

Planning The Perfect Wedding Ceremony

By Melissa Burton

A wedding ceremony marks the beginning of a marriage, and a couple's life together. Wedding ceremonies may be a civil or religious rite that can take place anywhere - at a church, in the gardens, at the beach, or at the city hall. Modern-day weddings can now also take place in the Internet (what is known as "Online Wedding").

From the bride's march down the aisle to the wedding reception, there are a number of wedding traditions and aspects that make a wedding ceremony special. It is important that the couple 'include' their guests and the people around them in the celebration by guiding and informing them of what is happening at any given time. This is made possible by wedding ceremony programs.

A wedding program (also called church programs, ceremony programs, or "The Order of Woship") is a personalized guidebook for the guests in a wedding. Essentially similar to that of a program at a theater play, wedding programs serve the following purposes:

They serve as a record of the wedding ceremony, providing guests with the order and details of the events that will happen in the ceremony.

- They help guests understand what is happening, making them feel included.
- They introduce and honor the bridal party, the sponsors, and the other people who are participating in the ceremony.
- They serve as a beautiful and sentimental souvenir for everyone, which can be included in the couple's scrapbook.

While a wedding program is not a strict requirement to have, but it certainly adds a unique and personal touch to any wedding ceremony. A wedding program can also be essential in the following cases:

- A wedding that is inter-cultural and no one understands the ceremony.
- A wedding with a number of guests from another faith or culture.
- A wedding so large that guests may not know the bridal party.
- A wedding that is particularly long and time-consuming.
- A wedding that involves so many people that the couple would like to thank and pay tribute to.

A wedding program is generally broken down into 3 sections, with the additional detailed information listed below:

1. Introduction

- Names of the couple
- Wedding date
- Time and place of the service.

2. Event or Ceremony Order

- Greetings
- Poetry
- Reading

- Exchange of vows
- Explanations of special religious rituals (such as the ring ceremony, unity candle ceremony, and pronouncement of marriage)
- Titles of the ceremony music to be played (including the names of the musicians, soloists, or readers)

3. Acknowledgement or Wedding Party

- Names of the members of the bridal party
- Name of the priest or officiant who will perform the ceremony
- Memorials, tributes or homages to someone who has passed away
- Thank-you notes and dedications to the parents and to people who gave support to the couple (and to the wedding)
- The couple's special message to their wedding guests
- Directions to the reception

Wedding programs are usually ordered from the same printer who does the wedding invitations. Other couples, however, opt to do their wedding programs on their own - it gives a couple a chance to be more flexible and creative while saving money.

Wedding programs are one of the little details that make such a big day extra special. Ordered ready-made or done personally, a wedding program can be made unique by the expressive feelings of love and joy that it conveys.

About the Author

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