

# SAMPLE WEDDING RITES & VOWS

## (Opening Options)

### **The Art of a Good Marriage**

*By Wilferd Arlan Peterson*

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In marriage 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 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 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.

**Based from the book of Psalms:** *Blessed are the man and the woman who have grown beyond themselves and have seen through their separations. They keep their hearts open, day and night. They are like trees planted near flowing waters, which bear fruit when they are ready. Everything they do will succeed. (Psalms 1)*

**Kahlil Gibran:** *Let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another and let that love be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup, give one another of your bread, sing and dance together and be joyous. (The Prophet)*

### **Book of Ruth:**

Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall* be my people, and thy God my God. (Ruth, 1:16)

**Verse from the Wedding Song -- based on Matthew 19 verse 5:**

A man shall leave his mother and a woman leave her home  
And they shall travel on to where the two shall be as one.  
As it was in the beginning is now and till the end ...  
And there is love, there is love.

**Buddhist Wedding Prayer – Lama Thubten Yeshe:**

Today you both promise to dedicate yourselves completely to each other with body, speech and mind. In this life, in every situation, in wealth or poverty, in health or sickness, in happiness or difficulty, you both will work to help each other perfectly. The purpose of your relationship will be to attain enlightenment by perfecting your kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings.

***(Welcome to the Guests)***

Bride and Groom bid you welcome ... although this is their day, it is also a tribute to all of you.

For knowing you and interacting with you has helped to make Bride and Groom who they needed to be to find each other.

And they would like to thank you all for that.

All of you are the threads from which they've woven the tapestry of their lives.

Each one of you is an important piece in the story their tapestry tells.

It is the fabric that they wrap around themselves and take comfort in when the world seems cold.

And on days like today when everything is right in their world, that tapestry is proudly spread out and displayed for everyone to see, with all the glorious colors and textures that your diversity adds.

You all hold a place in their hearts reserved for those that they have chosen to call 'Family and Friends' – and they are deeply grateful for each and every one of you here today.

***(Joined Hands)***

Please face one other and take each other's hands, so that you may hold the gift that these hands are to you both.

These are the hands of your best friend – young and strong and full of love for you.

These are the hands that will work along side yours as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will comfort you when fear or grief comes your way.

These are the hands that will wipe the tears from your eyes.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children.

These are the hands that will give you support and encouragement to chase your dreams.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

And these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours.

**(Sand Ceremony)**

Each of you here today was especially invited because you hold a special place in (bride and groom's) life.

You came to honor and witness their loving commitment.

(Bride and groom) wish to make each of you a real and personally active part of this ceremony. And for this, as each of you arrived you were asked to spoon a small amount of white sand into a container.

They chose white sand for you because of the purity of your love and support for them and their family.

(Bride and groom) have chosen (colors of) sand for themselves.

As the (colors) have blended to form one sand, the individual colors shall not be separated.

Along with your white sand, it is now a robust mix of enriched color.

Each of the sand particles touch and support one another, much as each of you have supported (bride and groom) in their journey.

And so, for the rest of their days together, they will have a keepsake reminder of the love and support that you have brought with you today – to blend and mix and strengthen their union.

***(Family Comment)***

We have some special words from those closest to the couple ...

***(Family Pledge)***

As (Bride and Groom) are to share their vows, this wedding day also joins two families as one. And so they pledge themselves, all to one another ... and to their united family as a whole.

Please repeat after me:

*(Bride, Groom, Family)*

We stand here today in united devotion ...

Ever open to our love for one another ...

Always encouraging and accepting one other ...

In good times, and hard times ...

Embracing each other in our arms and our hearts ...

Today and for all our days to come.

***(Unity Candle)***

In symbol and celebration of their unity, the members of this family now join together in lighting a common flame.

*Candle Lighting (Bride, Groom, Family)*

***(Unity Cord)***

As (Bride and Groom) share their vows before us ... their newly extended family now joins in promise to one another, each with a hand upon the cord.

As you stand strong as individuals in life, may you always remember the golden thread that unites and strengthens you as a family.

***(Declaration of Consent)***

Bride and Groom, by coming here today, you have reached a crossroads in your lives.

Your future is an adventure about to depart. It is a new dawn, a new horizon, a new commitment, a new life.

The bonds you are forging this moment will change your lives from this day on.

And so you publicly declare your vows – loud and amplified ...

Do you, Groom, promise to take Bride to be your wife?

To play with her and care for her; to make her laugh, and let her cry?

To offer her your best counsel, and your steadfast support with all the love you have to give?

“I do.”

Is it your choice that Bride be the one with whom you wish to spend eternity?

“It is.”

Do you, Bride, promise to take Groom to be your husband?

To play with him and care for him; to make him laugh, and let him cry?

To offer him your best counsel, and your steadfast support with all the love you have to give?

“I do.”

Is it your choice that Groom be the one with whom you wish to spend eternity?

“It is.”

***(Preparation for the Vows)***

The formal exchange of your wedding vows is the most essential part of this ceremony.

These are the words that couples have spoken to one another for ages past, and while they are very simple words, they have extraordinary meaning and importance.

As you speak them to one another, remember these are sacred promises, and such promises must be kept.

***(Vow Sample 1)***

(Name), it is with wonder and joy that I take you to be my cherished husband/wife.

To join with you and to share with you all that is to come,

To give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond,

To continue finding the delight we have discovered in each other's company.

In all our life together I promise to be loyal, to cherish you with my whole being, and to see you always through the eyes of love.

*I hold you tenderly in my heart, and I entrust myself to your heart, on this our wedding day, and for all our days to be.*

***(Vow Sample 2)***

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my wife/husband ...

To love you when you drive me crazy ...

To respect you when we disagree. ...

To support you if bad times come our way. ...

And to always remember how grateful I am ...

To have you by my side.

***(Vow Sample 3)***

*(Bride & Groom repeat out loud to each other simultaneously)*

I love you and respect you.

I cherish the gift of your love.

Knowing you has enriched my world beyond measure.

You make my life complete.

***(Chinese Blessing)***

May you enter this marriage  
With love and respect for one another.  
May your years together be blessed by children.  
Your love is the sum of your being;  
It must be cherished till the end of your days.  
For love is truly the strongest of bonds.  
Yet for all its strength, love is also delicate  
As a lotus flower, and requires care.  
Let your courage to love serve as an inspiration to all  
Who climb the highest mountains and cross the great waters  
In love's name.

***(Celtic blessing)***

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.