

Example Marriage Ceremony

Entrance of Bride & Groom

Gathering closes around forming a circle with the couple at the top.

Entrance song: 'Stars Above' by Maria Doyle Kennedy

Celebrant's Welcome & Introduction

Let's now begin the marriage ceremony!

My name is Nettie Hulme and I am the registered marriage celebrant authorised to preside at the marriage of *Bride and Groom* (full names to be used at least once)

We are gathering here to celebrate the love *Bride and Groom* have for each other – a love that embraces 'child's name', and you, their friends and family. In this relationship they have found much strength, joy and courage, and today they want to make a strong commitment to it. They can think of no more profound way of doing so than to make a promise in front of you, the people they care most about – and whose support they know they will need in the future.

Bride and groom are happy together, and recognise that they would not be happier with anyone else. They want what is best for the other, and are ready to work for each other's success and fulfilment. They recognise the danger of taking each other for granted, of not appreciating each other enough. And they remind themselves that they must help each other to grow without dominating, smothering, or resenting.

This, they know, is harder than it sounds. But they recognise what a gift they have found in each other, and they intend their relationship to last.

Today we celebrate their marriage in this lovely outdoor setting. It's a place *Bride and groom* have chosen for many reasons. It's beautiful. It feels like a sacred place. And it reminds them of the way in which their love for each other started – on an unforgettable drive along the Great Ocean Road.

Ring Warming/Blessing Ritual

Bride and groom are very happy that you are all here today and want to invite you to be involved in their wedding ceremony by taking part in the special ritual for their rings. Their wedding rings will be passed among you and you are invited to hold them for a moment and make a silent, wish, blessing or prayer for their future life together.

'child' will bring the rings to you, in two small baskets woven by *bride, groom and child*. The baskets are made from rushes in the Coorong in South Australia, and the Narrindjeri people of that area believe that, incorporated into the baskets, are the stories told during the weaving.

As you'll see, *bride and groom* have designed rings that fit their personalities and express both their individuality and their togetherness. Please pass them around, but remember that we'll need them back before too long!

I now welcome *bride's* cousin (part of the hugecontingent that has come from Western Australia!) to read for us.

.....*Bride* has always loved this reading, which she first heard at andwedding, and which honours her Catholic faith.

Reading: Hosea 2: 14-24

I am going to lure you
And bring you out into the wilderness
And speak to your heart

When that day comes I will make a treaty on your behalf with the wild animals
With the birds of heaven and the creeping things of the earth
I will break bow, sword and battle in the country
And make you sleep secure
I will betroth you to myself forever
Betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love
I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness
And you will come to know Yahweh

The Bringing Forth of the Bride and Groom (Nettie)

Before *bride and groom* betroth themselves to each other, I'm going to ask that their parents step forward. *Bride and groom* want to acknowledge your loving influence as parents in this marriage ceremony by asking you to bring them to be married.

So I now ask: who brings *groom* to stand beside *bride*?

Groom's parents: We do!

And who brings *bride* to stand beside *groom*?

Bride's parents: We do!

Parents' names: are you willing now and always to support and strengthen this marriage by upholding them both with your love?

The parents: We are!

The Monitum (Nettie)

Bride and groom, as you know, I am duly authorised by the Commonwealth of Australia to conduct marriages according to law. Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter. Marriage, according to the law in Australia, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

The Asking**Nettie**

Bride and groom will you please face each other and hold hands.

Do you come here freely and without reservation, to give yourselves to each other as husband and wife?

Do you promise to strive for a loving and equal relationship by respecting and honouring each other and always giving generously of yourself?

And do you promise to live your lives with compassion, loving tenderly and acting justly?

Bride and groom: We do!

Nettie (to the gathering)

Friends, bride and groom have asked whether you would pledge your support for their marriage by responding to the following vows with the words "We will!"

Will you support them in their new life together, rejoicing in their happiness and sustaining them in their struggles?

The Gathering: We will!

The Vows

Groom: I call upon the people here to witness, that I....take you.....to be my wife, my friend, my lover. I choose you above all others to share my life with me in marriage. I love you for yourself, and I want you to become all that you can be. I will love and cherish you all the days of my life. I make this promise today in the presence of my family and friends.

Bride : I call upon the people here to witness, that I....take you.....to be my husband, my friend, my lover. I choose you above all others to share my life with me in marriage. I love you for yourself, and I want you to become all that you can be. I will love and cherish you all the days of my life. I make this promise today in the presence of my family and friends.

Bride and groom to child

groom: child's name, I love you, and I love *bride*. I hope we'll always stay as happy together as we've been since *bride* came into our lives. I'm marrying *bride* today, but I'll always be your dad. I promise that we'll love you, look after you and be there for you when you need us.

Bride: child's name, I promise to remain your special friend. I'll try to always listen to you and help you. Our home will always be your home, and I hope we'll always be happy there together. I hope that today you can join us in becoming a new family. Do you think you can?

child: Yes!

Nettie: I'd now like to welcome *groom's* sister to read.

.....: This reading was from a book that *groom* received from our parents on his eighteenth birthday – although he says it's taken him another twenty years to appreciate the wisdom of its contents ...

Reading : “Marriage” by Kahil Gibran

Let there be spaces in your togetherness
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow

Exchange of Rings

Nettie: I hope everyone has had a chance to warm one of the rings. child, could you now please collect the rings and bring them back to us?

child gives a ring to groom who holds it halfway down bride's ring finger

groom:, this ring we designed together has been warmed and blessed by our friends and family. Take it and wear it as a pledge of my love, and as a symbol of all we share. Let it be a reminder every day of the promises I've made to you.

child gives a ring to bride who holds it halfway down groom's ring finger

bride:, this ring we designed together has been warmed and blessed by our friends and family. Take it and wear it as a pledge of my love, and as a symbol of all we share. Let it be a reminder every day of the promises I've made to you.

Declaration & The Kiss

Nettie: bride and groom have declared before all of us that they wish to live together in marriage. They've made a public commitment to each other and to *child's name*; they've taken vows and exchanged rings. It therefore gives me great pleasure to declare them husband and wife. (Bride and groom kiss).

Nettie: bride and groom's friend will now read a final blessing for them.

Apache Blessing

Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship – as they threaten all relationships at one time or another – remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives – remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

Signing (Music: 'Northern Sky' by Nick Drake)

Everyone please stay close while we sign the marriage certificates then we will return with the newly married couple.

Presentation of Certificate & Introduction of Newly Married Couple (Nettie)

Congratulations bride and groom. May your future journey together be filled with joy and dreams fulfilled. You are all now invited to come forward and congratulate the newly married couple: bride and groom's full married name

Music 'These Are Days' by 10,000 Maniacs