

Wedding Ceremony Order of Events and Ceremony Timeline

On the Wedding Day:

1. Wedding Ushers

The ushers are the first to arrive in the sanctuary. They stand outside the sanctuary, greeting and seating guests on either the Bride's or Groom's side. Groomsmen may double as ushers up-until the ceremony starts.

2. Groom & Best Man

The groom and best man are the next to arrive. The best man Groom and Minister enter the church from the side door and take their places, waiting for the Bride to arrive.

3. Prelude Music

The organist/sound technician plays prelude music, setting the mood for arriving family and guests.

4. Wedding Seating Arrangements

As guests arrive they are seated to the left of the church (bride friends and family); to the right of the church (groom's family and friends) leaving the 1st and 2nd pews vacant.

5. Parents & Close Family

Parents and close family of the Bride and groom arrive and are seated. Close family are seated at the 2nd pew. Parents are seated at the 1st pew. The Brides father waits at the entrance of the church.

6. The Bride's Arrival

The last to arrive is the Bride and her father and her attendants. They pause in the foyer with one of the wedding ushers as the Bridesmaids help with the Bride's hair, veil and train. Just before she enters the church the Bride's face may be covered by her veil.

Processional:

7. Processional Music

A signal is given to the organist/sound technician that the Bride is ready. The processional music begins. After the processional music begins, any late arriving guests are detained in the back by one of the wedding ushers and seated *after* the processional is complete.

8. Junior Wedding Attendants

The flower girls and page boy or ring bearer enter the church and walk down the aisle.

9. Adult Wedding Attendants

Bridesmaids and groomsmen are next to walk down the aisle, arm in arm, followed by the Maid of honor. They take up their positions at the front of the ceremony - before the Bride enters the church with her father.

10. The Bride's Mother

As the *Bridal March* begins, the Bride's Mother stands and turns to face the back of the church. The wedding guests will stand upon seeing the Bride's Mother stand.

11. The Bride & Her Father

The Bride enters the church, walking down the aisle on her father's right arm.

12. Bride's Father

Before the Bride reaches the chancel steps, the father takes his daughter's hand and places it in the groom's right hand. He takes his seat next to his wife.

13. Bride & Groom

The Bride is greeted by the groom. She hands her bridal bouquet to the matron of honor, who can also help her lift back her bridal veil. The Bride may prefer the veil be left in place until the minister pronounces them husband and wife, prior to the kiss.

Service:

14. The Service Begins

The minister says a few introductory words to the congregation and the marriage ceremony begins.

15. Wedding Vows

The couple then take their wedding vows in turn, repeating the words after the minister and answer, 'I will'.

16. Ring Exchange

The best man gives both rings to the minister to be blessed. The Bride's ring is then given to the groom, who places it on the third finger of her left hand and repeats the words as indicated by the minister. The Bride then repeats the same words as she places the groom's ring on his finger.

17. Husband & Wife

The minister will speak a few words to declare that the couple is now husband and wife: the Bride and groom kiss.

18. Signing The Register

The final stage is to sign the register. This usually takes place with the Bride and groom, their parents, the best man, matron of honor and their attendants present. A register copy is usually given to the Bride by the minister for her to keep.

Recessional:

19. Leaving The Church

When the signing of the register has finished, the bridal party leaves the church. The Bride and groom lead the way, while the organist plays the recessional music. Next to leave, is the best man and matron of honor, followed by the other junior and adult attendants, the Bride and groom's parents. The congregation is dismissed row by row by the wedding ushers, beginning with the first row of guests.

20. The Receiving Line

You may choose to have a receiving line after the wedding ceremony. If not, your guests and friends can mingle after the ceremony, leaving a receiving line at the reception instead.

Here's an example of a line-up:

- Bride's Mother
- Bride's Father
- Bride
- Groom
- Groom's Mother
- Groom's Father
- Matron of Honor
- Best man
- Bridesmaid
- Groomsmen
- Bridesmaid
- Groomsmen,
- Bridesmaid
- Groomsmen etc...