



A Traditional Wedding Ceremony Order of Events

Whether your service is civil or religious, it'll likely follow the same general outline.

Before you start planning your ceremony order, know this: No two wedding ceremonies are alike. Even if some couples say the same vows or take a deep dip for the kiss, every pair has a unique mix of things as it comes to their officiant, remarks, ring exchanges, recessional and more. That said, the below is a traditional wedding ceremony order of events to guide your preferences, but don't feel like you need to include every step or stick to a certain time frame.

The Procession

This is the part where the wedding party walks down the aisle and takes their places for the ceremony. You can each make your way to the altar separately, symbolizing the fact that you're coming from different backgrounds. In a Christian procession, the bride is escorted by her father, while the groom waits for her at the altar. In a Jewish procession, the groom's parents escort him down the aisle, and then the bride's parents escort her down the aisle.

The Officiant's Opening Remarks

You've heard it a hundred times: "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today..." Or some start by saying, "Friends and family..."

The Officiant Addresses the Couple

Your officiant may take this moment to emphasize the significance of the vows you're about to exchange. This may also include a reminder of your duties and roles in marriage.

The Exchange of Vows

Your vows are your promises to each other. You may repeat the familiar "to have and to hold, for better or for worse" vows, or recite ones you've written yourselves.

The Ring Exchange

As you exchange rings, you typically say, "With this ring, I thee wed."

The Pronouncement of Marriage

The officiant makes it official ("I now pronounce you husband and wife").

The Kiss

And now the moment everyone's been waiting for: your first kiss as a married couple.

The Closing Remarks

Your officiant wraps things up with a few last words and, for a religious wedding, a blessing.

The Recessional

Basically the reverse of the processional, you exit the ceremony together as newlyweds, followed by the wedding party.