

(Mike is authorized to perform this solemnization of marriage by the State of Maryland. Qualifications: he is ordained, has a letter of good standing, has his ordination credential, read and knows state laws on marriage, has the wedding certificate for the couple to sign obtained from county clerk).

WEDDING CEREMONY

OPENING WORDS

Ladies and gentlemen, we have joined here today to share with (full name) and (full name) an important moment in their lives. Their time together, they have seen their love and understanding of each other grow and blossom and now they have decided to live out the rest of their lives as one.

THE GIVING IN MARRIAGE (optional)

Who supports this couple in their marriage? or "Who supports this woman/man in her/his marriage?

AN OPENING READING OR PRAYER

A poem titled "The Art of Marriage" by Wilferd A. Peterson says something about love, relationships, or marriages, and I'd like to read it to you.

A good marriage must be created.

In the art of 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 each day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

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 not only marrying the right partner...it is BEING the right partner

DEFINITION OF WEDDING

Mike might say some words about marriage in general or personalize it here.

WEDDING VOWS

Couple may read their own vows or repeat one of these...

I, (Bride/Groom), take you (Bride/Groom), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my (husband/wife), my friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. In the presence our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I (name), take you (name) to be my (husband/wife), my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our union and love you more each day than I did the day before. I will trust you and respect you, laugh with

you and cry with you, loving you faithfully through good times and bad, regardless of the obstacles we may face together. I give you my hand, my heart, and my love, from this day forward for as long as we both shall live.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS OR GIFTS

The couple will repeat...

"I (name) give you (name) this (ring / gift / handfasting) as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you."

LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE (OR OTHER SAND CEREMONY)

CANDLE:

There are many traditions and rituals commonly included in marriage ceremonies. One of the most beautiful and expressive is the "Unity Candle." Two fires separate an individual. By uniting their flames, they burn as one. Imagine how you might describe fire to someone who had never experience it before. It is difficult to say what it is, because it is both substance and energy at the same time. The best you might do is to say that there is always plain evidence of it when it exists, and that you can feel its warmth.

Love similarly would be hard to describe to someone who had never experienced it before, except to say there is always visible evidence of it when it exists...and you can feel its warmth.

Officiant, parents or bride and groom light the separate candles (Be sure these are contained in glass to stay lit outside!) Music may be played while couple lights the one candle

-OR-

SAND:

(Bride and groom), I invite you each to take your vessels of sand – which symbolize your lives from birth to this day when you vowed to join your separate and individual lives into one, in the covenant of marriage. Please pour your individual sand together into the center vase of unity, which represents the beginning of your lives together as husband and wife. And just as these grains of sand become inseparable, may your union be the same.

-OR-

HANDBASTING:

The bride and groom have declared their intent to enter into this union, so we clasp their hands together with a cord. The wrapping of the cord forms an infinity symbol. The handfasting knot is tied is a symbolic representation of oneness between the couple. In unity, they become bound to each other.

CLOSING

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go around. However without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel. True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life – it is the foundation on which to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and it is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic. True friendship holds a mirror to our mistakes and failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness. True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our disappointments, and encourages us to grow to our best potential. (Bride and groom) have come together as friends, have become good friends and today they pledge not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and most importantly the joy of being best friends who will love each other forever

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

By the power vested in me by the State of Maryland, I now pronounce you husband/wife and husband/wife. You may now kiss the bride/groom. You may now kiss!

INTRODUCTION OF NEWLYWEDS

I present to you Mr./Mrs. and Mrs./Mr. _____

-Or-

I present to you the newly married couple, (both first name with last names).

The guests should stand and applaud, as the couple and recessional lead out.

(We will insert this where the vows and Unity candle/sand normally goes – I've changed e.e. cummings punctuation/structure for Mike's reading ease - apologies)

The couple has chosen a Poem by E.E. Cummings as a renewal of their vow to one another

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 true)

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)