

Basic Elements of a Wedding

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- The bride and the groom are the principal “ministers” of the day (they marry each other – versus being married “by” someone). The priest is witnessing the vows on behalf of the church and wider community and also offers a blessing or other prayers. In most cases, the priest also attests the marriage contract (civil marriage license issued by the state).
- A range of readings from scripture or other meaningful sources is often included – can include poetry or passages of stories or essays. If there is communion, one reading from the gospels is included. A gospel reading can be included with or without communion. Typically there is only one reading each from Hebrew Scripture, Christian Testament and Gospels (versus two gospel readings or two Hebrew scripture readings). One can have one, two or three readings and can mix scripture readings with readings from other sources (such as good poetry or a prose passage). Music is often interspersed with the readings. If this sounds confusing, discuss it with the priest.
- Music is often included – usually of a different, more reflective or spiritual nature than will be included later in the celebration (such as theatre, dance or other popular music that will be included in the reception).
- One can choose to have or omit receiving communion. It is also possible for the wedding couple or wedding party to receive communion and not the rest of the congregation.

*In descending order of **importance** (not the order in which they appear in the service):*

1. Vows or promises
2. Declaration of consent/statement of intentions
3. Giving of rings or other symbol of the vows/promises
4. Statement of Officiant witnessing to the marriage that has taken place
5. Blessing
6. Other Prayers
7. Readings (scripture or other sources)
8. Music
9. An opening address
10. A wedding letter or personal statement of bride/groom to one another