

Words that may be selected for the Marriage Ceremony

Legal Words in the Wedding Ceremony

In England and Wales there are three legal parts to the wedding service. These sections are shown below as section 2 The Legal declarations, section 7 The Vows and section 10, The Declaration of the Marriage. In Wren's Chapel all other parts if used may be rewritten to suit the couple's understandings and wishes.

First Names are used in all sections apart from section 2 Legal Declarations and section 7 The Vows when full names must be used.

1. The Purpose of Christian Marriage

This section can be given separately to the actual wedding ceremony, if so required; because it is read to the congregation as the reason they are witnessing the wedding. A poem, reading or hymn may be included after this part and before the actual wedding ceremony takes place.

The Minister's introduction of marriage to the congregation

1. Option 1.

"We are gathered here in the presence of God to celebrate the wedding of *A* and *C*¹ to rejoice with them, and to support them with our prayers."

"Marriage is a gift and calling of God, and is not to be entered upon lightly or thoughtlessly, but reverently and responsibly, in obedience to the gospel of Christ."

"God has given us marriage so that husband and wife may find comfort and companionship in each other, and live faithfully together for the whole of their lives."

"God has given us marriage so that husband and wife may love and honour each other, enrich and encourage each other, and know each other with tenderness and joy."

["God has given us marriage for the birth and nurture of children, so that they may grow up in the security of love, and come to experience the freedom of faith that there is in Christ."]²

"God has given us marriage so that husband and wife, being joined together as Christ with his Church, may be a sign of unity and mutual commitment, for the enrichment of society and the strengthening of community."

This is the way of life that *A* . . . and *C* . . . are now to begin. They come to give themselves freely to each other, to exchange solemn promises, and to ask God's blessing on their new life together.

OR

¹ Where *A* and *C* are shown it means that *A*= the first name of the bridegroom and *C*= the first name of the bride.

² Where the bride is unable to have children because of age or illness, the part between brackets may be removed.

1. Option 2

In the presence of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have come together to witness the marriage of *A and C*, to pray for God's blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.

It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are [born and] nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee.

Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

A and C are now to enter this way of life. They will each give their consent to the other and make solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring. We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together

OR

1. Option 3

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of *A and C*, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God that *A and C* are now to begin. They will

each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together

2. Legal Declarations called Declaratory Words

2. Option 1

Minister says: "If any know of any reason why [full name of the bridegroom] and [full name of the bride] may not lawfully be married to each other, let them now declare it."

Bridegroom says, "I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, [full name of the bridegroom], may not be joined in matrimony to [full name of bride]."

The Bride says, "I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, [full name of the bride], may not be joined in matrimony to [full name of bridegroom]."

OR

2. Option 2

Minister: "Due notice of their intention has been given, and no objection has been made." "I now ask you both to say that you know of no reason why you may not lawfully be married."

Minister says to the Bridegroom, "Are you, [Full name of the bridegroom], free lawfully to marry [full name of the bride]" **The Bridegroom replies** "I am".

Minister says to the Bride, "Are you, [full name of the bride], free lawfully to marry [full name of the bridegroom]?" **The Bride replies,** "I am".

OR

2. Option 3.

Minister: "Due notice of their intention has been given, and no objection has been made." "I now ask you both to say that you know of no reason why you may not lawfully be married."

Minister invites the Bridegroom to say: "I declare that I know of no legal reason why I [full name] may not be joined in marriage to [full name of bride]."

Minister invites the Bride to say: "I declare that I know of no legal reason why I [full name] may not be joined in marriage to [full name of bridegroom]."

3. Prayer

3. Option 1

“God of love, ever gracious and ever kind, we pray for *A* and *C* as they take the vows of marriage.

In repentance and in faith may they know you as a God of mercy and new beginnings, who forgives our failures, restores our wholeness, and renews our hope.”

“God of love, ever present and ever faithful, may *A* and *C* be conscious that their marriage is both your will and your delight. May the promises they make govern the life they will lead. May your presence surround them, your faithfulness encourage them, and your Spirit strengthen and guide them: through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Amen.**

OR

3. Option 2

Faithful God, only and eternal, source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing *A and C* to this day,
and we pray for them. Lord of life and love:

May their marriage be life-giving and life-long, enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace; may they bring comfort and confidence to each other in faithfulness and trust. Lord of life and love:

May the hospitality of their home bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need and embrace those in distress.

Lord of life and love:

May they discern in your word order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Lord of life and love

May they nurture their family with devotion, see their children grow in body, mind and spirit and come at last to the end of their lives with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven. Lord of life and love: Amen

[May they grow into maturity, enjoy long life and come at last to the end of their lives with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven. Lord of life and love: Amen.]³

OR

3. Option 3

You may write your own prayer for the minister to use.

OR

3. Option 4

No prayer offered at this stage in the service.

If this choice is made the Minister may use an opening prayer as he welcomes the congregation to the service.

³ Where the bride is unable to have children because of age or illness, the part between brackets may be substituted.

4. Giving of the bride by her- father or friend

4. Option 1

This part of the ceremony is not compulsory but usually the father of the bride or friend or other relative gives away the bride. If this option is chosen the words used are:

In reply to the minister saying "Who gives C in Christian marriage to A the one giving the bride says, "I do." The one giving the bride takes the Bride's right hand and offers it to the Bridegroom.

4. Option 2

If the father is giving the bride the father may lay a pledge on the bridegroom. Some suggested words may be:

"A I give my daughter C freely to you. I charge you to care for her, love her and protect her and make provision for her. Will you keep her always as the first love in your life? Do you so promise? The Bridegroom responds, "I will".

5. The Promises

5. Option 1

The minister asks the Bridegroom: "A, will you take C to be your wife in Christian marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, in times of prosperity and health, and in times of trouble and suffering, and be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?"

The Bridegroom replies: "I will."

The minister says to the Bride: "C, will you take A to be your husband in Christian marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, in times of prosperity and health, and in times of trouble and suffering, and be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?"

The Bride replies: "I will."

OR

5. Option 2

A, [Bride's name here]

I promise

To support you as you pursue your dreams, both large and small

To encourage you to be the best that you can be, and to grow both as an individual and within our marriage,

To give you wise, selfless counsel on all matters,

To hold you and comfort you in difficult times,

To love, cherish and be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

C, [Bridegroom's name here]

I promise

To support you as you pursue your dreams, both large and small

To encourage you to be the best that you can be, and to grow both as an individual and within our marriage,

To give you wise, selfless counsel on all matters,

To hold you and comfort you in difficult times,

To love, cherish and be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

OR

5. Option 3

A. [Bride's name here],

I promise to respect you as your own person
and to realise that your interests, desires and needs
are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you,
to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears
and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you,
to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad,
with all I have to give and all I feel inside in the only way I know how.

Completely and forever

A. [Bridegroom's name here],

I promise to respect you as your own person
and to realise that your interests, desires and needs
are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you,
to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears
and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you,
to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad,
with all I have to give and all I feel inside in the only way I know how.

Completely and forever

5. Option 4

Couple may write their own promises.

Rather than use the standard promises just mentioned in Option 1, and if option 2 and 3 are not quite what the couple desire, they may wish to consider writing their own promises perhaps using options 2 or 3 as a template for their own promises..

6. Added Option for friends and relatives

6. Option 1

In appropriate circumstances the parents of A and C, and members of their families, and any children who will share in the new family, together with friends may be invited to stand and make the following promise:

Minister says: Will the entire congregation please stand.

Do you give your blessing to this marriage of A and C, and promise always to support and encourage them? If you do say "We do" after me ... **"We Do"**

7. The Vows (Legal requirement)

7. Option 1

The Bridegroom says:

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, **[Full name of the bridegroom]**, do take thee, **[Full name of bride]** to be my lawful wedded wife in accordance with God's holy will, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part. This is my faithful promise and in the presence of God I make this vow."

The Bride says:

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, **[Full name of the bride]**, do take thee, **[Full name of the bridegroom]**, to be my lawful wedded husband in accordance with God's holy will, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part. This is my faithful promise and in the presence of God I make this vow."

OR

7. Option 2

The Bridegroom says:

"I **[Full name of the bridegroom]** take you **[Full name of the bride]** to be my wedded wife in accordance with God's holy will, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part. This is my faithful promise and in the presence of God I make this vow."

The Bride says: "I **[Full name of the bride]** take you **[Full name of the bridegroom]** to be my wedded husband in accordance with God's holy will, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part. This is my faithful promise and in the presence of God I make this vow."

OR

7. Option 3

The bridegroom says to his bride:

I, **[first name of bridegroom]**, take thee, **[first name of bride]**, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth and in the presence of God I make this vow."

The bride says to the bridegroom:

I, **[first name of bride]**, take thee, **[first name of bridegroom]**, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, **[and to obey,]*** till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth and in the presence of God I make this vow."

8. The Giving of the Ring or Rings (Optional prayer)

8. Option 1

"God our Father, from all eternity you love us; Lord Jesus Christ, in love you came among us; Holy Spirit, you gave us love as your greatest gift. Bless the giving and receiving of *this ring/these rings*, symbol(s) of unending love and faithfulness and reminder(s) of the promises made this day. We ask it in your Name which is above every Name, the Name of Jesus. **Amen.**"

OR

8. Option 2

Heavenly Father, source of everlasting love, revealed to us in Jesus Christ and poured into our hearts through your Holy Spirit; that love which many waters cannot quench, neither the floods drown; that love which is patient and kind, enduring all things without end; by your blessing, let these rings be to *A* and *C* symbols to remind them of the covenant made this day through your grace in the love of your Son and in the power of your Spirit. **Amen**

OR

8. Option 3.

No prayer

9. Words used while offering the ring

Note: If only one ring is used the bride says as indicated in bold type below each statement

9. Option 1

The man and then the woman placing the ring in turn on each other and say

"I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

One ring response: "I receive this ring as a signthen continue as above.

OR

9. Option 2

"I give you this ring in God's name as a symbol of all that we have promised and all that we shall share."

One ring response: "I receive this ring as a token....then continue as above

OR

9. Option 3

"This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and steadfast love."

One ring response: "This ring I receive from you in token.....then continue as above.

OR

9. Option 4

Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

One ring response: "I receive this ring as a sign of my love...then continue as above.

10. The Declaration

The minister joins their right hands together and addresses the congregation

Option 1

A and C have declared before God and before you that they will live together in Christian marriage; they have made sacred promises to each other, and have symbolised their marriage today by joining hands and by the giving and receiving of a ring/rings. I therefore by the authority granted to me as a minister of Jesus Christ I pronounce them to be husband and wife, in the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whom God has joined together, let no one separate. Amen

OR

Option 2

Forasmuch as A & C have consented to live together in Christian marriage and have witnessed the same before God and this congregation and have pledged their faith each to the other and have declared the same by joining of hands and by giving and receiving a ring, therefore by the authority granted to me as a minister of Jesus Christ, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate. Amen

11. The Marriage Blessing

11. Option 1

May the Lord bless you and take care of you;
may the Lord be kind and gracious to you;
may the Lord look on you with favour
and give you peace. Amen

OR

11. Option 2.

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and
give you peace. Amen

OR

11. Option 3

God of life and beginnings,
you created man and woman in your likeness
and joined them together in union of body and heart;
God of love and forgiveness,
you loved us in Jesus Christ
who humbled himself to death on a cross;
God of grace and strength,
you bring your people to faith
and fill them with your presence.
Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon *A and C* in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts,
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,

in life and in death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

OR

11. Option 4.

This may be added onto Option 1 or 2 or used instead of the other options.

Go forth into the world in peace,
Be of good courage,
Hold fast to that which is good.
Render to no one evil for evil.
Strengthen the faint hearted,
Support the weak,
Help the afflicted,
Show honour to all.
Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

OR

11. Option 5

All praise and blessing to you, God of love, creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your likeness,
source of blessing for married life.
All praise to you, for you have created
courtship and marriage,
joy and gladness,
feasting and laughter,
pleasure and delight. May your blessing come in full upon *A and C*.
May they know your presence
in their joys and in their sorrows.
May they reach old age in the company of friends
and come at last to your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen