

Interfaith Ceremony

Opening

We are gathered here today in the presence of God to give thanks for the gift of marriage, and to witness the joining together of _____ and _____. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, marriage is a sign of our Creator's intention for wholeness in all creation. Out of the chaos, God brought order. That creative purpose is still at work. The joining together of two persons into one unique, intimate, and creative unity in marriage is therefore not only a symbol but also a demonstration of the well-being, the shalom, the purpose of human society. And so marriage is truly a celebration of God's good work in creation.

The uniting in marriage of two individuals from two separate families and backgrounds to establish a new family is an important and memorable event. For us, attached as we are to _____ and to _____ by special bonds of love and affection, the uniting of these two people in heart and body and mind is an occasion of great significance which we can all celebrate.

Marriage is not a casual event, nor is it simply a private affair between two individuals. Marriage is to be entered into responsibly and prayerfully. This marriage brings together this day two individuals, two families, and two communities of faith. It is, then, in the midst of a troubled and broken society, a sign of hope. It deserves and needs the support of a wider community. Today is a time for family and friends to share in their commitment to each other by offering _____ and _____ our continued support, love and best wishes in their lives together.

Let us pray: O Lord our God, source of all blessing, in happiness and joy we thank you for the gift of marriage, which we celebrate today. May you give _____ and _____ the ability to rejoice always in their love. May you fulfill every worthy wish of their hearts. May you open their eyes to the beauty and the mystery of the love they hold for each other, every day as today. And may their | life together embrace and nurture the promise of this moment, so that all who know them will call them truly blessed. Amen.

Respecting Two Traditions

Out of two different and distinct traditions they have come together to learn the best of what each has to offer, appreciating their differences and confirming that being together is far better than being apart from each other.

Explanation of Huppah

Readings are done by the four people holding the poles of the huppah.

- Reader 1: Long after tents vanished from the Jewish landscape, wedding ceremonies were held out of doors in the hope that the marriage would be blessed by as many children as "the stars of the heavens." Some kind of covering was employed to create a more modest and sanctified space.
- Reader 2: The bridal canopy, or huppah, is a multifaceted symbol. It symbolizes: modesty in the presence of God, the safety of your home, the protection of a garment, the intimacy of your bed covering.
- Reader 3: It is open on all four sides to respect Abraham, who had doors on all four sides of his home so that visitors would always know they were welcome.
- Reader 4: The huppah does not promise that love or hope or pledges will keep out weather or catastrophe. But its few lines are a sketch for what might be. The flimsiness of the huppah is a reminder that the only thing that is real about a home is the people in it who love and choose to be together— to be a family. The only anchor that they will have will be holding onto each other's hands. The huppah is the house of promises. It is the home of hope.

Wine Blessing

The blessing over the wine, known as the kiddush, is a part of many Jewish celebrations and holidays. The word kiddush means sanctification, so as we recite this blessing, we symbolically sanctify this couple on their wedding day.

Blessed are you, O God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Vows

_____ and _____ please state your intent to enter into this union by expressing your vows to one another.

(Repeated to each other individually by phrases)

_____ repeat after me: "I promise, before family and friends, to commit my love to you; to respect your individuality; to be with you through life's changes; and to nurture and strengthen the love between us, as long as we both shall live."

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Officiant to the congregation:

Will all of you witnessing these vows do everything in your power to uphold _____ and _____ in their marriage? Will you? (We will.)

Rings

_____, have you a token of your love for [Bride] ?

_____, have you a token of your love for [Groom] ?

Traditionally, the marking of the passage to the status of husband and wife is marked by the exchange of rings. These rings are a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no giver and no receiver - for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May these rings remind you always of the vows you have taken here today.

Place this ring on her finger and repeat after me:

This ring, a gift for you, symbolizes my desire that you be my wife from this day forward.

Place this ring on his finger and repeat after me:

This ring, a gift for you, symbolizes my wish that you be my husband from this day forward.

Let these rings serve not as locks binding you together, but as keys, unlocking the secrets of your hearts for each other to know, and thus bringing you closer together forever.

Closing Prayer

Eternal God, without your grace no promise is sure. Strengthen _____ and _____ with patience, kindness, gentleness, and all the other gifts you so abundantly impart, that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day. Keep them faithful to each other and to you. Fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home of peace and welcome. And guide them by your word to serve you all their days. Amen,

Explanation of Yichud

I would like to take this opportunity to mention to you, the guests, that _____ and _____ will be spending a few moments alone together, immediately following the ceremony. This is a custom called Yichud, which means "union" in Hebrew. It gives the couple an opportunity to share, privately, the power and importance of this moment in their lives. They will return shortly to greet you.

Pronouncement

_____ and _____, having witnessed your vows for marriage with all who are assembled here, and by the authority vested in me by the State of Ohio, I announce with great joy that from this time on, you are husband and wife.

Breaking of Glass

Stepping on this glass signifies remembering the past and moving to the future. You no longer belong to your parents' houses, but to your own.

As _____ and _____ break the glasses, I invite everyone to shout "Mazel Tov", which means "Congratulations" and "Good Luck".

Kiss

As a sign of sealing your promises made to each here today, you may now kiss the bride.