How to use this script

Read aloud with a six-minute homily, the ceremony runs about 15 minutes, not counting music. Replace every name in square brackets. The words to say are set apart as quotations, and the plain lines between them tell you what happens. Notes marked Legal point to the parts the law cares about; before the day, ask the clerk who issued the license whether your state needs anything more.

Print the script in large type and put it in a plain binder. Bring the license and a pen, and arrive early. Practice the script aloud more than once, and on the day speak more slowly than feels natural. If you lose your place, stop, find it and go on.

Christian wedding ceremony script

Before the guests arrive

Read the license with the couple and check the spelling of both names. Give the rings to whoever will hold them. Stand facing the guests, with the couple in front of you.

1. The processional

Music plays and the wedding party walks in, in the order you rehearsed, with the bride last. When everyone is in place and the music stops, begin.

2. The welcome

To the guests:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony.

[Groom] and [Bride] have asked us here to witness their promises and to pray for them. Marriage is God's gift, given at the beginning. Jesus honored it with his presence at a wedding in Cana, where he did his first miracle, and the Church has long seen in a husband and wife a picture of the love between Christ and his people. So we come to this day with joy, and we do not come to it lightly.

Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined.

The first and last sentences are the 1928 Book of Common Prayer's own words. The middle paragraph is ours, a plain retelling of what the Prayer Book says between them. The 1928 book then asks whether anyone knows a reason the couple may not lawfully marry. This script leaves that question out; ask the couple whether they want it.

3. The reading

A friend or relative of the couple says, "A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians," and reads:

Love is patient and is kind. Love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud, doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil; doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4–8a, World English Bible. The reader's opening line is ours.

4. The homily

Five to seven minutes in your own words, built on the reading and on the couple. Fill in this outline:

The passage. One or two sentences on what the reading says. Paul wrote these lines to a church, not to a bride and groom, after hearing "that there are contentions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:11); the love he describes is the kind that keeps going when people are hard to live with. [Your sentences.]

The couple. One true story that shows a line of the reading in them: a time one of them was patient, or kind, or kept going. Ask them first whether you may tell it. [Their story.]

The charge. What the passage asks of the two of them, in a sentence or two, and what it asks of everyone here who will stand by them. [Your charge.]

The turn. Close by facing the couple and saying, in words of ours you may change, "[Groom] and [Bride], you are about to make your promises before God and all of us. Let us hear them."

5. The declaration of intent

To the bride:

[Bride], will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers, "I will." Then to the groom:

[Groom], will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers, "I will."

These questions, and the vows and ring words that follow, are from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, which asks the bride first.

Legal. This is the part state laws commonly require. California's Family Code, for example, requires that the couple "declare, in the physical presence of the person solemnizing the marriage and necessary witnesses, that they take each other as spouses." The declaration and the vows do that. If the couple replace the vows with their own, keep this declaration word for word.

6. The vows

The couple face each other. The groom takes the bride's right hand and repeats after you, a phrase at a time:

In the Name of God, I, [Groom], take you, [Bride], to be my 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

They let go. The bride takes the groom's right hand and repeats after you:

In the Name of God, I, [Bride], take you, [Groom], to be my 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 and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

7. The rings

Take the rings from whoever holds them. Give the bride's ring to the groom. He puts it on her ring finger and repeats after you:

[Bride], I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Give the groom's ring to the bride. She puts it on his ring finger and says the same words to him, with his name.

8. The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together in the words our Savior taught us.

Everyone says it together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The invitation is from the 1979 Prayer Book, the prayer in its traditional words from the 1928 book. Guests from different churches may end it at different places.

9. The prayer

Then pray for the couple:

O God, who hast so consecrated the state of Matrimony that in it is represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church; Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that they may love, honour, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and of peace; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

This prayer is from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. You may say the couple's names after "these thy servants."

10. The pronouncement

Join the couple's right hands and say to the guests:

Now that [Groom] and [Bride] have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

Both lines are from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. If both of them give rings, say "rings." The second line echoes Jesus in Matthew 19:6: "What therefore God has joined together, don't let man tear apart."

Legal. The pronouncement declares the marriage made. California's law sets no words for it ("No particular form for the ceremony of marriage is required"), and Texas law, says the state's law library, "does not provide many details about the actual marriage ceremony." Ask the clerk whether your state prescribes any.

11. The blessing

Facing the couple, say:

The LORD bless you, and keep you. The LORD make his face to shine on you, and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up his face towards you, and give you peace.

This is the blessing God gave Aaron and his sons to speak over Israel, in Numbers 6:24–26. The words are from the British edition of the World English Bible; the American edition reads "Yahweh" for "the LORD." Some churches keep a blessing spoken over people in this form for their ordained ministers. If the couple's church or yours does, turn it into a prayer, asking the Lord to bless and keep them, or say it with us in place of you.

12. The kiss and the presentation

[Groom], you may kiss your bride.

Then, to the guests:

Friends, it is my joy to present to you, for the first time as husband and wife, [Groom] and [Bride].

These two lines are ours.

13. The recessional and the license

The couple walk out, followed by the wedding party. Before the reception, sign the license with the couple and the witnesses wherever it asks.

Legal. Keep the license in your own hands until you have returned it to the office that issued it, before that office's deadline. As of October 2026, California allows 10 days and Texas 30. Ask the clerk for yours.

Christian wedding ceremony script

The officiant's checklist

- Before you look into ordination, ask the couple which churches they belong to and where the wedding will be held.
- Before you pay for any ordination, ask the clerk who will issue the couple's license what that office accepts.
- Plan at least one long conversation.
- Settle who will read, who walks in with whom, how long the ceremony should run, and whether the venue has rules about music, candles or photographs.
- Walk the whole order once so everyone knows where to stand and when to move.
- Decide who holds the rings and who brings the license.
- Test the microphone.
- Bring the license and a pen, and arrive early.
- Check that the names are spelled right and that the license is still in force.
- After the ceremony, you, the couple and the witnesses sign where the license asks.
- Ask the clerk for the deadline when the couple pick up the license, and keep it in your own hands until it is filed.