



# Introduction

The choices made for a wedding service make it unique and special. Scroll through the order of service to see what happens and where choices can be made.

## Arriving at the church

When the bride arrives, there will be a few moments before she enters the church. Bridesmaids may lead the way or follow the bride, and as the bridal party enters, the [entrance music](#) will begin to play. The bride may walk into the church by herself or be accompanied. When the bride arrives at the altar, she takes her place beside the groom.

## Welcome

The vicar will begin by welcoming everyone and a [hymn is often sung](#). After the hymn, the vicar gives an introduction which speaks of the purpose of marriage and God's will for it.

*'Love is the gift, and love is the giver,*

*Love is the gold that*

*Makes the day shine;*

*Love forgets self to care for the other,*

*Love changes life from water to wine.'*

*Extract from Come to a Wedding*

## Declarations & vows

The vicar will ask everyone present if there is any reason in law why the couple should not marry. The vicar then turns to the bride and groom and asks them each the same question about their commitment to the other. They answer 'I will'. The vicar then asks everyone present if they will support the couple in their marriage. Everyone replies 'We will'. A [Bible reading](#) and the vicar's talk may happen at this point, or, the service may continue with [the vows](#).

## Exchange of rings and blessing

The best man steps forward to hand the rings to the vicar, which are blessed. After the rings are exchanged the vicar will say: "They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife."

*'I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.*

*With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you,  
within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'*

## Bible readings

There will always be a [Bible reading](#) and a talk by the vicar, or, the vicar may do these after the legal part of the service - the vows, the exchange of rings and the blessing - are complete. Other readings can be included too. Anyone present can read from the Bible or do one of the other types of readings.

## Signing the paperwork

Along with the bride, groom and vicar, [two witnesses](#) must be present when the paperwork is signed, and they must sign it too. Those involved may go to one side of the church, or even into a separate room. It takes a few minutes to complete so [music](#) is often played, or everyone sings a [hymn](#).

## Ending of the service

After the marriage paperwork is signed, the witnesses return to their seats and the couple remain in front of the vicar, who will lead some [final prayers](#). Everyone says the Lord's Prayer together before the vicar says a final blessing. There may be a final hymn at this point.

## Leaving the church

[Music can be played](#) while the couple and the wedding party walk out of the church. The newly married couple leave first, followed by the best man and the chief bridesmaid. The couple's parents then follow. Outside there'll be more photos and confetti-throwing!

## Next steps

For couples keen to make a start on planning the ceremony, there's a 'Ceremony planner' booklet to help with choosing hymns and readings. You can either add choices and ideas on the screen or print it out to write on. The print-out of all your ideas and your preferred readings and music can then be discussed with the vicar. Click where you'd like to go next:

[Ceremony planner](#)

[Return to the home page](#)

- [Introduction](#)

## Arriving at the church

- Welcome
- Declarations & vows
- Exchange of rings and blessing
- Bible readings
- Signing the paperwork
- Ending of the service
- Leaving the church
- Next steps

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/walk-through-wedding-service>