

Organizing Your Wedding Ceremony

Your wedding ceremony just may be the most important part of your entire wedding plan. However, it's often left out until a few weeks or even a few days before the actual event. It's very important to engage in conversation early on as to how you want your ceremony to work. Location is an important part of your plan, and sets the stage of how the ceremony will flow. A ceremony inside a church will have a completely different set of parameters than a ceremony outside in a park, garden or on a beach. Each location presents its own set of advantages and challenges. Once you decide on the location of your ceremony, you can begin creating your program.

Here are some tips on how you can make this a less stressful part of your wedding planning:

1. Meet with your officiate and wedding planner/coordinator to establish a game plan. Most religious or civil officiates should be able to offer you a basic outline of their ceremony that you can map yours to.
2. Discuss any changes you want to make to the traditional order. You may want to be escorted down the aisle by both of your parents or by your grandmother. Some couples prefer a shorter or less traditional ceremony. Be sure to share your wishes with your officiate and planner. It's your ceremony and you can have as much or as little as you want.
3. Make sure the best man and maid/matron of honor know the order of the ceremony before the rehearsal. This is their opportunity to step up and help make sure everything is thought through and in place.
4. Be prepared to omit some parts of the ceremony, if you are using very young children as ring bearer or flower girl. They can get stage fright or ill at the last minute. Have an exit strategy prepared for them. Be sure your coordinator has escorts available for them if they need to leave the room.
5. Think about whether you will write your own vows or use prescribed vows from your officiate. This will affect the timing of your ceremony, particularly if you get poetic. Think also about if you're having a reading. Allow a little extra time for readers to get up and walk to the reading area and get their glasses out.
6. Make sure you talk about the kiss. It's one of the most awkward moments of the wedding ceremony. Practice!

Communicating what you want is the most important part of planning your wedding ceremony. Be gentle in your communication, but hold firm to what you want. And, make sure the program is ready a week ahead of time. You'll get better presents, we promise!



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