to be free from all worldly affections, and not to be entangled by any outward prosperity, or by any adversity subdued.

Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things, and warrants them to take effect, where he who does not love would faint and lie down.

Though weary, it is not tired; though pressed it is not straitened  
Though alarmed, it is not confounded; but as a living flame it forces itself upwards and securely passes through all.

Love is active and sincere, courageous, patient, faithful, prudent and strong.

### ***Adaptation of Plato's Symposium***

Love is our best friend, our helper, and the healer of the ills that cause unhappiness.

To understand the power of Love, we must understand that our original human nature was not like it is now, but different. Astrology has it that human beings each had two sets of arms, two sets of legs, and two faces looking in opposite directions. Man and a woman were once as one, called the children of the Moon.

The Gods divided these humans in half creating two parts of each desiring their other half. When they came together, they threw their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one. So ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of humankind.

Each of us when separated, having one side only, is but the indenture of a person, and we are always looking for our other half. Men and women are now drawn to one another longing to be together as they once were children of the Moon. And when we meet our other half, we are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and would not be out of the other's sight even for a moment. We pass our whole lives together, desiring that we should be melted into one, to spend our lives as one person instead of two, and so that after our death there will be one departed soul instead of two; this is the very expression of our ancient need and desire for what is called Love.

## **LOVE** **By: Barb Upham**

*Love Takes time. It needs a history*

of giving and receiving, laughing and crying ...

Love never promises instant gratification,  
only ultimate fulfillment.

Love means believing in someone, in something.

It supposes a willingness to struggle,  
to work, to suffer, and to rejoice.

Satisfaction and ultimate fulfillment are  
by-products of dedicated love. They  
belong to those who can reach  
beyond themselves; to whom giving  
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Love is doing everything you can to help  
others build whatever dreams they have.

Love involves much careful and active  
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Love is a constant journey to what others  
need. It must be attentive, caring, and open,  
both to what others say and to what

others cannot say ...  
Love says no with empathy and great compassion.  
Love is firm, but when needed it must be tender.  
When others have tried and failed, love is  
the hand in yours in your moments of  
discouragement and disappointment.  
Love is reliable.  
Love is a choice and commitment to others'  
true and lasting happiness. It is dedicated  
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not selfish.  
Love sometimes fails for lack of wisdom  
or abundance of weakness, but it forgives,  
knowing the intentions are good.  
Love does not attach conditions ... Genuine  
love is always a free gift.  
Love realizes and accepts that there will be  
disagreements and disturbing emotions ...  
There may be times when miles lie between,  
but love is a commitment. It believes,  
and endures all things.  
Love encourages freedom of self. Love shares  
positive and negative reactions to warm  
and cold feelings.  
Love, intimate love, will never reject others.  
It is the first to encourage and the last  
to condemn.  
Love is a commitment to growth, happiness  
and fulfillment of one another.

### **Reading - Ann Landers**

Love is friendship that has caught fire. It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses. Love is content with the present. It hopes for the future and it doesn't brood over the past. It's the day-in and day-out chronicle of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories, and working toward common goals. If you have love in your life it can make up for a great many things that are missing. If you don't have love in your life no matter what else there is it's not enough.

### **Reading - THE ART OF MARRIAGE – Wilferd Arlan Peterson**

Happiness in marriage isn't something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. It is never being too old to hold hands. Saying I love you once a day and not taking one another for granted. It is a courtship that goes beyond the honeymoon and continues through the years. It is forming a circle of love that encompasses the whole family. It is doing kind things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice but in the spirit of joy. It is not looking for perfection in one another but cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor. It is being close and allowing each other room to grow. It is not only marrying the right partner but also *being* the right partner.

#### *Version 2*

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 never 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 expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.  
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 giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.  
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.  
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.  
It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.  
It is not only marrying the right partner,  
It is being the right partner.

### **Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle Of Its Love – Edmund O’Neill**

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional 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 others’ best friend, confidant, love, teacher, listener, and critic. And 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 a love that is deeper than life. When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto 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 each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

### **Swedish Proverb**

A life without love is like a year without summer.

### **Aristotle**

Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies.

### **Dorothy L. Sayers**

I love you – I am at rest with you – I have come home.

### **Victor Hugo**

What a grand thing, to be loved! What a grander thing still, to love!

### **Mihri Hatun, Turkish poet**

At one glance I love you with a thousand hearts.

### **Gabriela Mistral, Chilean Poet**

He kissed me and now I am someone else.

### **Alice Walker**

I have learned not to worry about love; but to honor its coming with all my heart.

“God, the best maker of all marriages, combine your hearts in one.” **Shakespeare**

“There is nothing nobler or more admirable than when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife, confounding their enemies and delighting their friends.” **Homer**

“The first bond of society is marriage.” **Cicero**

“Love begins with the desire for union.” **Plato**

“The only thing that can hallow marriage is love, and the only genuine marriage is that which is hallowed by love.” **Leo Tolstoy**

“A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person.” **Germaine Greer**

“Marriage must exemplify friendship’s highest ideal.” **Margaret Sanger**

“Marriage is a partnership in which each inspires the other, and brings fruition to both.” **Millicent Carey McIntosh**

“A good marriage is based on the talent for friendship.” **Friedrich Nietzsche**

“Of love that says  
Not mine and thine,  
But ours, for ours  
Is thine and mine.” **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

“You see, when friends become lovers and then husbands and wives, well, two is definitely better than one, to themselves and to everyone they touch.” **Lee Baldwin**

“Teacher, tender comrade, wife,  
A fellow-farer true through life.” **Robert Louis Stevenson**

“All I know for sure from seven years of marriage so far...is this: a good marriage is worth more than rubies, flowers, flattery and French perfume; a true, loving husband or wife is a passionate gift from life.” **Anna Maria Dell’oso**

“You are the only being whom I can love absolutely with my complete self, with my flesh and mind and heart. You are my mate, my perfect partner, and I am yours.” **Iris Murdoch**

“The highest happiness on earth is marriage.” **William Lyon Phelps**

“We should marry to please ourselves, not other people.” **Isaac Bickerstaffe**

“Married couples who love each other tell each other a thousand things without talking.” **Chinese Proverb**

“There is no such cozy combination as man and wife.” **Menander**

“Not caged, my bird, my shy, sweet bird,  
But nested—nested!” **Hubberton Lulham**

“A marriage between mature people is not an escape but a commitment shared by two people that becomes a part of their commitment to themselves and society.” **Betty Friedman**

“Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” **Genesis 2:23**

“The bridal wind is blowing  
For love is at his noon;  
And soon will your true love be with you,  
Soon, O soon.” **James Joyce**

“A wedding, a church wedding, it’s what every girl dreams of.” **Joan Bennett**

“You have become mine forever.  
Yes, we have become partners.  
I have become yours.” **Hindu Marriage Poem**

“Nothing happens without a cause. The union of this man and woman has not come about accidentally but is the foreordained result of many past lives. This tie can therefore not be broken or dissolved.” **Buddhist Marriage Homily**

“To keep your marriage brimming, with love in the wedding cup, whenever you’re wrong, admit it;

whenever you're right, shut up." **Ogden Nash**

"Rituals are important. Nowadays it's not hip to be married. I'm not interested in being hip." **John Lennon**

"Marriage is the longing for the deep, deep peace of the double bed after the hurly-burly of the chaise-longue." **Mrs. Patrick Campbell**

"Marriage is a sea of dreams." **Frank Crane**

"A happy marriage is a new beginning of life, a new starting point for happiness and usefulness." **A.P. Stanley**

"Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone,  
I here, thou there, yet both but one." **Anne Bradstreet**

"Any marriage, happy or unhappy, is infinitely more interesting and significant than any romance, however passionate." **W.H. Auden**

"Many marriages would be better if the husband and wife clearly understood they are on the same side." **Zig Ziglar**

"The test of a happily married—and wise woman—is whether she can say, 'I love you' far oftener than she asks 'do you love me?'" **Dorothy Dayton**

"How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!  
How much better is thy love than wine!" **Song of Solomon 4:10**

"Marriage is more than four bare legs in a bed." **Hoshang N. Akhtar**

"Despite all protestations of men to the contrary, married life makes them happy." **Jessie Bernard**

"Marriage is that relationship between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence mutual, and the obligation reciprocal." **L.K. Anspacher**

"My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,  
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight!" **John Milton**

"Married love is woven into a pattern of living. It has in it the elements of understanding and of the passionate kindness of husband and wife toward each other." **Leland Foster Wood**

"Marriage is the most natural state of man, and the state in which you will find solid happiness." **Benjamin Franklin**

"Only choose in marriage a woman whom you would choose as a friend if she were a man." **Joseph Joubert**

"Already the second day since our marriage, his love and gentleness is beyond everything, and to kiss that dear soft cheek, to press my lips to his, is heavenly bliss. I feel a purer more unearthly feel than I ever did. Oh! was ever a woman so blessed as I am." **Queen Victoria of Great Britain**

"To such as you with such a master speed cannot be parted nor be swept away from one another once you are agreed that life is only life forevermore together wing to wing and oar to oar." **Robert Frost**

### **The Gift of Friendship....**

Friendship is a priceless gift  
That cannot be bought or sold  
But its value is far greater  
Than a mountain made of gold  
For gold is cold and lifeless

It can neither see nor hear,  
And in time of trouble  
It is powerless to cheer~  
It has no ears to listen,  
No heart to understand,  
It cannot bring you comfort,  
Or reach out a helping hand  
so, when you ask God for a gift  
Be thankful if He sends  
Not diamonds, pearls or riches  
But the love of real true friends.

### **Reading - SOUL MATES**

As Soul Mates the purpose of marriage goes beyond just creating a new life together...

- It evokes one's Intimate Soul, and stirs up the magic within that supplies a profound purpose for one's existence and fulfillment.
- Finding one's Soul Mate is to find someone to love completely, taking us into communion with a realm far beyond earthly life.
- More mysteriously, Soul Mates offer each other divine hope, an opportunity to enter, explore, and fulfill that that otherwise remains illusive fantasy.
- And ... marriage of Soul Mates is Holy, not only because it is a precious and revered way of joining human lives, but because it is a form of religion in itself - a special way in which spirituality pours into both lives, and beyond, into the families of each.

So you see, as Soul Mates, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are highly aware of the influences they have over their extended families, their good friends and the responsibility of these relationships they take quite seriously.

### **Marriage Means Being In Love for the Rest of Your Life – (Chris Ardis)**

Marriage is love walking hand in hand together. It's laughing with each other about the little things, and learning to discuss big things with care and tenderness. In marriage it is trusting each other when you're apart. It's getting over disappointments and hurts, and knowing that these are present in all relationships. It's the realization that there is no one else in this world that you'd rather be with than the one you're married to. It's thinking of new things to do together; It's growing old together. Marriage is being in love for the rest of your life.

### **I Dreamed of a Wedding – Author Unknown**

I dreamed of a wedding of elaborate elegance...  
A church filled with flowers, friends and beautiful music...  
I asked him what kind of a wedding he wished for...  
He said one that would make me his wife.

### **From A Natural History Of Love**

**By Diane Ackerman**

Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful. It has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable? Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots spreading into deep and mysterious days. The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving, and being loved.

### **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 an impossibility. 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.

### **Sonnet XLIII**

#### **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 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 but love thee better after death.

#### **The Promise by Heather Berry**

Within this blessed union of souls  
Where two hearts intertwine to become one,  
There lies a promise.  
Perfectly born, divinely created, and intimately shared,  
It is a place where the hope and majesty of beginnings reside.  
Where all things are made possible  
By the astounding love shared by two spirits.

As you hold each other's hands in this promise,  
And eagerly look to the future in each other's eyes,  
May your unconditional love and devotion  
Take you to places of which you've both only dreamed,  
Where you'll dwell for a lifetime of happiness  
Sheltered in the warmth of each other's arms.

#### **REAL LOVE by Daphne Rose Kingma**

For it is in loving, as well as in being loved, that we become most truly ourselves. No matter what we do, say, accomplish, or become, it is our capacity to love that ultimately defines us. In the end, nothing we do or say in this lifetime will matter as much as the way we have loved one another.

#### **ABUNDANCE AND DELIGHT - author unknown**

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, difficulties and fear assail your relationship - 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.

#### **CHERISH EVERY MOMENT by Leslie A. Neilson**

Today is the beginning of a dream.  
A day where two souls are woven together.  
Cherish every moment that life offers.  
And celebrate every small pleasure.

Express your love at every chance.

And allow it to unfold gracefully.  
Show your devotion and dedicate your lives  
to the enrichment of each other.

Strive always for honesty and integrity.  
Build upon your marriage daily.  
And seek to understand each other.  
But above all this...  
Draw upon the love you feel today  
and forever etch it in your hearts.

**IN MARRIAGE by Julia Escobar**

Cherish each other  
in big ways and in small ways,  
and never forget the magic  
of those three little words: "I love you".

In marriage, remember that  
it is the little things that make the difference...  
Don't forget the birthdays and the anniversaries.  
An occasional note means a lot.

Share each other's life - even the small details -  
for too often we forget  
that day-after-day becomes  
year-after-year, and then it's gone.

Give each other room to grow...  
We all need our time alone.

Keep strong your faith in each other;  
time has a funny way of testing us,  
and it's faith that gets us through.

Respect one another...  
This world could always use more of that.

Speak your mind honestly, openly,  
but with kindness,  
for angry words are scars that may never heal.

Trust each other;  
let your trust be your rock.

Most of all, each day...  
be sure to hold each other  
and fall in love all over again.

**The Perfect love, The Perfect friend – Renee Duvall**

Because you are my love... I know the joy that comes from feeling closer to someone than I've ever felt before.

Because you are my love... I know the passion of wanting to share everything I have, everything I am with you and only you.

Because you are my friend.... I know that I can count on you to hold my hand through the rough times and to be there to share the good times too.

Because you are my friend... I'll always have someone to make me smile just when I need it most, and to encourage me when I'm feeling confused or doubtful.

I know that I must be one of the luckiest people in the world to have someone like you.

The perfect love, the perfect friend.

**I Promise – Dorothy R. 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.

**Lau Tzu, "Transforming Power"**

Your love contains the power  
Of a thousand suns.  
It unfolds as naturally and effortlessly  
As does a flower,  
And graces the world with its blooming.  
Its beauty radiates a transforming energy  
That enlivens all who see it.  
Because of you, compassion and joy  
Are added to the world.  
That is why the stars sing together  
Because of your love.

**Chief Dan George**

Love is something you and I must have. We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it. We must have it because without it we become weak and faint. Without love our self-esteem weakens. Without it our courage fails. Without love we can no longer look out confidently at the world. We turn inward and begin to feed upon our own personalities, and little by little we destroy ourselves.  
With it we are creative. With it we march tirelessly. With it, and with it alone, we are able to sacrifice for others.

# Preparation for the Rings

*(Circle Reading - Black Elk, Oglala Sioux)*

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man (and of a woman) is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.

*Selection #2*

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.

*Selection #3*

What token of your devotion do you offer your beloved?

*Selection #4*

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

*Selection #5*

Now with these rings, symbolizing the continuous circle of unity and love with the marriage relationship, and ultimately symbolizing the unity and wholeness within the Self, \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ will finalize their vows.

*Selection #6*

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.

*Selection #7*

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.

*Selection #8*

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. Everyday 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.

*Selection #9*

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.

*Selection #10*

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.

*Selection #11*

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.

*Selection #12*

The ring is an ancient symbol, 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 as a couple.

As you place the ring on Megan's finger, please repeat after me:

"This ring is our symbol that you are my lover and you are my best friend in all times, in all places, and in all ways, forever."

As you place the ring on Joseph's finger, please repeat after me:

"This ring is our symbol that you are my lover and you are my best friend in all times, in all places, and in all ways, forever."

May these rings remind you that your love, like the sun, warms all that it touches, like the moon, brightens up the night, like the eye, is a gateway to your innermost soul. And your love, like the arms that embrace you, makes everything right with the world.

# Ring Exchange

## *Selection #1*

With this ring - I marry you - and join my life with yours. Accept this ring - as a sign of my love and faithfulness - for all the years to come.

## *Selection #2*

\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vows, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

## *Selection #3*

\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as the pledge of my love and as the symbol of our unity.

## *Selection #4*

With this ring, I thee wed.

## *Selection #5*

You are my life, my love, and with this ring - I marry you. I promise to be open and honest in our partnership, and I pledge myself to you from this day forward and for all eternity.

## *Selection #6*

With this ring, I pledge my constant and abiding love. I join my life with yours in loving kindness and compassion. I join my life with yours in faithfulness. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

## *Selection #7*

On this day...

I marry my best friend...

The one who shares my life, my love and my dreams.

\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring

As a symbol of my love and devotion

I offer you my heart, my hand, and my love

I join my life with yours

To cherish and to protect you as my husband/wife

With all that I am...

With all that I have...

I honor you as my husband/wife forevermore.

## *Selection #8*

Just as this circle is without end, my love for you is never-ending. With this ring, I take you to be my partner for life. I offer you my heart, my hand, and my love.

With all that I am...

With all that I have...

I will honor you as my husband/wife forevermore.

## *Selection #9*

I give this ring to you, my beloved, my friend, my wife/husband. Whenever I see this ring, I will remember the cherished bond we have created here tonight.

# Blessing Of Rings

May these rings henceforth be the chaste and changeless symbol of your evermore pure and unending affection.

## *Selection #1*

The exchange of rings is more than just a physical sign to show the world your union. They are a perfect circle, symbolizing a never-ending eternity. These rings are made from precious metals; natural elements were taken and painstakingly molded into precious tokens, purified by the heat of fires. They represent the wealth that resides inside each of you, the hot and dirty work required of marriage and the purity of your love for one another. They come from humble beginnings made by imperfect beings, and represent how the flames of passion can make something beautiful where there was once nothing at all.

## *Selection #2*

May these rings be blessed as the symbol of this affectionate unity. These two lives are now joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever they go, may they always return to one another in their togetherness. May these two find in each other the love for which all men and women yearn. May they grow in understanding and in compassion. May the home, which they establish together, be such a place of sanctuary that many will find there a friend. May these rings, on their fingers, symbolize the touch of the spirit of love in the heart.

## *Selection #3*

### Mother's Blessing of the Rings

"It is said that we learn how to give and receive love through the act of being loved. The first and strongest love we feel is that of our parents as the love and nurture us into adulthood and beyond. Throughout this ceremony (1) and (2)'s parents have been holding their rings for them as a sign of their blessing upon this marriage and a promise of their continued love and support. Will the Mothers of the Bride and Groom please bring the rings forward?

Mothers bring the rings forward and hold them out  
in the palm of their hand for the blessing

Let your hands below serve as a reminder of how (1) and (2) and their marriage are supported upon the earth by the love of family and friends well as blessed from above.

Holy Spirit, guardian of all that is seen and unseen,  
Bless these rings and this couple who shall wear them.

Keep them safe through adversity forever supported  
by your eternal blessing

Mothers kiss their child and return to their seat

A beautiful and appropriate tribute, that their last kiss as single people should come from the two women who gave them their first kiss and breath into this life, their mothers."

# Children

## *Selection #1*

With this marriage, these two families are joined.

(To the kids mainly)

- Each of you is now a resource into which, as family members, you may come to, throughout your life times, for direction, meaning, and love.
- Your Mom and Dad strive to provide not only the basic needs, but a nurturing and loving environment in which each of you find the confidence to reach the highest goals of your hearts, minds, and spirits.

This is part of their vision of what your family is.

Sons and Daughters:

Do you accept the responsibility of being an important part in the building of this family, and to forever contribute your best efforts to maintain the closeness and strength?

If so, say, "We do."

## *Selection #2*

This marriage joins together not just two individuals, but two families as well. The life that (bide) and (groom) and (name the children) have together will be that much richer for the unique character that each brings.

To celebrate their new family, (bride and groom) would like to present (children) with a symbol of their love.

## *Selection #3*

This wedding brings together not only two individuals, but two families as well. (Name of the children), you are a very important part of this celebration today and you will always be an important and central part of (name of stepparent)'s and you (father's, mother's, or parents') lives. This day is even more joyous for them because you are here.

## *Selection #4*

Often Marriage is viewed as the union of two individuals. In reality, however, marriage is much broader. As we give thanks to God for the love which brings \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ together, so, too, we recognize the merging of families taking place and the additional love and responsibility family and friends bring to this relationship.

The Unity of God's Family

We are, in fact, all members of one family, of God's family, a relationship emphasized in the Scriptures where it is written in Paul's letter to James: "And it was a happy day for God when we received our new lives, through the truth of God's word, and we become, as it were, the first children in God's new family."

Recognition of Children

As part of the family nature of God's creation we recognize \_\_\_\_\_ and the significant role he/she/they play(s) in this marriage today celebrated.

The love and hope which God sends to us through the gift of each child finds expression in the Gospel of Mark. "And they were bringing children to him, that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God'".

## *Selection #5*

Our children are gifts entrusted to us not as objects to be controlled but as human beings, each unique in their own personality, each separate in their own identity. Consider these words from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran:

"You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For they dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.”

### **Prayer For The Marriage and/or Family**

Creator God, you have made us in your own image, male and female, that together we may live as members of your one family.

As you surround us with never-ending love, strengthen us that we, too, might reflect your love, becoming ever supportive of one another in times of sorrow, forgiving of one another in times of anger.

We give thanks, O Lord, for the relationship here celebrated. In your presence we are humbled by the recognition that, today, we face a new future, one which love has unfolded and is unfolding before our very eyes. May we ever respect the sanctity of this gift.

As you have filled our cup with joy, may we share the strength our deepening love for one another. Amen.

### **Blessing for the Children**

“For one to love another – that is perhaps the hardest of all our tasks, the ultimate test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation... (Love) consists of this – that (we) protect and touch and greet each other.” *Rainer Marie Rilke (adapted)*

(Couple may kiss and then embrace children.)

Go forth bound together by the love of God. Go forth with hope and joy and a heart full of dreams, knowing that God is always with you. Amen.

### **A Force for Families**

The family unit is two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have a commitment to one another over time. The family is that climate that one ‘comes home to’ and it is this network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legal ties, adoption or marriage.

### **Family**

*I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich*

When you look at your life, the greatest happinesses are family happinesses

Family quarrels have a total bitterness unmatched by others. Yet it sometimes happens that they also have a kind of *tang*, a pleasantness beneath the unpleasantness, based on the tacit understanding that this is not for keeps; that any limb you climb out on will still be there later for you to climb back

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them

The family - that dear octopus from whose tentacles we never quite escape, nor, in our inmost hearts, ever quite wish to

Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present, and future

Other things may change us, but we start and end with the family

# Wine Ceremony

## Wine Blending Ceremony:

Officiant will motion to Travis and Chelsea to move to Wine Table

Travis and Chelsea have grown fond of sharing the occasional well-crafted beverage over the years so what better way to continue the celebration than with a drink! They have chosen wine as it is the perfect symbol of celebration and happiness. One carafe contains red wine representing the deep richness of their love and the other red wine symbolizes the robust energy of their relationship. They will combine some of the two wines into the common cup, creating a red blend. Some of the wine will remain in their individual carafes which represents that each of them will remain separate individuals.

Travis and Chelsea, please pour the wines.

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

Just a warning, the new wine you've created may taste sour but use it as a reminder to endure the unpleasantness life may bring. It may leave a bitterness on your tongue for which you should be reminded to never hold grudges or resentment towards each other. But hopefully, the drink you've created is sweet, a reminder to share in the sweetness this life has to offer.

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

## Selection # 2

(Usually inserted before or after the Ring Exchange)

Kahlil Gibran writes in "the Prophet":

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 one cup.

(A Officiant or Best Man hand glasses to Bride and Groom, then hands the previously opened bottle of their special wine to the Groom. As the Groom fills the Bride's glass, hands the wine to the Bride, and then the Bride fills the Groom's glass, the Officiant says:)

Fill each other's cup but drink from your own. Let this symbolize your promise to each other to be yourselves to the fullest and at the same time to honor the unity you share as husband and wife and to cherish the gifts of love and nurturing each gives the other.

(The Officiant or Best Man takes the wine, sets it on the nearby table. The Officiant then says:)

I invite you now to drink to one another . . . Let this drinking of wine also remind you that what matters most in life is the spirit, not the letter; the wine, not the cup.

## Wine

The cup of wine symbolizes the gratitude \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have for the loving care and teaching of parents, the ties of heart and mind and memory that link brothers and sisters, and for the friendships that fill this cup to overflowing.

## Blessing over the Wine

This cup of wine is symbolic of the cup of life. As you share the one cup of wine, you undertake to share all that the future may bring. All the sweetness life's cup may hold for you should be sweeter because you drink it together; whatever drops of bitterness it may contain should be less bitter because you share them.

As I recite the blessing over the wine, we pray that God will bestow fullness of joy upon you.

Blessed are , O Lord our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

As together you now drink from this cup, so may you, under God's guidance, in perfect union and devotion to each other, draw contentment, comfort, and happiness from the cup of life. Thereby may you find life's joys doubly gladdening, its bitterness sweetened, and all things hallowed by true companionship and love.

### *Selection #2*

Blessed is the creation of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed is the creation which embodies glory.

Blessed is the creation of the human being.

Blessed is the design of the human being. Developing our wisdom we may become Godlike. We are assembled from the very fabric of the universe and we are composed of eternal elements. Blessed be and blessed is our creation.

Rejoice and be glad you who wandered homeless. In joy have you gathered with your sisters and your brothers. Blessed is the joy of our gathering.

Bestow happiness on these loving mates as would creatures feel in Eden's garden. Blessed be the joy of lovers.

Blessed is the creation of joy and celebration, lover and mate, gladness and jubilation, pleasure and delight, love and solidarity, friendship and peace. Soon may we hear in the streets of the city and the paths of the fields, the voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of lover, the voice of mate, the triumphant voice of lovers from the canopy and the voice of youths from their feasts of song. Blessed Blessed Blessed is the joy of lovers, one with each other.

### *Selection #3*

Cherished be the earth, the provider of all things.

Cherished be the hopes and aspirations of friends and family.

May we respect the diversity of humankind.

May we acknowledge the cyclical nature of life.

May we acknowledge the human need for providing a home.

Honored be the tradition of bride and groom and their happiness at this rite of passage that is celebrated the world over.

Praised be the sounds of joy and happiness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the shouts of young people celebrating, and the songs of children at play. We praise the bride and groom rejoicing together.

### **Wine Box Ceremony:**

They have chosen to include a love letter ceremony. Both (1) and (2) have taken the time to compose a letter addressed to each other. These letters detail why they fell in love, their hopes for the future, and what they admire most about one another. These letters were sealed before they could be read and will now be locked in this box along with a good bottle of wine. Please close the box.

close letters in box together.

(1) and (2), if your marriage should ever falter and you feel like you have lost your way, bring out this box, open it, share the wine, and read the letters reminding yourselves of the love that brought you together, and the promises you made to each other here today. Let the wine remind you of your mutual love of wine tasting adventures and bring you back to the day Nicholas proposed at a winery in Temecula. It is hoped that you will not need this box except in the joyful celebration of your 10th anniversary. At which time you may share the contents of this box and replace it with new letters describing your last 10 years together, along with a fresh bottle of wine.

# Seven Blessings

We bless God for creating the universe.

We bless God for creating the individual.

We bless God for creating human beings who are one at their core and who complement each other by their differences as woman and man.

We ask that our land be happy and bless God for letting Zion rejoice with her children.

Let these loving friends rejoice. May their joy be paradise on earth. We bless God for enabling this bride and this groom to rejoice.

We bless God for creating joy and happiness, bride and groom, mirth song, gladness and rejoicing, love and harmony, peace and companionship; and we thank God for letting this bride and groom to rejoice together.



# The Unity Candles

## *Selection #1*

From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls are destined to find each other, their two streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being. They do not lose their individuality; yet, in marriage, they are united in so close a bond that they become one. Now, following the profession of their marriage vows, they will light the large center candle from the smaller candles to symbolize this new reality. In this way, they are saying that henceforth their light must shine together for each other, for their families, and for their community.

## *Selection #2*

"Soft mists embrace two golden flames,  
Alone they search the night.  
Two souls adrift in dreams of love,  
They seek to claim the light.  
The path is long from which they came,  
But sure they are it's right.  
Two flames embrace in dreams of love,  
Two Souls - Two Hearts Unite."  
by Harold Douglas

## *Selection #3*

Today the bride and groom come here from two different families, two different heritages. We are especially grateful for the values which have flowed into them from those who have loved and nurtured them and pointed them along their way. The Heritage each brings to this marriage will continue to be an important element in their lives, but now will be shared between them. Out of these two families, a new family will be created. A very beautiful way to symbolize the two who become one, is to invite the mothers of (bride's name) and (groom's name) to come forward and light the individual candles which represent the two separate families. When the two individual flames are merged as one, it will symbolize the union of their two families in this marriage and the rich heritage each brings to it. From now on Caleb and Anne will grow together as unique persons who will together create a rich heritage all of their own.

## *Selection #4*

(couple's names), will now light center Unity Candle. You will take the flame from the candles which your (names of candle lighters) have lighted. You will see that this center candle is larger than the other two because it is the new family that has been formed today as you repeated your vows and will be a blending of all the love, traditions and experiences you have both shared with your individual families. It is also larger because the middle candle represents Christ, who has brought you both together for this moment and to remind you that He is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and to guide you in all that you do.

## *Selection #5* Individuals into One

(1) and (2), the two outside candles symbolize you as individual selves with separate lives, separate families and separate sets of friends. In other words; your lives before today.

As you blend your flames to light the third candle, you celebrate the power of separate lights to ignite a common flame of passion and commitment, and to join two lives into one. And as you leave the separate candles burning, may it be known that you are still individuals, each unique and different. Your flames are separate, yet they feed the same fire.

You also bring the warmth, strength and wisdom of your family's fire as kindling for your own.

From this day onward, may you bask in the beauty of the light of your love, may its light shine bright and steady upon your path together and may its heat keep you warm through all the days of your lives and beyond.

## *Selection #6: Blending Families*

Today, the wedding couple come here from two different families, two different heritages. We are especially grateful for the values which have flowed into them from those who have loved and nurtured them and pointed them along their way. The Heritage each brings to this marriage will continue to be an important element in their lives, but now will be shared between them.

Out of these two families, a new family will be created. A very beautiful way to symbolize the two who become one, is to invite the mothers of (1) and (2) to come forward and light the individual candles which represent the two separate families. When the two individual flames are merged as one, it will symbolize the union of their two families in this marriage and the rich heritage each brings to it.

From now on (1) and (2) will grow together as unique persons who will together create a rich heritage all of their own.

# Sand Ceremony

## Selection #1

Three colors of sand are layered in a vase to symbolize the importance of the individuals within the marriage and the joining of the two lives into one entity.

The sculpture begins with a layer of neutral sand to symbolize that the marriage is grounded.

The next layers are the individual colors representing the bride and groom which symbolizes that the foundation of the marriage is based on the strength of the individuals.

The final layer is the bride and groom's colors combined to symbolize the joining of their lives as one in marriage.

## Selection #2

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you have just sealed your relationship by the giving and receiving of rings as a pledge to commit to one another throughout your lives. Today, this relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand. One, representing you, \_\_\_\_\_ and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be. The other representing you, \_\_\_\_\_, and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be. As these two containers of sand are poured into the third 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 your marriage be.

## Selection #3

(1) and (2), today you join your separate lives together. The two separate bottles of sand symbolize each of you as separate individuals with separate lives, separate families and separate sets of friends. They represent the people you were before today.

As these two containers of sand are poured into the new container, the individual bottles of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. The individual grains are still there; you are both still individual people but are now blended into one family. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage be.

## Sand Sculpture with Children

Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other and honor your children as well. Your family relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these individual containers of sand; one, representing you, \_\_\_\_\_ and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, one representing you, \_\_\_\_\_, and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be and another container for each child.

There are children who will share in this marriage. The gathering of this new family will have a deep influence upon them. 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.

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 family. You may now blend the sand together symbolizing the uniting of the children and bride and groom into one.

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage and your family be.

# The Rose Ceremony

It is now my privilege to be the first to address you as husband and wife. In the language of flowers, a red rose is the symbol of love. Will you please exchange your roses? In this exchange, you have given to each other your first gift as husband and wife. And it would be our hope that where you may make your home, there will be a specially appointed place in it for red roses. And on each anniversary of today you celebrate it, at least in part, by each of you bringing a rose to the appointed place, understanding that this rose is a restatement of love, and as an acknowledgement of the vows you have made.

In every marriage it is occasionally difficult to find words to resolve certain issues which may arise. If and when such issues might come to your marriage, if either of you will remember and bring to the appointed place a red rose, the other will see it and understand it as a statement of love and accept it, because love is the gateway to all answers.

Corinthians: "Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, and not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs; it does not gloat over the other's mistakes, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, hope and its endurance. In a word, there are three great things that last forever: Faith, hope and love... and the greatest of these is love."

## *Version #2*

In the elegant language of flowers red roses are a symbol of love, the giving of a single red rose is a clear and unmistakable way of saying the words, "I love you." For this reason it is fitting that the first gift you exchange as husband and wife would be the gift of a single red rose. Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife. 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. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, I would ask that wherever you may make your home, that t you choose a special location. And at those times when words fail, that you leave a red rose at that spot you have both selected – a rose that will say what matters more than al other words... "I still love you"; The other should accept this rose for the words that cannot be found, and remember the love and hope that you both have shared today.

## *Selection #3*

Will you please, as an expression that your hearts are joined together in love, join your hands.

(Mother's each hand a single rose to their children)

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 that 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. Will you please exchange your roses?

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.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, I would ask that wherever you make your home in the future — whether it be a large and elegant home — or a small and graceful one — 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 who we most love. It is easiest to be most hurt by who we most love. It might be difficult some time to say the

words "I am sorry" or "I forgive you"; "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 than says 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 that cannot be found, and remember the love and hope that you both share today.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, 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.

From Corinthians: "Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, and not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs; it does not gloat over the other's mistakes, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, hope and its endurance. In a word, there are three great things that last forever: Faith, hope and love... and the greatest of these is love."

#### Selection #4:

A single red rose always means "I love you". 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. Now for your first gift as husband and wife I want you now to give each other the rose you hold.

(Exchange Roses)

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

And try to remember this: In every marriage there are times where it is difficult to find the right words. It might be difficult some time to say "I am sorry" or "I forgive you"; "I need you" or "I am hurting". If this should happen, if you simply cannot find these words to express what you really feel, Go to that spot that you both have selected and there leave a rose. That rose placed in that special location can say what matters most of all. The rose you place there will say 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, if there is anything you remember of this marriage ceremony, remember this, 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.

# Mother's Rose Ceremony

Marriage is a coming together of two lives, and a celebration of the love of two people. But it is more. The love that you feel for one another is the flowering of a seed your mothers planted in your hearts many years ago. When you were first born, you were a bundle of diapers and tears, and your mothers lost sleep caring for you. Their love for you has brought them great happiness and great challenges, and their love did not diminish as they met these challenges. That is the great lesson you can bring into your marriage.

As you embrace one another in your love, so do you embrace the families that have been brought together on this happy occasion. As a token of your gratitude for your families, the wedding couple will offer these symbols of eternal love, these roses, to your mothers (or mother in laws).

(Hand the roses to each mother together, offering the mothers kisses if they wish.)

**Flowers to Parents** *The Bride and Groom give a flower to their respective In-Laws as a symbol of welcome into the new extended Family.*

## **Parents Rose Ceremony:**

Marriage is a coming together of two lives, and a celebration of the love of two people. But it is more. The love that you feel for one another is the flowering of a seed your mothers planted in your hearts many years ago. When you were first born, you were a bundle of diapers and tears, and your mothers lost sleep caring for you. Their love for you has brought them great happiness and great challenges, and their love did not diminish as they met these challenges. That is the great lesson you can bring into your marriage. As you embrace one another in your love, so too do you embrace the families that have been brought together on this happy occasion. As a token of your gratitude for your families, I would like to ask you to offer these symbols of eternal love, these roses, to your mothers. (Both bride and groom can hand the roses to each mother together, offering the mothers kisses if they wish.)

# Prayer for Couple's Veil & Cord

## Selection #1

(1) and (2) will now perform a traditional Filipino ceremony. Please present the chairs.

Chairs are brought in and placed in the center. Couple sits down.

The first custom is the draping of the veil. It is placed over the shoulders of the couple to symbolize their union and being "clothed as one." It also symbolizes the unity of the two families. Please place the veil over (1) and (2).

Attendants or sponsors place veil on (1)'s shoulder first, pinning from his shoulders extending to cover (2)'s.

The last custom is the draping of the cord. The cord symbolizes the love and friendship that bind (1) and (2) together, and the figure eight shape represents the infinite nature of marriage, as they equally share the responsibility of this marriage for the rest of their lives. Please place the cord over (1) and (2).

Attendants or sponsors place cord over (1) and (2).

These ceremonies we have incorporated into the ceremony today represent the joining of two families, and the creation of memories, which are the cornerstones around which we build a life and will be cherished for all of (1) and (2)'s marriage.

(1) and (2), as you are bound together now, so too your lives and spirits are joined in a union of everlasting love and trust. Above you are the stars and below you is the earth. Like the stars, your love should be a constant source of light, and like the earth, a firm foundation from which to grow.

You may now remove the cord and veil.

Attendants or sponsors come back to remove the cord and the veil, then return to the seats.

## Selection #2:

(reader / celebrant reads as Veil Sponsors place veil over couple's shoulders):

(names of couple), (names of Veil Sponsors) will now place a veil over you. Let this be a symbol of the faithful love you have for each other. Through the passing of the years, let the veil remind you that you belong to each other and to no one else, and that the love you have for each other becomes more beautiful in self-surrender that is total and pure.

(reader / celebrant reads as Cord Sponsors place cord over couple's shoulders):

Lord, with this cord, may the bond of love and friendship uniting (names of couple) grow stronger over the years. May they remain united to you all their lives knowing, loving and serving in each other and the community.

# Guest Vows

To all of you gathered here today, please rise. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are honored by your presence. You will all play a very important part in the success of this marriage. Do you promise to love and support them? If so, say, "we do."



# The Blessing of the Marriage

## *Selection #1*

May you always share with each other the gifts of love and be one in heart and always beautiful of mind. And may you always create a home together that puts in your hearts, love, generosity and kindness.

## *Selection #2*

We rejoice in the grace of this moment of giving and receiving of the heart, of the miracle of love expressed on earth. May these two loving people be a blessing and inspiration to each other and to all those close to them.

May they share each other's joys, sorrows, achievements and dreams in their life's adventure and journey together.

May their sensitivity and understanding for one another deepen, and may they nurture and support one another through all growth and all challenges.

May they maintain and strengthen their respect and honor for each other's individuality while holding in their hearts the truth and the power of this union.

May patience and understanding be theirs in vast resources to call upon, and may forgiveness always be a natural expression of their love for each other and for all those in their lives.

We now ask a blessing of happiness upon \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, and may they share their happiness with all those whose lives they touch.

## *Selection #3*

\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, may this be the love that you bring into this relationship and may its essence touch all those with whom you come in contact. 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. Love enriches each part of life and marriage enriches love. Your lives, shared in love, can hold more fulfillment and happiness than either life alone. Love is the reason this day was chosen by you to begin your lives together and love is the reason you will give with all your hearts for the good of each other. Love is the reason that together you will become one; one in hope; one in believing; one in sharing the coming years.

## *Selection #4*

\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, if there is anything you remember of this marriage ceremony, may it be the love that brought you here today. It is only love which can make it a glorious union, and by love which your marriage shall endure. Today your separate lives with your individual memories, desires, and hopes merge into one. You are now taking into your care and keeping the happiness of the one person in the entire world whom you love above all others. 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. May you be a blessing and comfort to each other, sharers of each other's dreams, conscience of each other's sorrows, helpers to each other in all of life's challenges. May you encourage each other in whatever you set out to achieve. May you trust each other, trust life and be unafraid. May you love each other and offer love and support to those around you. May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you patience, tolerance, and understanding.

## *Selection #5*

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, difficulties 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.

## *Selection #6*

You have promised your love to each other, formalizing the existence of the bond between you, and you have exchanged vows and symbols of love before God and this community. From now on each of your will see your own experiences in a new light as your life together unfolds. May you have courage to love

each other and all others on this earth, not only as you are now but as you are yet to be. Let all others honor your decision.

### **An Irish Blessing for Weddings**

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 the fields.

May the light of friendship guide your paths together.  
May the laughter of children grace the halls of your home.  
May the joy of living for one another trip a smile from your lips,  
A twinkle from your eye.

And when eternity beckons,  
at the end of a life heaped high with love,  
May the good Lord embrace you  
with the arms that have nurtured you  
the whole length of your joy-filled days.  
May the gracious God hold you both  
in the palm of His hands.

And, today, may the Spirit of Love  
find a dwelling place in your hearts.

What God has put together let no man take apart.

### **Italian Blessing**

There are three beautiful things in life: birth, love, and this day. Best wishes and good fortune to you, \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, for all of your life.

### **Chinese Blessing**

May your two hearts and two souls be united for one hundred years of eternity.

### **Wampanoag Indian**

May the Great Spirit protect you, keep you together, and sustain your love for Mother Earth.

### **Gaelic Blessing**

Deep Peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep Peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep Peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep Peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep Peace of the spirit of peace to you.

### **Eskimo love song**

“You are my husband. . .  
you are my wife. . .  
My legs run because of you  
My feet dance because of you  
My heart shall beat because of you  
My eyes shall see because of you  
My mind thinks because of you  
And I shall love because of you.”

### **Native American:**

May the sun bring you new energies by day,  
May the moon softly restore you by night,  
May the rain wash away any worries you may have,  
And the breeze blow new strength into your being,  
And then, all the days of your life,  
May you walk gently through the world,

And know its beauty and yours.

### **Bride and Groom Blessing**

May you be generous and giving with each other.

May your sense of humor and playful spirit always continue to enliven your relationship.

May you always respect the diversity of humankind.

May you act with compassion to those less fortunate and with responsibility to the communities of which you are a part.

May you appreciate and complement each other's differences.

May you always share yourselves openly with your friends and family.

May your home be a haven of blessing and peace.

### **Heart & Body Poem**

Hearts to thee,

Bodies to thee,

Always and Forever,

"And united you shall be."

*The Wedding party will repeat last sentence of poem "United you shall be"*

### **Javanese poem**

Now it is completed

The marriage ceremony,

Just like the moon descending

In its dazzling radiance.

The couple is given the happiness

Of those who watch

Which showers down upon them like gold.

This is the symbol,

The marriage ceremony,

With the blessings of all the guests,

That this marriage may be free from all misfortune

And bear eternal happiness forever.

### **Wings of Angels**

May the wings of angels uphold you through all the life of your love, may you live forever in happiness with one another. May your hearts be full; may your lips stay sweet. May your love grow strong; may you love long and happily in one another's arms.

# Closing Prayer/Blessing

## *Selection #1*

Father (Divine Spirit, Lord), our hearts are filled with great happiness. This is \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_'s wedding day. They come before you, pledging their lives and their hearts to one another. Grant that they may be ever true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring heartache into their marriage. Temper their hearts with kindness and help them to be sweethearts, helpmates, friend and guide, and together, may they meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. Let them remember the value of each other as individuals, and never take each other for granted. And as time takes away their youthful charm, may they find contentment in the greater joys of rich companionship. May their home truly be a place of love and harmony where your spirit is ever present. Bless their wedding day, we pray, and walk beside them, through all their life together. May their love continue through life and finally blend in the life eternal. Amen

## *Selection #2*

Holy Father, Creator of the Universe, maker of man and woman in your likeness, source of blessing for married life, we humbly pray to You for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who today are united in this sacrament of marriage. May Your fullest blessing come upon them so that they may together rejoice in Your gift of married love. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, may you reach old age in the company of your friends, and come at last to the kingdom of heaven. Amen

## *Selection #3*

Most gracious God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death.

## *Selection #4*

Blessed by you, Life-Spirit of the universe, who makes a distinction between holy and not yet holy, between light and dark, between committed and uncommitted, between common goals and personal goals, between love and aloneness. Blessed by You who distinguishes, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ begin their marriage tonight. Bless them in their work and in their companionship, in their sleeping and in their waking, in their joys and in their sorrows; in their lives and in their deaths. As they become bound more closely to each other, may they also be more surely themselves. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts and a sign of Your high love. In beauty, they walk, with beauty before them, with beauty behind them, they walk. With beauty below and above them, in the beauty about them they walk. It is finished in beauty. Amen.

## *Selection #5*

*(Here is one from a Lutheran Ceremony);*

Let us pray. Faithful Lord, we thank you for the love and joy Karen and Roy have found in each other. Pour down your grace that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their faithfulness to each other. May they continue to grow in wisdom, understanding, patience, respect, affection, and love toward you, toward each other, and toward the world. Use us to support them in their promises and life together. Grant that all married persons witnessing these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. Enrich all families making them a sign of the fulfillment of your perfect kingdom, where, with your Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, one God through all ages of ages. Amen.

## **The Benediction - Numbers 6:24-26 (NKJV)**

The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>[[L]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>

The LORD make His face shine upon you, <sup>[[L]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub> And be gracious to you; <sup>[[L]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, <sup>[[L]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub> And give you peace.

## **St. Theresa's Prayer:**

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.. May you be content

knowing you are a child of God.... Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us. Amen.

# Closing

## *Selection #1*

By the authority vested in me by the American Marriage Ministries and the State of California, I pronounce you to each other, husband and wife.

## *Selection #2*

I now pronounce \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ husband and wife.

## *Selection #3*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you have expressed your love to one another through the commitment and promises you have just made. It is with these in mind that I pronounce you husband and wife.

## *Selection #4*

Since you have consented to join together in the bond of matrimony, and have pledged yourselves to each other in the presence of these loving friends, I now pronounce you partners in marriage.

## *Selection #5*

In the presence of this good company,  
By the power of your love,  
Because you have exchanged vows of commitment,  
We recognize you as married.

## *Selection #6*

With the sense of incomparable joy that you have found emotional sanctuary for your heart, that you have discovered your life's true love, I now pronounce you married.

## *Selection #7*

Now that \_\_\_\_\_, have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of rings, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

## *Selection #8*

Inasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, have consented together in marriage before this company; have pledged their faith and declared their unity by each giving and receiving a ring - and are now joined in mutual esteem and devotion; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together.

## *Selection #9*

Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have consented together in holy matrimony, and have pledged their love and loyalty to each other, and have declared the same by the joining and the giving of rings, by the power vested in me, and as witnessed by friends and family, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

## *Selection #10*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, bear witness to the love of God in this world, so that those to whom love is a stranger will find in you good and generous friends. By the power vested in me by God and man, I pronounce you wife and husband. What god has joined together, let no man put asunder.

# Butterfly Ceremony

An Indian legend says that if anyone desires a wish to come true they must capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it. Since they make no sound, they can't tell anyone but the Great Spirit. So by making the wish and releasing the butterfly it will be taken to the heavens and be granted.

(Ask guests to make a wish for the bride and groom. releases butterflies)

# Breaking of the Glass

## *Selection #1*

The traditional breaking of the glass marks the end of the ceremony and the beginning of the celebration. As (groom) breaks the glass, I invite everyone to shout "Mazel Tov," which means "Congratulations" and "Good Luck."

## *Selection #2*

We end the ceremony with the traditional breaking of the glass. Breaking this glass symbolizes the permanent change this marriage covenant makes in \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ lives.

## *Selection #3*

It is a Jewish custom to end the wedding ceremony with the breaking of a glass. We do not know the exact origin of the custom. Some people say that the breaking of the glass symbolizes the irrevocable change in the lives of the couple standing before us; other say it has its roots in superstition when people broke glasses to scare away evil spirits from such lucky people as the bride and groom. Whatever its beginnings, the breaking of the glass now has many interpretations, one of which says that even in the moment of our greatest joy, we should have a responsibility to help relieve some of that pain and suffering. And, of course, the breaking of the glass marks the beginning of the celebration.

## *Selection #4*

We conclude this ceremony with the breaking of the glass. It is a joyous ceremony. The fragility of the glass suggests the frailty of human relationships. The glass is broken to protect this marriage with the implied prayer:

May your bond of love be as difficult to break as it would be to put together the pieces of this glass.

## *Selection #5*

May the breaking of this glass remind you of the fragility of human relationships. A broken glass cannot be mended, and likewise marriage is irrevocable. As this glass shatters, so may your marriage never break.



# Preparation for the Kiss

You have kissed a thousand times, maybe more. But today the feeling is new. No longer simply partners and best friends, you have become husband and wife and can now seal the agreement with a kiss. Today your kiss is a promise.

**You may now kiss each other.**

**You may kiss the bride/groom.**

**You may now seal this moment with a kiss!**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present to you Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_**

or

**It is now my pleasure to present \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ as Husband and Wife!**

Or

It is my pleasure to present to you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in their new relationship as husband and wife and their son/daughter/children \_\_\_\_\_. Or Now I present to you the \_\_\_\_\_ family.