

How to have a productive Wedding Rehearsal

The Purpose of the Wedding Rehearsal is:

- the opportunity to figure out all the tiny logistical details
- make your wedding ceremony run smoothly
- entering, exiting, of bridal party, groom, bride
- which way to face and when
- handling the rings,
- handling the bouquet & when to pass it to maid of honor
- Candle lighters, Readers, special rituals in your ceremony
- Seating of parents/grandparents
- Cues and who's role it is
- Flower girl & ring bearer roles, where to stand or sit
- Maid of Honor & Best Man Roles
- The Bride and her escort need to know where to stop
- What happens at the altar standing, facing
- Table set up for Unity Candle & Sand Ceremony, Roses for mothers
- Prepares you for your special day.
- These steps need to be practiced so that each phase of the ceremony flows smoothly, seamlessly, beautifully so that on your wedding day everyone will be confident and poised. All of which you gained from your rehearsal

Do I need a Wedding Rehearsal?

Not every ceremony needs a rehearsal. If the ceremony participants are the Bride and Groom and their 2 attendants, a rehearsal is not necessary. If you are not having a processional, music, or very small informal wedding; In that case, arrangements can be made to have the Groom to give me the marriage license to review immediately before the ceremony.

Who should attend the wedding rehearsal?

- All members of the wedding party , bride, the groom, best man, maid of honor, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girl, ring bearer,
- readers, Ushers
- Mothers and fathers. Grandparents should come if possible.
- Ideally, the person who will be in charge of the music & photography if they are not professionals
- Professional Wedding musicians, Professional Wedding D.J. and Professional Wedding photographers will not need to attend a few minute conversations prior to the wedding is all that is required for coordination. Professional experienced wedding is the key as they know what to do and how to do their job.
- Everyone should arrive on time because we will start on time.

Planning the day and time of your rehearsal

- Please keep in mind that planning a rehearsal for a Friday evening or sometime Saturday may not be a good idea. That's because probably 99% of all weddings take place from Friday afternoon through Sunday evening. Your ceremony location and/or wedding officiant may have more than one event planned for the weekend you are getting married.
- Also, many couples make the mistake of checking everyone else's schedule to set the rehearsal, and then assume their wedding officiant will make it. Instead, you should check with the officiant first to find out their availability, and the venue to be sure they are available and not booked and then with everyone else. If you set the rehearsal without first checking with your officiant, and then find out your officiant has another commitment (such as a wedding) at the same time, you will be doing your rehearsal without your officiant and may not have the venue to practice in!

Prior to the Rehearsal:

- Try to have the rehearsal at the wedding site
- Names of attendants and the order in which they are to stand (farthest out will walk first)
- List who will be attending the rehearsal and their roles
- Names of candle lighters, readers, or any other special ritual included in ceremony
- Names of the ushers who will seat the mothers.
- Number of family rows to be reserved.
- Number of grandparents to be seated.

- Specific seats should be assigned to family members
- Will the Mothers enter first carrying the Unity Sand or Light the Unity Candles?
- We decide then how the Groom will make his entrance...with officiant, with officiant and best man?
- How will the Groomsmen enter...single file with the Officiant, Groom and Best Man, or escorting the Bridesmaids?
- Who are the Groomsmen paired with if they escort the Bridesmaids in?
- Does the Maid or Matron of Honor enter alone or is she escorted by the Best Man?
- Will the Flower Girl drop petals and will she sit after the processional or stand at the Altar?
- If no flower girl, and using rose petals who will drop them?
- After the Recessional, you can choose to have a receiving line or not
- Decide if the Officiant will be asking “who gives this bride to this man” or say nothing
- Will the ring bearer sit after the processional or stand at the altar?
- Ushers, should know whom they will be seating, and vice versa.
- Reserve seats for immediate family members.
- Entering with escort:
 - Escorted by her father and/or mother. Escorted by her children.
 - Escorted by close friend(s) in lieu of absent or deceased family members.
 - Escorted by her groom. In other words the couple walks down the aisle together.
 - Unescorted. (A strong statement of equality).

Altar

- Actual Vows and Rings exchange are never practiced
- Everyone will know exactly where to stand once they enter
- Perform any duties they are assigned.
- I will show you how to stand, where to face and everything else that is needed.
- Special Rituals as Sand Ceremony, Unity Candle, Readings, Blessing, Roses for Mothers etc

Recessional

- Facing the guests for the Announcement
- We will practice exiting and walking down the aisle.
- When to stop for the Second Kiss,
- How the Groomsmen escort the Bridesmaids out.

Officiant

- Your officiant is the best person for your rehearsal. They know your ceremony from start to finish and what will be taking place throughout the ceremony. If you Officiant will not be attending your rehearsal will the person who is directing the rehearsal make you feel comfortable and confident for your wedding ceremony and be knowledgeable to know what is going on throughout the ceremony?
- Plan on up to one hour for the rehearsal
- We will start on time. Make sure whoever needs to be there is on time. Generally if you have your rehearsal dinner first, everyone will be there and we can get started. Also, because they have had time to calm down and eat dinner everyone is more attentive.
- If someone is late or can't make it, the person standing next to him/her will give them instructions. We will not delay the rehearsal
- Occasionally you will find a few people who have their own “ideas” as how things should be done, that is fine, their suggestions are welcome and they may have a good idea. However, this is your wedding and you will have the final say. We will not waste time debating with anyone should they become too opinionated!

Misc However Important:

- The marriage license should be delivered to the Officiant at the rehearsal if not prior to that date.
- All payments should have been paid unless agreed to be paid at this time
- Bring practice bouquets for the Bride and her Bridesmaids so they will know how to properly hold them and
- Crying or disruptive children. Not a pleasant subject but one that needs to be mentioned. Nothing ruins a wedding ceremony more than a crying child. Children who are disruptive or crying loudly during the ceremony should be removed from the ceremony. This is your wedding and it will be very stressful for you when this is going on. A crying child will become the focus of the entire audience. If you are having your wedding videotaped, it can be a big problem. It is the role of the usher to take care of this matter politely and discretely.
- The roses for mothers should have a table where they can be placed before the ceremony.
- Unity Candles, Sand Ceremonies and other rituals require a table at the altar site
- If you are not having any flowers delivered to the ceremony site, please assign one of the groomsmen or ushers to bring the flowers for the rose ceremony to the ceremony site when they come. It should not be one of the bridesmaids as they will not arriving until the wedding is about to begin.

- Unity candle and sand ceremony set up prior to the wedding by an assigned person
- It's important to remember that your rehearsal should be a pleasant part of your wedding events.
- Make your rehearsal as much fun and as pleasant as you can. Your attendants will thank you and you will find that you too are far less anxious if you do it with a smile. Keep in mind that it's your wedding, although certainly an important event is not by any means, a performance. It is instead, a very special moment that you choose to share with your friends and family. No one will be keeping score or grading you or taking notes. Everyone will be caught up in the joy of the moment. You should be too!
- **Guests:** Your guests will begin arriving at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony for all weddings. Indoor and outdoor! They are excited, want to make sure they get there on time, and want a good parking spot and the best seats! Due to the Florida heat, your guests will become overheated very quickly sitting or standing in the sun. On numerous occasions, I have arrived to find guests very uncomfortable and hot especially the elderly and children.
- **Outdoor warm weather:** Have a supply of cold bottled water in coolers etc. This water can be passed out by the groomsmen or ushers. It will help keep your guests more comfortable.
- **Microphones:** Officiant does not carry a microphone. Generally your music provider will provide a microphone for the officiant as they control the sound levels and they use their amplifiers for quality sound. **Please note:** the microphone **must be** a clip-on or on a stand; it is very difficult for the Officiant to read from a book, flip pages, and handle rings while trying to hold a mic.
- **Don't expect perfection! Nerves, Stress, and Human Nature creates "situations" out of everyone's control. Nobody is there to see a perfect wedding. They are there to celebrate and support your decision to be married! Remember this is not a play or stage show it is a wedding ceremony. It is about the two of you. Your guests are there to witness and celebrate with you. A good Officiant will keep them focused on the two of you.**
- **Ring Exchange during Wedding Ceremony:**
Proper Etiquette: The Wedding band is worn on the third finger of the left hand. The wedding ring always goes on first. The wedding ring is the symbol of marriage. It is worn closest to the heart and is addressed in the Book of Commons. Prior to the ceremony the bride should move the engagement ring to the right hand. During the ceremony the groom will place the wedding band on the finger, he may then place the engagement ring on the outside of the wedding ring or following the ceremony the bride may move the engagement ring back to the ring finger of the left hand on the outside of the wedding ring.