

FREE CEREMONY WORKBOOK

Wedding Ceremony Planning, Checklist & Rehearsal Workbook

Build the ceremony in the right order, assign ownership, confirm every operational detail, and use the rehearsal to test movement, spacing, cues, and handoffs before the wedding day.

STRUCTURE · ASSIGN · CONFIRM · REHEARSE

Build the Ceremony as a Dependency Chain

Set leadership and format first; then confirm the space, movement, content, music, accessibility, weather plan, and rehearsal. Each later decision should rest on a settled earlier one.

1 STRUCTURE

Define the format, officiant, venue setup, seating, processional, readings, vows, rings, music, and audio.

2 CONFIRM

Give every critical detail a named owner, deadline, and current status - not a vague plan.

3 REHEARSE

Physically test movement, spacing, positions, cues, and handoffs. Confirm wording without performing everything.

CORE RULE

If a later decision depends on an earlier one, do not finalize it out of order. Rework is usually a dependency problem, not a creativity problem.

CEREMONY BASICS

Wedding date: _____ Ceremony start: _____

Venue: _____ Indoor / outdoor: _____

Approx. duration: _____ Guest count: _____ Rehearsal date: _____

Ceremony Decision Dependency Map

Use this sequence to show what each decision unlocks, what it depends on, and who owns the next confirmation.

Element	Decision / output	Depends on	Owner	Confirm by
Format				
Officiant				
Venue & setup				
Seating / reserved rows				
Processional / recessional				
Readings / readers				
Vows / rings				
Music / audio				
Decor / accessibility				
Weather plan				
Rehearsal				

Choose the Ceremony Format First

The format shapes officiant requirements, required elements, paperwork, ceremony content, and sometimes the venue itself.

FORMAT OPTIONS

- ☐ Religious
- ☐ Civil
- ☐ Spiritual / non-denominational
- ☐ Hybrid
- ☐ Other: _____

WHAT THE FORMAT CHANGES

- ☐ Officiant requirements
- ☐ Required ceremony elements
- ☐ Order / structure
- ☐ Readings / rituals
- ☐ Venue restrictions
- ☐ Paperwork process

OUR CEREMONY STRUCTURE

Opening: _____

Core moments: _____

Closing / transition: _____

Define Ceremony Leadership

The officiant needs more than a booking status. Clarify the structure they lead, cues they own, rehearsal involvement, and paperwork responsibilities.

Item	Current answer	Owner	Confirmed?
Officiant name / organization			
Primary contact			
Ceremony format understood			
Planning meeting complete			
Ceremony outline approved			
Rehearsal attendance			
Who leads rehearsal if absent			
Paperwork responsibility			
Wedding-day arrival time			
Backup / substitution plan			

Map the Space Around Movement and Sightlines

The room or outdoor space should make it clear where people enter, stand, sit, speak, and exit - including accessible routes.

Zone / function	Location	Who uses it	Access / sightline issue	Confirmed?
Processional entrance				
Aisle				
Couple position				
Officiant position				
Wedding party positions				
Reader / microphone point				
Musician / DJ / AV				
Reserved seating				
Late-arrival route				
Accessible seating / path				

Assign Reserved Rows and Accessibility by Name

Ushers need specific instructions. 'Family in front' is not a usable seating plan.

Guest / group	Row / seat	Reason / role	Accessibility need	Usher briefed?	Confirmed?

USHER BRIEF

Late-arrival instruction: _____

Seating-conflict escalation contact: _____

Build the Processional as a Cue Sequence

Order alone is not enough. Record the entrance point, music, trigger, spacing, and final position.

# / person(s)	Entrance	Music / track	Exact cue	Spacing	Final position
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Plan the Exit and What Happens Next

Connect the recessional cleanly into photos, guest release, cocktail hour, or the next post-ceremony transition.

Order / person(s)	Music trigger	Exit route	Next destination	Cue owner
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

POST-CEREMONY MOVEMENT

Couple goes to: _____ Wedding party goes to: _____
Guests transition to: _____ Who directs them: _____

Coordinate Readings and Speaking Moments

Readers should know when they move, where they stand, whether they use a microphone, and what cue starts their moment.

Reader / speaker	Reading / moment	Cue	Mic?	Wait location	Return location	Final copy?

CONTENT VS. MOVEMENT

At rehearsal, test the movement and cue. Confirm the final text without requiring a full performance.

Assign Every Physical Handoff

Small objects and brief exchanges cause outsized confusion when nobody has practiced who holds what and when it moves.

Item / handoff	Before owner	From	To	Exact cue	Afterward owner
Rings					
Bouquet					
Vow cards					
Microphone					
Ritual object					
Marriage document, if relevant					
Other					

RING SECURITY

Real rings used in processional? [] Yes [] No If no, who holds them until exchange? _____

Create One Ceremony Music and Audio Cue Sheet

Music becomes operational only when someone knows exactly when each cue starts, stops, and who triggers it.

Moment	Track / performer	Start cue	Stop cue	Mic / audio need	Cue owner
Prelude					
Family / VIP seating					
Processional 1					
Processional 2					
Partner entrance					
Ceremony speaking					
Ritual / special moment					
Recessional					

Build a Real Weather Decision Plan

A backup space is not enough. Set a decision deadline, one owner, and every vendor or setup element that changes.

Plan element	Preferred setup	Backup setup	Decision owner	Deadline
Ceremony location				
Guest seating				
Florals / arch				
Audio / power				
Signage / guest direction				
Accessibility / pathways				

WEATHER-CALL CASCADE

- [] Venue notified [] Florist notified [] Rentals notified
- [] Audio / AV notified [] Guest communication ready [] Setup timeline adjusted

Final Ceremony Checklist

Run this 2-4 weeks before the wedding and again in the final week. Every row needs a specific owner.

Item	Owner	Vendor / venue	Confirmed?	Final-week recheck
Officiant briefed				
Marriage documents verified / stored				
Witnesses, if applicable				
Rings sized / carrier assigned				
Music selected				
Sound check scheduled				
Readers confirmed				
Processional / recessional final				
Reserved seating assigned				
Accessibility confirmed				
Decor access / setup window				
Weather backup / decision owner				
Rehearsal scheduled				

Invite Only People With an Active Ceremony Role

Invite the people who move, cue, speak, or complete a handoff. Extra observers can slow the walk-through without improving execution.

Role / person	Needs to attend?	Why / active responsibility	Confirmed?
Both partners			
Officiant / rehearsal leader			
Wedding party			
Escorts / aisle partners			
Readers			
Parents / grandparents with a role			
Music / audio cue person			
Children with an active role			
Other active participant			

Practice Movement; Confirm Purely Verbal Content

Use rehearsal time where movement, timing, spacing, object transfers, and microphone use can actually fail.

Moment	Physical walk-through	Verbal confirmation	Participants	Cue
Processional				
Front positions				
Escort handoff				
Reading movement				
Ring handoff				
Vow delivery				
Microphone handoffs				
Recessional				

RULE OF THUMB

Practice movement, spacing, physical objects, and handoffs. If it is only wording, confirm the cue.

Run the Processional at Real Pace

Rehearse the actual path, footwear, spacing, and stopping points. A rushed rehearsal gives false timing.

Person / pair	Pace	Gap / spacing	Stop point	Footwear / terrain issue	Retry?

SECOND RUN

What changed after run 1? _____

Final processional note: _____

Physically Rehearse the Small Exchanges

These moments are brief on the wedding day, which is exactly why nobody has time to improvise them.

Handoff	From	To	Exact cue	Where it happens	What happens next
Rings					
Bouquet					
Escort / partner transition					
Microphone					
Ritual item					
Other					

REHEARSAL RESULT

Any moment still unclear? _____ Owner for fix: _____

Give Children a Simple Role and an Adult Backup

Children may perform perfectly, freeze, move too fast, stop halfway, or refuse. The ceremony should still work in every version.

Child	Role	Adult backup	Where they wait	If they refuse	Where they go

CHILD-FRIENDLY REHEARSAL

- [] Practice the actual walking path [] Keep instructions simple
- [] Do not force repeated performance [] Show the final waiting spot
- [] Adult backup knows the plan [] An exit option is acceptable

Run the Rehearsal Like a Short Operational Meeting

The goal is not to perform the entire ceremony. It is to remove uncertainty before everyone leaves.

Step	Owner	Time / duration	Complete?	Notes
Gather active participants				
Explain ceremony shape				
Set lineup				
Processional run 1				
Correct spacing / positions				
Processional run 2				
Walk through readings / mic movement				
Practice physical handoffs				
Run recessional				
Confirm child / accessibility adjustments				
Final questions / release				

Ceremony Ready-to-Execute Check

The ceremony is ready when every critical decision is current, every operational item has an owner, and rehearsal has removed uncertainty from movement and cues.

FINAL VERIFICATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Format and officiant are final | ☐ Ceremony layout and access are final |
| ☐ Reserved seating and accessibility are confirmed | ☐ Processional and recessional are final |
| ☐ Readers and speaking cues are final | ☐ Rings and physical handoffs have owners |
| ☐ Music and audio cues are final | ☐ Weather decision plan is current |
| ☐ Checklist has no unnamed owners | ☐ Rehearsal attendance is confirmed |
| ☐ Movement and spacing were physically tested | ☐ Children and special-role backups are clear |

FINAL STATUS

[] READY TO EXECUTE [] OPEN ITEMS REMAIN

Open item / owner / deadline: _____

Final ceremony version date: _____ Final approver: _____

Use this page for unresolved cues, officiant follow-ups, accessibility changes, seating adjustments, handoff details, and rehearsal corrections that still need an owner.