

A SERVICE FOR MARRIAGE

FIEC Third Form*

A WELCOME

Use a form of words that achieves the following:

- a connection to the group;
- an understanding of who you are and your role as celebrant;
- and any necessary housekeeping.

You may include an instruction to get the group to stand.

PROCESSIONAL

Bridal party arrives.

A FORMAL INTRODUCTION

Outline the biblical purpose of marriage which includes the following:

We have come together in the sight of God, and in the presence of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in marriage.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said about marriage that: 'at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Marriage was created by God, and it is very good. Marriage should be honoured by all and is not to be entered into lightly or carelessly, but with reverent and serious respect for those purposes for which it was instituted by God.

There are three great purposes in marriage:

Marriage is a symbol of God's unending love for his people, and of the union between Christ and his Church. So **[Groom]** is to love **[Bride]** as Christ loved his church, and **[Bride]** is to respect **[Groom]** and honour his leadership, in the same way that we respect and honour Jesus.

Marriage is a gift from God for the well-being of mankind and for the proper expression of sexual intimacy and affections between husband and wife. It is a life-long union in which a man and a woman are called to give themselves in body, mind, and spirit, and to respond likewise, that from their union will grow a deepening knowledge and love for each other. In the joys and sorrows of life, in prosperity and adversity, they share their companionship, faithfulness and strength.

In marriage a new family is established in accordance with God's purpose, so that children may be born and nurtured in secure and loving care, for their well-being and instruction, and for the good order of society, to the glory of God.

[Groom] and *[Bride]* have now come here to be joined in this holy union to which God has led them. They seek his blessing on their life together, that they may fulfil his purpose for them; and they ask us to support them in their desire for God's blessing. If any person here can show why they may not lawfully be joined in marriage they should speak now, or from this point on remain in silence.

Speaking to the persons to be married, the celebrant says:

I charge you both, as you will answer before God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, you now confess it. For be assured that those who marry otherwise than God's word allows are not joined together by God, neither is their marriage lawful in his sight.

THE CONSENT ¹

[Groom], will you take *[Bride]* to be your wife,
to live together according to God's law?

Will you give her the honour
due to her as your wife
and, forsaking all others,
love and protect her,
as long as you both shall live?

The groom answers:

I will

[Bride], will you take *[Groom]* to be your husband,
to live together according to God's law?

Will you give him the honour
due to him as your husband
and, forsaking all others,
love and respect him
as long as you both shall live?

The bride answers:

I will

The celebrant may ask:

Who brings this woman to be married by this man?

Father or parents of the Bride answer:

I/We Do

The celebrant may pray words to the effect of:

God our Father, in your great love for us all
you have given us the gift of marriage;
so bless *[Groom]* & *[Bride]* as they pledge their lives to each other,
that their love may evermore grow
to be the true reflection of your love for us all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

THE WEDDING VOWS ²

The celebrant will usually prompt the bride and groom by saying each line that will then be repeated. It is usual to ask the groom to face his bride and hold her hands as he says these words to her and reverse when she says her vows to him.

The groom's vows:

I [*Groom*], in the presence of God,
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 protect,
as long as we both shall live
This is my solemn vow and promise.

The bride's vows:

I [*Bride*], in the presence of God,
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 respect,
as long as we both shall live
This is my solemn vow and promise.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The celebrant receives the wedding ring[s], and may then pray:

Grant, Lord, that these rings may be a constant sign of the pledge of love and faithfulness which [*Groom*] and [*Bride*] make to each other; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The groom places the ring on the ring finger of his bride and holding it there says:

[*Bride*], with this ring I wed you;
with all that I am and all that I have
I honour you;
In the name of God. Amen.

Before loosing hands, the bride says:

I receive this ring
in token of our marriage.
May God enable us to grow in love together.

If the bride gives a ring to her husband, this procedure is to be repeated appropriately.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The celebrant joins the hands of the bride and groom and says to the people:

Those who God has joined, let no person try to separate.

The celebrant then addresses the people:

In the sight of God and in the presence of us all,

By solemn consent and promise,

By the giving and receiving of a ring,

And by the joining of hands,

[Groom] & [Bride] have now accepted each other in marriage.

In the name of God,

I declare them to be husband and wife.

May God the Father enrich you with his grace,

God the Son make you holy in his love,

God the Holy Spirit strengthen you with his joy.

May the Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life. Amen.

[Groom] you may kiss your bride.

BIBLE READING ³

BIBLE TALK

PRAYERS

The prayers ought to include two key elements: a prayer for love and faithfulness in marriage; and a prayer for the blessing of children and godly parenting. An example of prayer follows:

Almighty Father, giver of life and love, look in favour on all who are made one in marriage, and especially on these your servants as they enter into their new life together. In your love deepen their love; strengthen their wills to keep the promises they have made; that they may live to your glory and to the good of mankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty Father, you have created us in your own image, and by your gracious gift mankind is increased. To [Groom] and [Bride] grant the blessing of children; and such wisdom and loving care in the nurture of their family, that they and their children may come to know you in their lives and give you praise and honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

Signing of the register and marriage documents ought to be completed following the prayers.

RECESSIONAL

The celebrant invites the congregation to stand:

I now present to you: Mr & Mrs [Groom] & [Bride] [Surname].

¹ *If desired, the consent may be used from the FIEC first form of marriage, or as below:*

[Groom], will you have **[Bride]** as your wife, to live together, as God has ordained, in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love her, cherish her, honour and protect her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her, as long as you both shall live?

The man answers:

I will

Then the minister says to the woman:

[Bride], will you have **[Groom]** as your husband, to live together, as God has ordained, in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love him, submit to him, honour and protect him, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him, as long as you both shall live?

The woman answers:

I will

² *If desired, the vows may be used from the FIEC first form of marriage, or as below:*

I **[Groom]** take you **[Bride]** to be my wife, according to God's holy ordinance: 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. And to this I pledge you my word.

I **[Bride]**, take you **[Groom]** to be my husband, according to God's holy ordinance: 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 submit, until we are parted by death. And to this I pledge you my word.

³ *If desired, the Bible reading and Bible talk can be inserted prior to "The Wedding Vows".*

* Approved by the FIEC Executive, 17/12/2019