

WEDDING



Ceremony Hints & Tips



Register your marriage

To register your marriage in Stockton-on-Tees, you need to give notice at a register office. Both you and your partner must give notice together, at a register office in the district where at least one of you lives. If you live in different districts, you will both need to go to your own local register office.

Who conducts your ceremony?

Religious Officiant/officiant/celebrant or other

In general, "officiant" and "celebrant" are used interchangeably to describe the person who conducts a wedding ceremony. While "celebrant" is more common in some countries like Australia, New Zealand, and the UK, "officiant" is more common in the US.

A religious officiant is a person authorized by a religious body to conduct religious ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, or baptisms, examples include: Priests, ministers, rabbis, imams, etc whose role is to lead the ceremony in accordance with the religious traditions and rituals of their faith.

Vows - write your own or not

Wedding vows typically include promises of love, respect, and commitment, often incorporating personal reflections on the couple's relationship. These vows can be traditional or customized to reflect the couple's unique love story.

Unity ceremony

A unity ceremony is a symbolic ritual performed during a wedding ceremony, typically after the exchange of vows and before the pronouncement of marriage. It's a way for the couple to visually represent their union and commitment to each other, often with the help of family or loved ones.

Ceremony audio

You will need a sound system at your wedding ceremony, too. Ask your DJ about this, as they should include it in their package.

Witnesses

In the UK, you need two witnesses for a legal wedding. These witnesses must be able to understand the nature of the ceremony and be at least 18 years old in Scotland, or 16 in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Beyond that, there are no specific restrictions on who can be a witness. Traditionally, the best man and maid of honor are chosen as witnesses, but it's common for parents to be witnesses as well. Ultimately, you can choose anyone who meets the legal requirements and you feel comfortable with.

Which side to sit on?

Traditionally, the bride's family sits on the left side of the aisle, while the groom's family sits on the right. This arrangement is rooted in the idea that the groom's placement on the right allowed him to better defend the bride, a chivalrous notion from the Middle Ages. However, many couples choose to deviate from this tradition, and it's ultimately up to them how they want to arrange their guests.

What order do wedding party walk down the aisle?

The traditional order for walking down the aisle is: officiant, groom, groomsmen, bridesmaids, maid of honor/matron of honor, ring bearer/flower girl, and finally the bride with her father or escort. This order is often a mix of traditional roles and personal preferences.

Modern Variations:

- Some couples prefer to have the wedding party walk in pairs or have the bridesmaids and groomsmen enter in a single line.
- The order can be adjusted to reflect personal preferences and the specific roles of the wedding party members.
- It's common for the bride and her father to walk down the aisle last, creating a dramatic entrance.

Music

1. Prelude

The prelude music will be one of the first things your guests will notice at your wedding. Generally, prelude music is light background music that is played while guests are being seated. Though you can request specific songs, your DJ, ceremony musician, or wedding planner will most likely have a list of songs to fit your wedding style.

2. Processional

The processional song is played while the wedding party enters the ceremony. This also includes parents and grandparents. Traditionally, instrumental music is played during this time. Though, if you wanted to switch things up, you could have a processional style!

3. Bridal Processional

“Here comes the bride...!” This is the moment you have been waiting for. The moment where everyone will gasp at the beauty of the bride and marvel at the look on the groom’s face. Choose a bridal processional song that will highlight your arrival to the ceremony.

4. Recessional

The recessional song is played when you exit the ceremony as husband and wife. This song should be happy and lively! While this can also be an instrumental song, it is becoming more popular to have a fun recessional song or even a dance routine! I definitely recommend my personal favorite – Signed, Sealed, Delivered by Stevie Wonder.

Reserving chairs

To reserve seats at a wedding, you can use "reserved" signs or cards on specific rows or seats to designate them for particular guests.

Here's a more detailed look at how to reserve seats:

1. Using "Reserved" Signs:

- Clear Signage:
- Create simple or elaborate signs with "Reserved" or "Reserved for [Guest's Name]" to clearly indicate designated rows or seats.
- Visual Appeal:
- Consider using your wedding theme or color scheme to make the signs visually appealing and coordinate with the overall decor.

2. Using Visual Cues:

- Section Off Rows:
- Employ elements like floral garlands, ribbon, or other decor to visually separate reserved rows from open seating.
- Customize:
- Tailor the visual cues to your wedding style and theme for a cohesive look.

3. Assigned Seating with Ushers:

- Pre-Assign Seats:
- If you're assigning specific seats, create a seating plan and have a wedding party member or professional ushers guide guests to their designated spots.
- Smooth Arrival:
- Ushers can greet guests, inquire about their names, and direct them to their reserved seats.

4. Traditional Seating Practices:

- Parental Seating:

In traditional Christian weddings, the bride's parents often sit on the left side of the aisle, while the groom's parents sit on the right, as noted by Brides.

- Family Seating:

You can designate entire rows or sections for close family members with "Reserved for Family" signs.

Wedding decor

Decor for your ceremony can be as little or as much as your budget, personal preference and imagination you are able to allow for.

Who's looking after your wedding rings?

At a wedding, the rings are typically entrusted to the best man or maid of honor. They are responsible for keeping the rings safe before the ceremony and handing them over at the appropriate time. Alternatively, a ring bearer (usually a young child) may carry the rings down the aisle, and then the best man or maid of honor will take them over.

What will the rings be presented in/on?

Wedding rings are typically presented on a ring pillow or in a ring box during the ceremony.

Traditions

"Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue": This rhyme encourages the bride to incorporate items that represent her past, future, and a touch of tradition.

Bridal Bouquet and Garter Toss: Traditions where the bride throws her bouquet and garter to unmarried guests, hoping to pass on good luck.

Signage

For a wedding ceremony, essential signage includes welcome signs, directional signs, and seating guidance. Additional signs can be used to clarify the order of events, guide guests to specific areas like the guest book or gift table, or even announce a signature cocktail. Unplugged ceremony signs and signs regarding photos or social media sharing can also be helpful.

Who wears flowers at the wedding?

At a wedding, various individuals and the bridal party often have flowers.

- The bride carries a bouquet,
- The bridesmaids have bouquets or other floral items,
- The groom wears a boutonniere,
- The groomsmen have boutonnieres.
- Mothers, grandmothers, and other family members may wear corsages,
- Flower girls might carry a basket of petals, wear a floral crown or hold a floral wand

Confetti, bubbles or other

Confetti is used at weddings to shower the newlyweds with good wishes and joy, symbolizing prosperity, fertility, and happiness. It's a festive tradition that allows guests to participate in celebrating the couple's union and creates memorable photo opportunities.

Programs & newspapers

Wedding programs provide guests with a roadmap of the ceremony, including the order of events, key participants, and often, details about any readings or songs. They help guests follow along, know what's happening next, and feel more involved in the celebration.

Fans for hot weather

Available in bright colours to match the theme of your occasion. Constructed in fabric and natural bamboo ribbing, these sturdy wedding fans will keep them cool enough to sit through the entire ceremony. Perfect for outdoor weddings and indoor ceremonies where there is no air conditioning.

Dog/s taking part?

Dogs can participate in wedding ceremonies in various ways, including serving as ring bearers, flower pups, or simply walking down the aisle with the couple or a member of the wedding party. It's also common to include them in photos or to have them as guests at the reception.

Here's a more detailed look at how dogs can be involved:

1. Ring Bearer or Flower Pup:

- Dogs can carry the rings in a special pouch attached to their collar or harness.
- They can also carry flowers or be dressed as a flower girl/boy.
- It's important to ensure the rings are securely attached and that a trusted individual is present to escort the dog and retrieve the rings at the altar.

2. Walking Down the Aisle:

- A dog can walk alongside the couple or a member of the wedding party.
- The dog can be on a leash, or the couple can hold the leash themselves.

3. Other Roles:

- Some couples have their dogs as a "dog of honor" or "best dog".
- They can also be included in photos or have a designated area to rest during the ceremony.

Things to Consider:

Dog's Personality:

Not all dogs are comfortable in crowded or loud environments, so it's important to choose roles that suit their temperament.

Venue and Regulations:

Check with the venue to ensure they are pet-friendly and if there are any specific rules or restrictions.

Practice:

If your dog is taking on a specific role, it's a good idea to practice with them beforehand.

Plan B:

Have a backup plan in case your dog becomes overwhelmed or uncomfortable during the ceremony.

Chaperone:

Assign a trusted individual to be the dog's chaperone, who can take them away if needed and keep them comfortable.

Dress Up:

Dress your dog in wedding-appropriate attire, such as a bow tie, dress, or flower collar.

Tissues

Popping a packet of tissues on guests chairs is a thoughtful touch

Water

On hot days, enabling the guests to have access to a drink whilst the ceremony proceeds would be appreciated

WEDDING



Ceremony Details



DATE:

VENUE:

START TIME:

END TIME:

CONTACTS

WHAT

NAME

MOBILE

Venue contact

Officiant

Photographer

Videographer

Bridal party

1

2

3

4

5

Groomsmen

1

2

3

4

5

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Running Order of
Ceremony