

# *Ceremonies & Rituals*

*Together we will create a wedding ceremony that reflects who you are as individuals and as a couple. By including traditions, customs, and rituals within your wedding ceremony you can make it more meaningful.*

*Here are some ideas to make your ceremony more memorable, to honour your families, and to include those people close to you.*

## *Sand Ceremony*

The sand ceremony offers a visual element to your wedding.

At its simplest, a sand ceremony involves a symbolic blending of two different-colored sands into a single vessel. The meaning is clear: The blending of two different beings, the bride and the groom, into a single, inseparable unit that is their marriage - the joining of their lives. A very appropriate and visually appealing ritual for weddings located by the beach/sea/ocean/water. This ceremony can be conducted indoors or outdoors and is not affected by the light or wind. You also end up with a beautiful memento of your wedding ceremony.

*“Difficult as it would be to separate these grains of sand that's how difficult it is to separate these two people”*



## ***Family Sand Ceremony***

One of the greatest benefits to the sand ceremony is how easily it is to personalize. It lends itself especially well to blended families, when the bride and/or groom already have children. Having each child pour his or her own colored sand into the vessel along with the couple involves them in the ceremony - and in the finished product. You don't have to stop at the children, you can include your parents, the wedding party – whoever you like.

Other ways to personalize the ceremony include:

- Collecting sand from meaningful sources - using sand from favorite beaches or from vacation spots can add some extra poignancy to the ceremony.
- Coordinating the sand colors to the wedding colors
- Choosing a vase, urn or shell that has special meaning to the couple.

Coloured sand and full sand ceremony kits are available on-line or in specialized stores.

\* It's important to practice the sand ceremony. It's especially important to have your quantities right. Ensure that the amount each person will pour will fit correctly into the vessel that represents your marriage. No good if it gets to the groom or the last child and there is no room left in the vessel.

***“When we blend these sands together, they create a beautiful masterpiece that is your new family”***



## ***Wine Ceremony***

### ***Champagne Ceremony***

There are many variations to the wine ceremony. You can use it to symbolize blending two lives by blending two carafes of wine into a larger carafe, then drinking from the blended wine. You can symbolize how you will share your life together by sharing a single glass of wine.

A very appropriate ritual for weddings celebrated at vineyards or a very appropriate ritual for those of us who like wine (or champagne)!

A lot of couples have a special wine glass engraved with their wedding date and their names to keep as a memento of their ceremony. Perhaps you can toast each other or share a glass on each wedding anniversary.

Some words below can be incorporated into this ceremony:

***“We all know that the rose is the symbol of love.  
In this glass is rose wine – another symbol of love”***

\*

***“May your lives together grow deeper, richer and greatly satisfying, like a rare and  
fine wine”***

\*

***“This wine glass is to remind you of your love – something delicate, yet strong”***

\*

***“If wine has been called the symbol of life then champagne surely represents  
the fun and celebration of life”***



## *The Celtic Loving Cup Ritual*

The years of life are as a cup of wine poured out for you to drink.  
The cup of life contains within it, the sweet wine of happiness and delight.  
The same cup, at times, holds the bitter wine of disappointment or grief.  
Those who drink deeply from the cup of life with an open heart and willing spirit,  
invite the full range of challenges and experiences into their being.  
Now drink to the love you've shared in the past.  
Drink to your love in the present, on this your wedding day.  
And drink to your love in the future and forever more!

(at this point the cup can be passed to others, say parents)

As you have shared the wine from this Loving Cup, so may you share your lives.  
From love all things proceed and unto love they must return.  
May you find life's joys heightened, it's bitterness sweetened,  
and all of life enriched by God's blessings upon you  
(or. . . and all of life enriched by the love of family and friends).

*\*Traditionally, the Loving Cup is a two handled cup used by the bride and groom to share their first drink of married life together, to toast each other's happiness.  
If you intend to include others in this ritual, of course, you will need a larger cup!*



## ***Celtic Anam Cara Ceremony “Soul Friend”***

Another traditional Celtic ceremony using the 4 elements, earth, water, wind and fire. Earth is represented by the pebble that each guest holds during your vows. To represent water – you share a glass of water, to represent wind – you share a kiss, and for fire – you light a candle. After the ceremony all the guests are invited to place the pebble they held during your vows into a bowl. The number of pebbles in the bowl is the exact number of people present at your wedding ceremony. This ceremony is a great way to involve the guests and it also presents you with a beautiful memento to keep and display in your home or garden.



## ***Variation***

### ***Blessing Stones / Oathing Stones***

It is believed that holding the stone during the reading of vows, casts them into the stone – hence the term “set in stone”. As the couple exchange their wedding vows, guests hold a blessing stone tightly in their hand. Guests are asked to reflect for a moment on the wishes they have for this couple - for love, happiness, prosperity and unity.



## ***Hand Fasting / Love Knot Ceremonies***

There are many variations to hand fasting. You can just hold hands or your hands can be bound with cords, ribbons or scarves. Your mothers or fathers can bind your hands to show that the family gives the relationship their blessing. This ancient ritual dates back to even before Medieval times. A couple joined hands over the village anvil, under the stars or in a grove of trees and declared their intent to accept each other as life partners. They would link hands and a cord or a cloth would be knotted around their hands symbolizing the tying together of two lives. This is where we get the expression ‘tying the knot’.

***These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you.***

***These are the hands that are holding yours on your wedding day  
as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever.***

***These are the hands that will work along side yours  
as together you build your future.***

***These are the hands that will passionately love you & cherish you through the years  
and with the slightest touch - will comfort you like no other.***

***These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief wracks your mind.***

***These are the hands that will countless times wipe tears from your eyes  
tears of joy and tears of sorrow.***

***These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children.***

***These are the hands that will help hold your family together as one.***

***These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.***

***These are the hands that even when wrinkled with age, will still be reaching  
for yours – still giving the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch***



## *Some ways to involve Mums within the Ceremony*



### *Last Kiss before the First Kiss*

These mother's lips were the first to kiss  
them and bring them into this world  
and today a mother's love,  
together with their blessings,  
will be first to send them on their way

### *Mother's Blessing Ring Ceremony*

Your mothers have taught you so much.  
You can honour them by having them  
'bless' your wedding rings before you  
present them to each other.

*"MOTHER,  
I ask that you hold these rings  
for just a moment, to warm them  
with your love"*



### *Rose Ceremony*

Acknowledge the love and sacrifice that  
mothers have made for their children by  
giving them a Rose. This is often kept a  
secret until the roses are presented.

## ***Arras Ceremony***

The custom of the coins originated in Spain. 13 coins represent the different values that the couple desire to share between themselves:

***Love, Harmony, Cooperation, Commitment, Peace, Happiness,  
Trust, Respect, Caring, Wisdom, Joy, Wholeness & Nurturing.***

The Groom gives the coins to the Bride symbolizing that he will share with her all his worldly goods. Then the Bride gives the coins back to the Groom essentially telling him that she accepts his gift but,

***What's Mine is Yours and What's Yours is Mine***



## ***Warming of the Rings***

Before the wedding rings are exchanged, they are passed among the family or the guests. Each guest is asked to hold the rings for a moment, warm them with love, then pass them onto the next person. When the rings return they will contain in their precious metal, that which is more precious, that which is priceless: the love, hope and pledge of support for the union.

*Music is played while the rings are being "warmed".*





## ***Butterfly Release***

According to an American Indian Legend - If anyone desires a wish to come true they must first capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it. Since a butterfly can make no sound, the butterfly can not reveal the wish to anyone but the Great Spirit who hears and sees all. In gratitude for giving the beautiful butterfly its freedom, the Great Spirit always grants the wish.



## ***Dove Release***

White doves are the symbol of Love, Peace and Hope. They pair for life, and at the end of each day they return to the same home for the night. As the couple release the doves, family and friends are asked to witness this very symbolic gesture, which heralds the beginning of their new life together.

***“We wish you a love that, like the doves, continues to soar. We wish you peace as you work together to make a home ...”***



## ***Unity Candle***

Probably the most well known of all wedding ceremony rituals. It's definitely wiser to hold this ceremony indoors. Traditionally, there are three candles – 2 tapers and a larger 'unity' candle in the centre. You can involve your parents by having them come forward to light the tapers. The couple each take a taper and together they light the centre candle. They may then blow out the tapers to symbolize the extinguishing of their two single lives. Or, as is more common today, they may keep the tapers burning to symbolize that their individuality is not extinguished, even though they are united in marriage.

***May the blessing of light,  
Be with you always,  
Light without and light within.  
And may the sun shine  
Upon you and warm your heart  
Until it glows  
Like a great fire  
So that others may feel  
The warmth of your love  
For one another.***



## *Unity Candle Variations*

- ❖ All guests are given a candle. From the back, the guests pass the flame from candle to candle until all candles are lit. Finally, the couple take the flame and together, they light the unity candle that represents their marriage. This variation typically includes a proclamation that this ceremony represents the unity of friends and family supporting the couple in their marriage.
- ❖ You can involve your children in the ceremony, calling it a Family Unity Candle.



## *Rose Ceremony*

The couple exchange two roses, symbolizing the giving and receiving of their love for each other throughout their entire married life. This ceremony also talks about forgiveness and understanding and conveys how to use the rose and its symbolism in difficult times.

***"Accept this rose as a symbol of my love. Like our love, it has blossomed from a tiny bud into a breathtaking thing of beauty."***



## ***San San Kudo - Sake Ceremony***

San-san-kudo literally translates as "three-three-nine-times," and is a formal and ritualized drinking of a small amount of sake. The groom usually goes first, taking three sips from the first cup to finally drain it of its contents. Sake is poured for the bride and she takes three sips from the cup to finally drain it of its contents. This ritual is repeated for the middle and finally the bottom cup. In the end, they will have sipped sake three times from each of three cups, with the total being nine times. The remaining sake is then offered to their parents as a way of representing the unification of the two families. Drinking the sake is a sign that the marriage vows are sealed.

Why three and nine? Why not two-two-six or the even more intoxicating four-four-twelve? Because odd numbers are far more auspicious in Japan, and in particular the number three. Odd numbers cannot be divided by two (very appropriate for a wedding – the two shall not be divided).



## ***Balloon Ceremony***

Symbolize the hopes and dreams for your relationship by releasing some balloons. Make sure the balloons are latex - a 100% natural substance. Latex balloons are biodegradable which means they will break down in sunlight, air and water and will therefore not harm the wildlife. You will also need to check that you are not near an airport. The can release 2 balloons, a bunch of balloons or you can involve the whole wedding party.

