



SAMPLE CEREMONY

This sample wedding ceremony is provided as a resource to marriage celebrants. This material is supplied with the permission of Karen Siggins, Baptist Churches WA.

JESS AND JORDAN'S WEDDING CEREMONY

BEFORE THE CEREMONY

Remember that the wedding ceremony must include

- A statement of the Christian nature and purpose of marriage
- Acknowledgment that the ceremony is being conducted before God and the people gathered
- Witnesses (i.e. gathered people – at least two over 18 year olds and signing witnesses)
- Declaration of intent by the couple
- Personal vows by the couple in which they make clear a life time commitment
- Signing of documents
- Pronouncement of marriage
- Clear identification of the person authorised to conduct the ceremony

Other regular (but not legally required) inclusions are

- Prayer
- Bible readings and poems
- Music
- Exchange of rings
- Blessings or affirmations from the parents of bride and groom
- Blessings
- Short address

REHEARSALS

These are vital and often highly stressful events that are important to have and to run well.

Seek to make arrangements with the bride and groom about how we are going to run the rehearsal and who will be in charge. Try to take that responsibility yourself! This makes sense at many levels and most particularly because as the celebrant you're the one who has travelled most closely with the couple in relation to the ceremony and probably most able to speak on their behalf in that context.

At the beginning, gather everyone together and let them know how the rehearsal is going to proceed. It is helpful to point out that, yes we will do the walk down the aisle a few times; and yes we will be particular about where you stand on the platform and so on because all of this will help with nerves on the actual day and also it gives us the best chance of being part of a ceremony that the bride and groom can remember happily.

Be prepared to be quite directive and on your toes for uprisings! Keep your sense of humour to the fore! Personalities seem to get even bigger at wedding rehearsals and both brides and grooms and others are often feeling quite stressed by this stage.

Encourage everyone who is going to be part of the ceremony to be in attendance at the rehearsal from sound technician to page boy.

Run through the format of the entire ceremony without going through the complete script. Do provide time at some stage to let both the bride and groom and anyone else with a speaking part have a go with the microphone. Talk about where to position the microphone in relation to their mouths etcetera. It is also a good idea to word the bridal party up about what they do with their eye contact while on the platform. If someone is performing an item or doing a Bible reading instruct the bridal party to turn at the very least their faces towards that person and in some cases it may require turning their bodies.

SAMPLE WEDDING SCRIPT

1:00 pm - Music (iPod provided) as guests arrive

1:30 pm – Groom and groomsmen to front of sanctuary in preparation for the arrival of the bridal party

Processional: Please stand for the bridal party (live music by Dayna)

Welcome: on behalf of Jess and Jordan I welcome you to this ceremony in which they will declare their commitment to each other through the vows of marriage. My name is Karen Siggins and it's my pleasure to be conducting this ceremony today.

Please be seated.

Introductory remarks: we are here today in the presence of God to witness the marriage of Jess and Jordan, to ask God's blessing on them, to share in their joy and to express our own joy in their relationship as their family and friends.

The Bible says that God made us in his own image, male and female. We are separate and different, yet able in love, to know and delight in the other. As followers of Jesus, Jess and Jordan are trusting in this mystery of love and today they are committing themselves to live faithfully together for a life time.

It's our privilege to witness this and to celebrate with them as they begin a new life together.

Marriage is given by God so that husband and wife may comfort and help each other in times of plenty and in times of need, in times of sorrow and in times of joy. Marriage is given for the satisfying expression of a physical relationship. It is given so that the strong relationship of man and wife may be a source of strength and comfort and joy for others and the foundation of a secure family life for children born to them. Marriage is given for the welfare of our community which is stronger and happier when the marriage bond is upheld.

Marriage is a way of life that all should honour and which must not be undertaken lightly, carelessly or selfishly. I know that Jess and Jordan have prayerfully, responsibly and thoughtfully committed themselves one to the other and because if this and their faith in God it is a privilege to be marrying them today.

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for the gift of love. It colours our lives and gives meaning to all of our days. Thank you for your presence in the lives of Jess and Jordan; for the joy and the love and trust they find in each other. And since we know that you are love we pray that you will surround them and sustain them as they make their vows today. And then every day from this day forward please show them how to live in ever deepening grace and love. Father even as we pray for Jess and Jordan we pray too for ourselves. As we witness the commitment they make to each other today may we look again at the commitments we have made and see the gift our relationships are to us. Where there is brokenness please grant healing and where there is loneliness please give love. Amen

1:40 pm Reading 1: Psalm 100

Malcolm McQueen (brother in law)

Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!

² Worship the LORD with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

³ Acknowledge that the LORD is God!

He made us, and we are his.[a]

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

and his faithfulness continues to each generation

Congregational Worship Songs:

(2 songs led by Graeme Magowan, Jess Ruck and Kiara Waller). Invite congregation to stand and point out words in their wedding booklets (provide booklets for bridal party)

- 10,000 Reasons
- Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)

Reading 2: Ephesians 3:14-19

Stacey-Ann Duff (married last weekend!)

¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.

¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Message: I've known Jess for about eight years; Jordan for not quite as long but long enough to count it a privilege to be officiating at this ceremony today and more than that to count the time we have spent meeting this year preparing for married life, as one of the great joys of my time as a pastor.

Of course many of you know them very well indeed... Family and long-term friends... And it's a joy isn't it, to see how the wedding celebrations so far are a wonderful reflection of the style and taste and personhood of Jess and Jordan. The two Bible passages that they asked to be read along with the beautiful worship songs we sang show a little something of who Jess and Jordan are as followers of Jesus and how central that relationship is to their lives and to their relationship with each other. I know that they have a strong sense of being together as a married couple so as to follow Jesus better. And that is a beautiful thing.

And later on this afternoon and this evening there will be a celebration and speeches which reveal even more about Jess and Jordan-hopefully not more than they are happy to have revealed!

But right now I want to tell you a little something of what I have seen in Jess and Jordan's relationship so as to encourage them to continue in the way that they have begun and perhaps to prompt the rest of us to consider our own relationships.

Now Jess and Jordan are quite different personalities and that is often the way it goes in marriage! But they share some things in common

- Jess and Jordan are friends -and you could never overrate the importance of friendship in a marriage
- Jess and Jordan are particularly honest people. If something is going on that's causing distress or that it is reason to celebrate you know about it with these two and they particularly know about it in relation to each other. I like that. I have really enjoyed the integrity which Jess and Jordan bring into their relationship and it has been very evident as we have met together. Jess and Jordan are two young people who want to be real with each other and I have seen them do so even when it has taken great
- courage; and that's the second thing I wanted to say about Jess and Jordan. I have come to know them both as people who are brave enough to have the difficult conversations; to persevere in difficult times; to stand up for what is right even when it makes them stand out from others; to be determined to do something worthwhile with the life and skills and passions that God has given them.
- Jess and Jordan are also a couple with high expectations without being slaves to idealism. With Jess these expectations are more out there. With Jordan they are a little more hidden under a mellow exterior but there nonetheless. Sometimes of course high expectations trip us up, but at their best high expectations inspire us to be all we can be; to be and to give our best in every circumstance and I know that Jess and Jordan are approaching their married life in this way.

One of the ways in which I see Jess and Jordan complementing each other beautifully is in the mixture of serious earnestness and she'll be right light heartedness that they bring to their relationship. I'll let you sort out who brings what! And of course they both contribute in both these ways. I think this will stand them in good stead for the decades that lay ahead of them. Jordan, having journeyed with Jess I know that she has prayed about this day or more accurately marriage, long and hard. You will find her to be steadfast, faithful, creative, attentive and loving partner - there is nothing lukewarm about Jess-watch her so that you learn to read her; hug her, hold her hand, look at her, listen to her; surprise her with gifts of your love; at times indulge her and at other times help her lift her eyes to a further horizon.

Jess, you will find Jordan a devoted, truthful, compassionate, steady and loving partner - he is not you, but he is yours- think about him; notice what inspires him; court him even into old age; help him see who he is and liberate him to his full height in God; at times indulge him and at other times help him lift his eyes to a further horizon.

My husband and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary some years ago now on the top of the Eiffel Tower. We met a Canadian schoolteacher there with a group of schoolchildren. She had been married just a few months and when she heard we were celebrating she asked us what were three things we thought were important for a successful marriage.

Jess and Jordan I want to tell you what we told her:

- take any opportunity you can find to celebrate -new jobs, new homes, new opportunities, birthdays, anniversaries, surviving a week!
- Talk often and about everything
- Laugh - sometimes to do that you will have to hold things very lightly. But it's worth it. Even in the most serious of times learn how to hold some things calmly even nonchalantly so that there is always something you can smile about together.

And maybe I'll add one more thing... Fall in love many times, with each other

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for life, for the gift of love, and the blessing of the marriage of Jess and Jordan. We give you praise for the joy you've poured into their hearts because of love, which comes from you. We pray that their home will be a happy one and that their family will be content. We pray that they will always treasure the experience of loving each other in the holy union of marriage. Help them to remain forever committed to their vows; those they will soon make to each other and those they have already made to you, Jesus.

They will need your strength daily Lord, as they live together with the goal of following and serving you. Develop within is Jess and Jordan the character of your Son, Jesus, that they might love each other with the love he demonstrated—with patience, respect, understanding, honesty, forgiveness and kindness.

Let Jess and Jordan always be a support to one another—a friend to listen and encourage, a refuge from the storm, and a place of unquestioned love and respect.

Holy Spirit, be with Jess and Jordan in the good times and guide them through the difficult moments of life; always be their comfort. May their lives be a testimony to your love and so bring glory to you, creator, saviour, lover, of this world .

And father God even as we pray for Jess and Jordan, we pray for ourselves. We thank you for the relationships that we have. And if today we have been reminded of the preciousness of these relationships and prompted towards actions that will honour them, then please remind us when we wake tomorrow so that this moment will not be lost.
Amen

Declaration of intent:

Jordan Jonathan Israel Everson, will you take Jess to be your lawful wedded wife, will you love and respect her, be honest with her, and stand by her whatever may come, so you can genuinely share your life together?

Jordan: "I will"

Jessica Evelyn Van Der Meulen , will you take Jordan to be your lawful wedded husband, will you love and respect him, be honest with him, and stand by him whatever may come, so you can genuinely share your life together?

Jess: "I will"

Family Blessing: ask parents to stand

Julie and Pieter, Pim and Rose - do you give your blessing to Jess and Jordan, and do you promise that in good times and bad, you will do everything in your power to support them in their marriage?

"We do"

Vows:

Jordan:

Before God/ and in the presence/ of my friends and family/ I give myself to you/ as your husband/ and I take you, Jess,/ to be my wife./ I do so/ loving you now/ and committing to loving you/ as you grow and develop/ into all/ that God intends./ I will love you/ when we are together/ and when we are apart;/ when our lives are at peace/ and when they are in turmoil;/ when I am proud of you/ and when I am upset with you;/ in times of rest/ and in times of work./ I will honour your goals/ and dreams/ and help you to fulfil them./ From the depth of my being,/ I will seek to be open/ and honest with you./ I say these things/ believing that they are possible/ because God/ is in the midst of them all./

Jess:

Before God/ and in the presence of my friends and family/ I give myself to you/ as your wife/ and I take you, Jordan,/ to be my husband./ I do so loving you now/ and committing to loving you/ as you grow and develop/ into all that God intends./ I will love you/ when we are together/ and when we are apart;/ when our lives are at peace/ and when they are in turmoil;/ when I am proud of you/ and when I am upset with you;/ in times of rest/ and in times of work./ I will honour/ your goals and dreams/ and help you to fulfil them./ From the depth of my being,/ I will seek to be/ open and honest with you./ I say these things/ believing that they are possible/ because God is in the midst of them all./

Rings:

Prayer of blessing - God of steadfast love, by your blessing may these rings be to Jess and Jordan symbols of the vow they have made this day and of the covenant into which they have entered. By your grace, help them to be faithful to each other in unbroken love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Jordan: Jess, I give you this ring/ in God's name,/ as a sign and a seal/ of our marriage./ May God's love encircle us/, together or apart./ May this ring be a sign to all/ that I pledge you/ my lifelong love and loyalty.

Jess: Jordan, I give you this ring in God's name,/ as a sign and a seal/ of our marriage./ May God's love encircle us/, together or apart./ May this ring be a sign to all/ that I pledge you/ my lifelong love and loyalty.

Declaration: Before God and in the presence of their friends and family Jess and Jordan have declared their love and made their solemn vows to each other. They have joined hands and given and received rings binding themselves in the covenant of marriage. And so, according to the authority vested in me as a minister in the Baptist Churches of WA and with great pleasure I now pronounce Jess and Jordan husband and wife.

Kiss

Prayer: God bless the marriage of Jess and Jordan. Together may they build a life where they know each other's strengths, nurture each other's talents, and support each other's needs. May they work together, play together, laugh together and dream together. May they show others that, with love, life has hope, life has meaning, and life is good.

May they share values, share faith, share sorrow, share joy. Witness their love Lord, and help them make it deeper and stronger with time. For this is why we were born – to love and to be loved. Amen

Signing the register: live music from Dayna

Invitation to afternoon tea:

Karen will let people know that Jess and Jordan will be going straight into the Hall for the cutting of the cake and will then be available for people to greet and congratulate them after that. All are welcome to stay for afternoon tea and the cake cutting

Blessing:

Father God, bless this marriage as Jess and Jordan begin their journey down the road of life together. May they respect each other's likes and dislikes, opinions and beliefs, hopes and dreams, and fears, even though they may not always understand each other.

May Jess and Jordan's love be genuine; May they live in harmony, hating what is evil, and holding fast to what is good.

May they outdo one another in showing honour; and in humility.

May they always know that love is stronger than death; flooding waters cannot drown it and wealth cannot buy it. It is not jealous or boastful, arrogant, rude or stubborn. It is not irritable, resentful or possessive. May Jess and Jordan know that love is patient and kind. Love rejoices in what is right; May Jess and Jordan's love always bear, believe, hope and endure all things.

May the peace of Jesus Christ always rule in their hearts and may Jess and Jordan always be forgiving, just as Christ has forgiven them.

Jess and Jordan, now you will feel no rain

For each of you will be shelter to the other.

Now each of you will feel no cold

For each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there is no loneliness for you

For each of you will be companion to the other.

May your days be good and long upon the earth.

May you find mercy and grow old together and made a torch of love always burn with the fire that you share in your hearts today.

Presentation of Mr and Mrs Jordan and Jess Eversen

Recessional: iPod music- Jordan's own play list