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## Wedding Ceremonies – Traditions And Customs

By Sharon Stajda

Weddings require a lot of planning, even traditional weddings that are intended to include particular ceremonies. Here are a few tips you may find helpful when including any ceremonial practices into your special day.

### Wedding Rings

A wedding ring is a symbol of wholeness, unity, and eternity. Some couples choose a double ring ceremony or a single ring ceremony, regardless there is usually some type of `blessing of the ring/s' and it's a good idea to talk to your wedding officiate to see if water will be used or not.

If the marriage between the two people will be catered to one of the spouse's religions that the other spouse is not familiar with it's a good idea to ask about ring placement because in Jewish ceremonies the ring is always placed on the index finger of the bride's right hand. It's worth checking.

### Wedding Vows

Always discuss the wedding vows together as well as with your priest/officiate to decide what options are available as far as changing any terminology such as `man', `wife' or `woman'. You may decide to use standard vows or write your own.

Either way give your vows great vows because these vows are the beginning of your life together and if traditional vows don't appeal to you, it's best to write your own.

### Unity Candles

Some couples use unity candles and it's important to consider what you would like the candle/s to symbolize. One important idea to ponder is who will light the candle/s?

Unity candles can be lit by: the couple, just the husband, just the wife, parents, other family members (aunts, uncles, cousins, god parents), and even children from previous marriages.

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Other things to consider: Leaving the candle/s lit can signify becoming one while still retaining your individuality, blowing the candle/s out can signify your own unity as becoming one, and you should decide the decoration of your candle/s. You can buy them pre-decorated or do it yourself.

### Communion

Considering the attendees are important and if all of the attendees are of the same religion, this may be accepted but if the attendees are of mixed religions, communion is something to consider. It's a good idea to place a note in the wedding ceremony program giving people notice and an idea of what to expect.

### Other Things to Consider

Flowers are often symbolic items used in weddings and can symbolize whatever the bride and groom wish them to be used for. Brides maids can place flowers at the brides feet, give them to the women of the bride's and groom's families. In the old Roman Catholic tradition flowers were placed near a picture or a statue of Mother Mary. Some denominations carry bibles under their bouquets as a symbol of faith and God's blessing.

Ultimately it's up to the bride and the groom, however, some people get so caught up in the planning that it's just hard to keep track. The best advice is to make a checklist of every item on the agenda and follow it.

For more information about wedding customs and traditions, visit the following url:

<http://www.oldandsold.com/articles25/marriage-customs-1.shtml>

## **The Traditions Of A Western Wedding**

**By Julia Tanner**

For people of Eastern descent, the customs and traditions of a Western wedding may seem odd. In fact, it may appear that there are no distinct characteristics. In truth, part of the Western wedding customs includes freedom and independence to celebrate in whatever manner the bride and groom wish. However, there are a few standard customs that, although they may not be practiced at every wedding, are acknowledged as being traditional.

The traditional clothing worn by the bride is a white gown, usually floor length. The white symbolizes purity, but can be adorned with beading or sequence. This is a custom that is still very popular in Western weddings. However, many brides choose variations of the traditional style, such as short dresses or an off-white version. The groom and his party will most often wear black tuxedos. Traditionally, these are worn with ties; however, many popular styles also have no collar with a button clasp at the neck.

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Most often, the bride is walked down the aisle and "given away" by her father. This is a very old custom which is still practiced. However, as families mix and marriages sometimes happen later in life, some brides choose their sons, brothers, or step-fathers to walk them down the aisle.

Other customs of a Western wedding include the bride wearing a garter on one leg, which is removed and thrown to the guests at the end of the wedding. The bride will also throw her bouquet at the end of the wedding; the lucky girl to catch it is said to be the next married. It is also common for the wedding vehicle to be covered with shaving cream, balloons, or cans and messages to be written on the glass to show others they were just married. While the origins of these traditions are unclear, they are stringently adhered to by many in Western weddings.

There is also a rhyme which speaks of a Western wedding custom, "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue", which are all of the things the bride is supposed to wear to her wedding to guarantee good luck. They can be any items that fit in those categories, but all four must be worn at the time of the ceremony.

Traditionally, the bride's parents pay for the wedding. This is probably based on the dowry customs which are no longer practiced in the West. Much like the old customs, this is steadily fading in Western weddings also.

Julia Tanner is a professional writer. More articles can be found at:

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