

## Elements of a Wedding Ceremony

### **Procession:**

*(also known as the Wedding March)*

This element is the choreographed walk down the aisle of the wedding party to the altar. This symbolically represents two things; the couple's transition from their individual lives to the union of marriage and the wedding attendant's support of the union by taking part in the same walk.

### **Welcome/Introduction:**

*(also known as the Convocation)*

This element calls together all in attendance to begin the ceremony. The words spoken at this time welcome and thank the guests as well as introduce the purpose of this gathering.

### **Opening Blessing:**

*(a prayer also known as the Invocation)*

The words spoken at this time are intended to invoke a higher source (God, Goddess, Great Spirit, the Universe, etc) to elevate the intent of the ceremony.

### **The Address:**

*(also known as the Sermon)*

The words spoken at this time are meant to inform the observers about the sacred commitment they are about to witness, and to share with the guests, the couple's beliefs on the meaning of marriage.

### **Dedication Blessing:**

*(a prayer also known as the Consecration)*

The words spoken at this time are meant to elevate the intent of the message communicated in the Address and remind everyone that the commitment about to be made is sacred.

This element also provides a transition from the message about marriage just spoken to the actual promises that the couple is about to make to seal their commitment.

### **Declaration of Intent:**

*(legally required element of the ceremony)*

This element is the "I Do" section of the ceremony. The words spoken at this time declare the couple's intention to marry. The declaration is customarily made by answering, "I do" or "I will" in response to a question presented by the Officiant.

### **The Vows:**

This element is the verbal exchange between the couple that expresses the sincere promises they are making to each other regarding their intention for the marriage.

The words spoken at this time may be memorized, read from paper, or recited after the Officiant.

### **Ring Blessing:**

The words spoken at this time describe the purpose of exchanging the rings and the sentiment that the couple wishes to be reminded of as they wear them.

### **Exchanging of the Rings:**

This element is the physical exchange of wedding rings and the verbal exchange between the couple that expresses the significance of this offering. The words spoken at this time may be memorized, read from paper, or recited after the Officiant.

### **Pronouncement of Marriage:**

*(legally required element of the ceremony)*

This element is the pronouncement that the couple is officially wed.

### **The Kiss:**

This element is a kiss shared between the couple and symbolically represents the sealing of the promises made.

### **Closing Blessing:**

*(a prayer also known as the Benediction)*

The words spoken at this time are meant to send off the couple into their new future together, and to communicate the hopes and wishes for that future.

### **The Presentation:**

This element is the official introduction of the newly married couple.

**The Recession:**

This element is the choreographed walk down the aisle of the wedding party away from the altar and to the festivities. This walk signifies the completion of the ceremony and the beginning of the celebration.

**The Readings:**

This element consists of one or more selections of writings (poems, lyrics, stories, etc.) to be read aloud during carefully selected moments throughout the ceremony. The Readings are meant to convey a feeling or message that provides a window into the couple's unique world and may be read by a friend, family member or the Officiant.

