

# PREMARITAL COUNSELING & WEDDING MANUAL

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**Note: Bethany facilities are available for the wedding ceremony only and not available for receptions.**

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, '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. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

At Bethany we believe marriage is honorable and holy before God. It is on this premise that we have prepared the following handbook. It contains the policies and procedures we feel are important to you, our Bethany Pastoral Team, to help guide you through premarital counseling, preparation and planning.

## PREMARITAL PROCEDURES

When an engaged couple requests information on getting married or having premarital counseling, they will need to set an appointment with an available pastor or the pastor they request for a premarital interview. A pastor will meet with the couple for the premarital interview to determine the eligibility of the couple to be married based on Bethany criteria. A Premarital Counseling Form must be filled out completely, by both the couple and the pastor.

If the couple meets the criteria to participate in premarital counseling, the pastor will need to communicate with Pastoral Support and indicate if he will be doing the counseling or if a Counseling Couple will be needed. We have trained a number of couples from each campus to do premarital counseling. This provides a couple the option to have counseling after hours since their work schedules usually conflict with the pastors' office hours for counseling. If a counseling couple will be used, Pastoral Support will connect the two parties and make all arrangements. If the pastor will be counseling he may schedule the appointments or Pastoral Support will do so on the Pastoral Care Calendar.

The pastor will turn in the Interview Form to Pastoral Support and if the couple would like to hold their ceremony at Bethany's facilities then a copy of the Interview Form should be forwarded to Bethany's wedding events coordinator. The wedding coordinator will use this form to contact the couple about their wedding plans.

If ineligibility is determined based on Bethany criteria, recommendations will be made to the couple as to their next step.

Couples must successfully complete all aspects of the premarital counseling program. This program is designed to help the couple gain a deeper and more complete understanding of their relationship as well as their commitments and roles in a covenant marriage. The counseling sessions are to be scheduled throughout the engagement period.

Both premarital counseling and wedding plans could be forfeited and/or postponed for any of the following reasons:

- The couple discovers significant unresolved issues during counseling, and the pastor determines that they should no longer pursue marriage.

- The couple falls into sexual sin during the engagement period.
- The couple decides that they no longer desire to be married.

If the wedding is forfeited or postponed for any reason, the Bethany pastor will contact the Bethany wedding coordinator, and all Bethany reservations will be released and the security deposit returned. New wedding dates may not be selected until such a time as the reason for forfeiture has been resolved.

*If you have questions, need assistance or have never done premarital counseling or been trained on reading the compatibility assessment please contact Pastor Chuck Stearns for training and information.*

## Wedding Policy

Couples planning to marry at Bethany Church must be advised of the following guidelines:

- In accordance with Bethany Church by laws, we recognize the biblical definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman, and that romantic and sexual contact between the same sex is sinful according to Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.
- All weddings performed at Bethany facilities must have a Bethany pastor officiating. Guest pastors may assist in the ceremony or must obtain special permission to perform the ceremony.
- Bethany requires couples to obtain a covenant marriage license if a Bethany Pastor is officiating. By law we must provide the couple with a copy of the Covenant Marriage Act (*included in the folder for each couple that is provided to the counselor*) and must appear before a Notary with the Declaration of Intent and Covenant Marriage Affidavit of Attestation signed by the counselor.
- The couple must have a minimum three-month engagement period. During the three months, the couple must successfully complete five premarital sessions.
- Second-marriage weddings are distinctly different in style from first-time weddings. When applicable, the officiating pastor will outline the ceremony guidelines for a second marriage.

\*\*\* If a couple's ceremony is not held in a state where the Covenant Marriage Act is available then it is not a requirement to obtain a Covenant Marriage License.

### Counseling Procedures:

- The interviewing pastor will make sure the initial interview form is filled out completely and turned in to pastoral support admin. PS Admin will use this form as information to provide necessary materials, etc.
- If the couple is requesting to use a Bethany facility for the ceremony, the interviewer needs to email needs to the Events department right away to let them know the name and contact info of the couple and that an interview has been done and the couple is approved. The couple will then need to contact the Events department to make their reservations and arrangements.
- There is an \$80 fee for the premarital materials to be turned in to the pastoral support admin. This materials fee covers the cost of books and the online Symbis assessment.
- Pastoral Support admin. will create a folder with all forms, assessments and materials for each couple and give it to the pastor/counselor. It is very important that upon completion of the counseling that the pastor/counselor turn the folder with the remaining contents back into PS admin.

- Premarital counseling consists of the pastor/counselor going through the book “Called Together” and going over the Symbis compatibility assessment with the couple. This should take approximately 6 weeks.

**List of Counseling materials: Counseling Cost - \$80 per couple**

- Called together (book) - bride and groom each get a copy
- Act of Marriage (book) - bride and groom each get a copy after counseling is completed and only a week prior to the wedding
- Symbis compatibility assessment - online assessment that on completion is sent to the pastoral support admin who will give them to the pastor/counselor
- Copy of instruction on getting a Marriage License in Louisiana
- Copy of Covenant Marriage Act

## PREMARITAL PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

Date of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom’s Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride’s Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Question	Groom	Bride
How long have you attended Bethany?		
Which campus do you attend?		
Are you in a B-Group? Give leaders name.		
Marital Status: Never Married - Widowed - Divorced		
If divorced, legal divorce date:		
Number of children if any:		

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need a pastor to officiate the ceremony? \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor officiating the wedding ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
**THE FOLLOWING INFO IS TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE PASTOR/INTERVIEWER**  
 -----

**INTERVIEWERS NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW:**

Do their parents support their decision to get married? \_\_\_\_\_

Do their leaders/friends support their decision to get married? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the couple living together? \_\_\_\_\_

Do they agree to a covenant marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

**Pastors Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pastor will do Counseling:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Recommend Counseling Coaches:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Cost of Counseling - \$80 per couple*

**\*\*If planning on using any Bethany facilities, the interview must send an email notification to the Events dept. that the couple has been interviewed and approved. The couple then needs to contact the Events dept.**

### Reserving Bethany Facilities

Reserving Bethany facilities for a wedding must be done through our Bethany Events Coordinator. To arrange a meeting, call the offices at 225-293-2100.

### Wedding Fees

**Subject to change due to updates so please check on this before giving out the info. You can always direct them to call Events for accurate info.**

- A \$200 deposit is required to hold the wedding date. This will be applied toward the damage deposit if you choose to keep your date. Otherwise, it will be forfeited.
- A \$500 damage deposit is due 30 days prior to the wedding date. This will be reimbursed to you minus any damages 30 days after the wedding date.
- There will be a \$200 per hour charge for each additional hour of facility use not reserved in advance. This fee will come out of the damage deposit if the facility is not vacated in the allotted time.

**The price of the weddings include:**

- Audio Engineer Services
- Event Coordinator Services
- Facility Manager Services (to be present at event)
- Cleaning
- Two dressing rooms: one for Bride, one for Groom
- One hour rehearsal (night before the wedding)
- Five hours the day of the wedding (including set-up, ceremony, and takedown)
- The total cost is due 30 days prior to the wedding.

**ADDITIONAL HOURS-** There is a \$100 per hour fee for additional hours arranged in advance. This can be requested through the Events Coordinator when scheduling your wedding date.

**SECURITY -** Security can be added to your event at a rate of \$35/hr per officer if requested.

**WEDDING VENUES**

- 1) The Crosses (only includes audio engineer/sound system).....\$400
- 2) Baker Timothy Retreat Center Lodge.....\$650 (max seating 150, date restrictions)
- 3) Baker Main Auditorium.....\$1,300 (max seating 1,500)
- 4) Baker Legacy Room/Wedding Chapel.....\$800 (max seating 300)
- 5) South Baton Rouge Warehouse.....\$900 (max seating 500)
- 6) South Baton Rouge Auditorium .....\$1,600 (max seating 1,800)

\*Fees may change depending on additional room requests. Original rental fee factors in two dressing rooms.

\*Bethany facilities are available for the wedding ceremony only and not available for receptions.

# COVENANT MARRIAGE INFORMATION

## Louisiana Laws on Community Property and Covenant Marriage

Louisiana law, LA-R.S. 9:237, has empowered the attorney general to prepare, for the local officers who issue marriage licenses, a summary of the community property laws and the covenant marriage laws of this state, with the mandate to these local officers to deliver this summary to each prospective spouse when they receive their license to marry. This pamphlet contains the summary of these laws.

It should be understood at the outset that this pamphlet only briefly summarizes the law so that the prospective spouses can have a general idea of what the Louisiana law on these topics contains. For a more detailed analysis on precisely how these laws affect their individual circumstances and what may be the best way to maneuver through this legal pathway, prospective spouses should consult their private attorneys.

### LOUISIANA'S COMMUNITY PROPERTY LAW AND HOW TO CHANGE ITS EFFECTS BY CONTRACT

In Louisiana, marriage affects the property rights of both men and women. The rights of married people to buy, sell or control their property, to borrow money, and to get credit are all regulated by law. "Property" includes almost everything; house, land, bank accounts, stock, pension plans, wages and other income and things of value. A married couple becomes subject to Louisiana's community property law automatically upon marrying, unless they have made a special contract providing different rules to govern their property.

#### What is community property?

The community property laws provide rules on who may incur debts, how those debts are to be paid, and how debts and assets are to be divided between the husband and wife if their community ends.

#### Marriage Contracts

A couple may make a written marriage contract before the wedding which sets out how they want their property owned and controlled. A marriage contract written before marriage does not need court approval for its provisions that are in accordance with Louisiana law to be enforceable. Married people from another state who move into Louisiana, and who do not wish to have their property become community property, have one year after they move to Louisiana to make a marriage contract to that effect without a judge's approval. Their contract is also governed by the Louisiana law on separation of property, so the contract is valid if it is in accordance with relevant Louisiana law. Of course, after the first year, they too may enter a separation of property agreement with court approval.

#### Remember

By law, marriage changes our property rights. The community property law will apply to you if you do not make a special marriage contract. You may make this special contract before or after you are married, but some contracts written after marriage require a judge's approval to be legal. If you were married outside of Louisiana, moving here has changed your property rights. You have one year from the date you moved to make a marriage contract without a judge's approval. The contract must be signed by the man and woman in the presence of a Notary Public and two witnesses or executed by a private signature duly acknowledged. You should see a lawyer so that you will know how the taxes on your property and the inheritance of your property may be changed by your marriage.

### THE COVENANT MARRIAGE ACT

#### What is covenant marriage?

The law describes a covenant marriage as a marriage entered into by one male and one female who understand and agree that the marriage between them is a lifelong relationship.

#### How does a couple enter into a covenant marriage?

In order to enter into a covenant marriage, the couple must take special steps and execute and record special documents on the public record.

The law provides that a man and woman may contract a covenant marriage by declaring their intent to do so on their application for a marriage license and executing a declaration of intent to contract a covenant marriage and then, of course, actually getting married accordingly. The application for a marriage license and the declaration of intent shall be filed with the official who issues the marriage license.

The declaration of intent to contract a covenant marriage shall contain all of the following:

- A recitation signed by both parties
- An affidavit by the parties attesting they have received premarital counseling from a priest, minister, rabbi, clerk of the Religious Society of Friends, any clergyman of any religious sect, or a professional marriage counselor. The seriousness of covenant marriage shall be included in the discussion during counseling.
- An attestation signed by the counselor and attached to or included in the parties' affidavit, confirming that the parties were counseled as to the nature and purpose of the marriage.

- The signature of both parties witnessed by a notary.
- If one or both of the parties are minors, the written consent or authorization of those persons required under the Children's Code to consent to or authorize the marriage of minors.

Thus, the declaration shall contain two separate documents, the recitation and the affidavit of the parties to marriage, the latter of which shall include the attestation of the premarital counselor, either included therein or attached thereto. The recitation of the parties shall be prepared in duplicate originals, one of which shall be retained by the parties and the other, together with the affidavit and attestation, shall be filed with the official who issues the marriage license.

The law also stipulates a method by which already married couples may convert their marriage from a "standard" marriage into a covenant marriage by designating it so. This method is very similar to the method by which covenant marriage is entered into in the first instance, but, in this declaration of intent, the two spouses renew their original marriage promise to love, honor, and care for one another as husband and wife for the rest of their lives and, of course, instead of "premarital counseling," they simply undergo the covenant marriage counseling prior to designating their marriage as a covenant marriage. The declaration of intent and other documents are filed with the state officer who issued their original marriage license and who maintains the record of their marriage certificate. If they were originally married out of state, they file a copy of their marriage certificate from the other state, which does not have to be certified, together with the covenant marriage documents, with the officer who issues marriage license in the parish in which they are domiciled. The officer will then make a notation on the copy of the out-of-state marriage certificate that a declaration of intent has been filed by the couple to designate their marriage as a covenant marriage.

**What are some of the special incidents and effects of a covenant marriage?**

The law provides that the spouses to a covenant marriage owe to each other the same legal obligations as couples in a "standard" marriage, but it also provides, in addition, some special rules. Essentially, these special rules include the following: spouses owe each other love and respect and they commit to a community of living; spouses are bound to live together, unless there is good cause otherwise; the spouses determine the family residence by mutual consent, according to their requirements and those of the family; the management of the household shall be the right and duty of both spouses; and spouses by mutual consent after collaboration should make decisions relating to family life in the best interest of the family.

An extremely important and special incident and effect of a covenant marriage is that each of the parties to the covenant marriage has voluntarily declared, "If we experience marital difficulties, we commit ourselves to take all reasonable efforts to preserve our marriage, including marriage counseling". It should be noted that not only formal marital counseling, if needed, be undertaken by the spouses in times of marital difficulties but also all other reasonable steps as well be observed.

**What are the grounds for a covenant marriage divorce?**

1) The other spouse has committed adultery. 2) The other spouse has committed a felony and has been sentenced to death or imprisonment at hard labor. 3) The other spouse has abandoned the matrimonial domicile for a period of one year and constantly refuses to return. 4) The other spouse has physically or sexually abused the spouse seeking the divorce or a child of one of the spouses. 5) The spouses have been living separate and apart continuously without reconciliation for a period of two years. 6) The spouses have been living separate and apart continuously without reconciliation for a period of one year from the date of the judgment of separation from bed and board was signed. 7) If there is a minor child or children of the marriage, the spouses have been living separate and apart continuously without reconciliation for a period of one year and six months from the date the judgment of separation from bed and board was signed; however, if abuse of a child of the marriage or a child of one of the spouses is the basis for which the judgment of separation from bed and board was obtained, then a judgment of divorce may be obtained if the spouses have been living separate and apart continuously without reconciliation for a period of one year from the date the judgment of separation from bed and board was signed.

**Instead of an immediate divorce, a separation from bed and board may be obtained. The grounds for a judgment of separation from bed and board are as follows:**

1) The other spouse has committed adultery. 2) The other spouse has committed a felony and has been sentenced to death or imprisonment at hard labor. 3) The other spouse has abandoned the matrimonial domicile for a period of one year and constantly refuses to return. 4) The other spouse has physically or sexually abused the spouse seeking the divorce or a child of one of the spouses. 5) The spouses have been living separate and apart continuously without reconciliation for a period of two years. 6) On account of habitual intemperance of the other spouse, or excesses, cruel treatment, or outrages of the other spouse, if such habitual intemperance, or such ill-treatment is of such a nature as to render their living together insupportable.

**Covenant marriage forms**

For samples of the recitation, affidavit, and attestation covenant marriage forms for couples about to enter into marriage or couples already married, please visit the Attorney General's website @ [www.ag.state.la.us](http://www.ag.state.la.us) . Click on "News and Publications" then "Community Property and Covenant Marriage."

**Resources**

Louisiana Department of Justice  
Office of the Attorney General  
(225) 326-6000  
[www.ag.state.la.us](http://www.ag.state.la.us)

Louisiana State Bar Association  
[www.lsba.org](http://www.lsba.org)

Lawyer Referral Services  
Baton Rouge: (225) 344-9926  
Lafayette: (337) 237-4700  
Lake Charles: (337) 436-2914  
New Orleans: (504) 561-8828  
Shreveport: (318) 222-0720

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**COVENANT MARRIAGE  
AFFIDAVIT AND ATTESTATION**

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF \_\_\_\_\_

BE IT KNOWN THAT on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ before me the undersigned notary, personally came and appeared:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

who after being duly sworn by me, deposed and stated that:

Affiants acknowledge that they have received premarital counseling from a priest, minister, rabbi, clerk of the Religious Society of Friends, any clergyman of any religious sect, or a professional marriage counselor, which marriage counseling included:

A discussion of the seriousness of Covenant Marriage:

Communication of the fact that a Covenant Marriage is a commitment for life:

The obligation of a Covenant Marriage to take reasonable efforts to preserve the marriage if marital difficulties arise, and

That the affiants both read the pamphlet entitled "The Covenant Marriage Act" developed and promulgated by the office of the attorney general, which provides a full explanation of a Covenant Marriage, including the obligation to seek marital counseling in times of marital difficulties and the exclusive grounds for legally terminating a Covenant Marriage by divorce or divorce after a judgment of separation from bed and board.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Prospective Spouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Prospective Spouse

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

**ATTESTATION**

The undersigned does hereby attest that the affiants did receive counseling from me as to the nature and purpose of marriage, which included a discussion of the seriousness of Covenant Marriage, communication of the fact that a Covenant Marriage is for life, and the obligation of a Covenant Marriage to take reasonable efforts to preserve the marriage if marital difficulties arise.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Counselor

**STATE OF LOUISIANA**  
**DECLARATION OF INTENT**  
**COVENANT MARRIAGE**

We do solemnly declare that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman who agree to live together as husband and wife for so long as they both may live. We have chosen each other carefully and disclosed to one another everything which could adversely affect the decision to enter into this marriage. We have received premarital counseling on the nature, purposes, and responsibilities of marriage. We have read the Covenant Marriage Act, and we understand that a Covenant Marriage is for life. If we experience marital difficulties, we commit ourselves to take all reasonable efforts to preserve our marriage, including marital counseling.

With full knowledge of what this commitment means, we do hereby declare that our marriage will be bound by Louisiana law on Covenant Marriages and we promise to love, honor, and care for one another as husband and wife for the rest of our lives.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of the Bride)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of the Groom)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Bride)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the Groom)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Date)

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## **PLEASE NOTE**

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**\*The marriage ceremony can not be performed within TWENTY FOUR ( 24 ) hours from the date and time in which your license was issued.**

**\*This marriage license is only valid for thirty (30) days. If you have not used this marriage license within 30 days, it will expire. You will have to re-apply and pay another \$27.50 fee to have a new license issued.**

## NOTARY AND LICENSE INFORMATION

**Suggested Locations:** Check prior to going to be sure the location you choose is still an active location

Marriage Licenses are issued at the following locations in East Baton Rouge Parish, open 7:30 a.m until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except legal holidays:

### Downtown Clerk of Court

Public Service Department  
East Baton Rouge Parish City Hall/Governmental Building  
222 St. Louis Street, Room B115  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
(225) 389-3950

### Coursey Clerk of Court Branch Office

Public Service Department  
10500 Coursey Boulevard, 2nd Floor  
Baton Rouge, LA 70816  
(225) 293-2933

Marriage Licenses are issued at the following location in East Baton Rouge Parish, Monday through Friday, except legal holidays:

### Baker Municipal Annex

1320 Alabama Street  
Baker, LA 70714  
(225) 778-1866  
open 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

*Please arrive at least 30 minutes prior to closing in order to allow time for processing.*

*If you are applying at the Baker office, please call in advance to ensure that applications can be issued at your preferred arrival time.*



**DOUG WELBORN**  
CLERK OF COURT  
  
19TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

Public Service Department  
P. O. Box 1991  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1991  
Telephone: (225) 389-3950  
Fax: (225) 389-7835  
www.ebrclerkofcourt.org

## **MARRIAGE OFFICIANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The person who performs the marriage ceremony, the officiant, should:**

Know the state regulations regarding the performance of a marriage, including any registration requirements for officiants.

Complete the officiant's portion of the marriage certificate (items 32 through 39) by entering the date, time place of marriage and his or her signature, name, title and address.

Obtain signatures of bride, groom/applicants and witnesses (items 40A through 41B) on marriage certificate.

### **THE LICENSE MUST BE RETURNED TO THIS OFFICE WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS.**

*In accordance with LSA-R.S. 9:254, which reads in part -"Any person authorized to perform marriages in this state who fails to complete the forms provided by the Department of Social Services,...or fails to file the two executed copies with the Clerk of Court...,within ten days after the date of the marriage as provided by law, shall be fined...,and the offender shall be prohibited thereafter from officiating at any marriage in this state."*

**FOR PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE PURPOSES, A MARRIAGE APPLICATION MUST BE SIGNED IN BLACK OR BLUE INK. IT WILL BE REJECTED IF IT IS SIGNED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN BLACK OR BLUE INK.**

**TORN, TAPED OR SOILED MARRIAGE LICENSES WILL BE REJECTED.**



## DOUG WELBORN

CLERK OF COURT

19TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

P. O. Box 1991  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1991  
Telephone: (225) 389-3950  
Fax: (225)389-7835  
www.ebrclerkofcourt.org

### CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

1. A marriage ceremony shall not be performed until a (TWENTY FOUR) hour period has elapsed between the time of issuance of the license and the proposed ceremony. \*\*If there is a serious or grave reason for performing the marriage within a shorter period of time, the Family Court Judge may waive the time period.
2. The ceremony must be performed in the presence of two(2) witnesses, age 18 or older. The witnesses must sign lines 41A and 41B on the marriage license in **black or blue ink**.
3. The bride and groom must sign lines 40A & 40B, respectively in **black or blue ink**.
4. The official must complete lines 32 through 39 in **black or blue ink**.
5. The ceremony may be religious or civil. Clergyman must be registered in the parish in which they principally perform, however the registration is effective for the entire state of Louisiana.
6. Lines 32 through 41B must be filled in completely and in **black or blue ink**.
7. The license (both white copies) should be returned to the Clerk of Court **within 10 days** after the ceremony has been performed.

**The Bureau of Vital Records will return all licenses not filled in completely and correctly.  
Lines 32 through 41B should be completed in black or blue ink.**

8. The "Gold Leaf Certificate" is your copy of the marriage license and **should not** be mailed to the Clerk of Court. This certificate is to be filled in by the witnesses, bride and groom, and the officiant in the appropriate spaces in **black ink**. This **DOES NOT** serve as a certified copy of your marriage license.
9. For certified copies of your marriage license, mail a cashier's check or money order (**NO PERSONAL CHECKS**) made payable to the "Clerk of Court" in the amount of \$10.00 to:  
Honorable Doug Welborn  
19th JDC Clerk of Court  
P.O. Box 1991  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821  
ATTN: Public Service Department
10. If you have any additional questions, please contact our Public Service Department at (225) 389-3950.

# Typical Order of Wedding

Most wedding ceremonies contain most of these elements. This is only an example to assist with helping couples plan their ceremony, not to be interpreted as an official order of service.

1. Wedding processional or entrance of the bride and groom, and wedding party if applicable
2. Music, literature, and poetry or wedding readings from the Bible
3. Attendants or witnesses to sign the wedding certificate or marriage license
4. Wedding Vows
5. Exchange of wedding rings or gifts
6. A blessing, benediction, community commitment to support the marriage, or officiates sanction of the marriage
7. A first kiss as a married couple
8. A recessional

Some weddings also include a unity candle ceremony or other unity ceremony.

Here are samples of a wedding ceremony:

## **PROCESSIONAL**

### **OPENING WORDS OF THE OFFICIATE**

The wedding should begin by welcoming your guests.

*Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here today in the presence of these witnesses, to join \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in matrimony, which is commended to be honorable among all men; and therefore - is not by any - to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly - but reverently, discreetly, advisedly and solemnly. Into this holy estate these two persons present now come to be joined.*

Another variation is:

*Friends, we have been invited here today to share with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ a very important moment in their lives. In the years they have been together, their love and understanding of each other has grown and matured, and now they have decided to live their lives together as husband and wife.*

### **THE GIVING IN MARRIAGE (optional)**

The traditional wording is "Who gives this woman to be wedded to this man"

### **AN OPENING PRAYER OR READING**

This will generally set the tone of your wedding. It could be serious, humorous, sentimental, or elegant. Typically, it says something about love, relationships, or marriages.

### **DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE**

Here the officiant says some words about marriage in general. He will most likely talk about the seriousness of the solemn vow you are about to make, and the new life together you are creating.

## **SECOND READING OR SONG**

### **EXCHANGE OF RINGS OR GIFTS**

The bride and groom say something like "I (name) give you (name) this ring as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you."

### **LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE, COMMUNION, OR OTHER UNITY CEREMONY (optional)**

Many couples are choosing to add a unity ceremony. They may choose to do this in silence, with music playing or they may create vows to say about the joining of their families.

### **CLOSING**

This could be a poem, a prayer, or a sanctioning of the marriage. It is generally the "final thoughts" of the officiate.

### **DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE**

The officiate typically says something akin to "By the power vested in me by the State of \_\_\_\_\_, I now pronounce you husband and wife". This is followed by the first kiss of the newly married couple. The officiate will say "You may now kiss the bride".

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEWLYWEDS**

The officiant says "I present to you Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_". The guests stand and applaud, as the couple then lead the recessional.

### **ANOTHER OPTION:**

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony which is commended of the Bible to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these come now to be joined together.

### **Read Ephesians 5:21-28**

Marriage is a covenant relationship, not a contract.

A covenant is based on trust between parties...a contract is based on distrust.  
A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility...a contract is based on limited liability.  
A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur...a contract can be voided by mutual consent.



**Reciting of Vows:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wedded 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, till death do us part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my troth.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wedded 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, cherish and to obey, till death us do part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my troth.

**The Rings**

May I have the rings, please?

This ring is a never ending circle. It is never to be broken, as this marriage covenant is never to be broken. It is made of Gold and will not tarnish, as your love for each other will never tarnish.

\_\_\_\_\_ take this ring and place it on \_\_\_\_\_’s finger and repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, with this ring I pledge my life to you, and I covenant before God and these witnesses to be a loyal, loving and faithful husband all the days of my life.

\_\_\_\_\_, take this ring and place it on \_\_\_\_\_’s finger and repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, with this ring I pledge my life to you, and I covenant before God and these witnesses to be a loyal loving and faithful wife all the days of my life.

**Pronounce Husband and Wife**

For as much as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have consented together in holy wedlock before God and this company, and have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining hands; I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

**Kiss the Bride**

**PREMARITAL COUNSELING  
INDIVIDUAL COUPLE**

**NAMES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Payment: \$80.00**

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment

Personality Profile

**COUNSELOR:** \_\_\_\_\_