

Marriage Symbols

The following is a selection of ceremonial symbols, designed to articulate and underpin the bond between two people during a marriage ceremony.

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A Wishing Box

This is where the guests, family and friends write messages to the bride and groom on their wedding day.

The messages are placed in the box, which may be opened many years later, usually to commemorate a special occasion such as an anniversary, or a poignant birthday of a son or daughter.



United Hands Forever

This is where the bride and groom join hands, whilst a plaster cast of the moment is captured for eternity.



Handfasting Ceremony

Derived from Celtic tradition, Handfasting is where the bride and groom drape a ribbon of their choice, material and colour across their hands during the marriage ceremony.

The ribbon is placed loosely across the couple's hands representing marital unity. The couple keep the ribbon as a symbol of their commitment.



Releasing of Doves

The symbol of releasing doves during a ceremony signifies a new beginning.

The release of doves during a marriage ceremony is a spectacular and memorable event, adding a dimension to the ceremony that is almost unrivalled.



Sand Ceremony

The sand ceremony involves the wedding couple and/or close family, adding different coloured sands to a glass container.

Each contributor is given a specific colour, taking it in turns to add the sand to the container in varying concentrations and intensities.

The overall effect of the resultant layered sand is to signify the importance of each person's contribution towards the welfare and moral support of the wedding couple.



The Rose Ceremony

During the Rose Ceremony there is an exchange of red roses between the bride and groom. The significance of the exchange is to demonstrate the 'love' between the wedded couple.

Only two roses are required for the exchange, whilst the ceremony traditionally follows the official vow exchange.



Wine Ceremony

The wine ceremony involves the pouring of various wines into a central glass or cup.

The various wines are meant to represent the 'journey' of life ahead for the wedded couple, which is why mixing wines of differing varietals is an important part of the ceremony. For example, red wines with a more bitter taste may represent the hard times ahead, whilst sweeter white wines may represent the more prosperous and joyous times ahead.

Finally, the bride and groom drink from the glass or cup once it has been filled with the bittersweet mixture of wines. This demonstrates symbolically their acceptance of the challenges that may lie ahead in marriage.



Candle lighting Ceremony

The candle ceremony is a symbolic metaphor for two merging families, their unity and fortitude.

Traditionally there are three candles. The respective mothers each light one of the side candles, then the bride and groom each take one of the side candles and together they light the centre candle.

This signifies the unification and acceptance of each other's families.



Hand Ceremony

This is a simple ceremony, where the wedding couple holds each other's hands (palms up), so that they may see the 'gift' that they are to each other.

The palms of each partner are a symbolic representation of the varying trials and tribulations of life ahead. Their palms are a metaphor for many aspects of marriage, the toil, the nurturing, the supporting, the anointing and the sacrifice.



Release of Butterfly

Butterflies are symbols of the spirit of freedom and happiness and provide a spectacular visual during a wedding ceremony.

After the wedding couple have spoken their vows, the butterflies are released.



Wishing Stones Ceremony

This ceremony involves the bride and groom, bridal party and guests. Each person at the wedding is given a stone, which is cast into a body of water nearby.

Although this ceremony is best conducted near a river, lake, pond or beach, it can easily be adapted to include a large bowl of water.

As each stone is cast into the water, the person casting the stone makes a wish or blessing for the wedding couple. The rippling effect of the stone hitting the water is a symbol of the wish or blessing being granted.



Seashell Ceremony

During this ceremony, the guests are presented with either polished stones or seashells, which they hold throughout the entire ceremony, bestowing on the stones and shells good wishes and thoughts.

After being announced husband and wife, the bride and groom also take a shell from a basket while the celebrant says a suitable blessing.

At the end of the ceremony, the wedding couple collect the stones and seashells in a container, which are kept forever and revisited whenever the couple commemorate a special occasion.



Warming of the Rings

During this ceremony the bride and groom exchange rings, as a symbol of their commitment to one another. As the ceremony proceeds, the families take part in the warming of the rings.

Family members hold each ring for a moment, thus 'warming' the rings with their wishes and blessings, and then pass them on to the next person.

The rings are eventually passed back to the bride and groom (the metal now blessed), to continue the traditional exchange of the rings.