

Questions From Brides and Grooms and Answers too

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Q. We will be planning our own wedding. How can we preserve the entire process as a keepsake?

A. As you prepare to begin planning your wedding, be sure to buy or make a "Wedding Organizer". This can be as simple as a 3-ring binder with pockets such as the one that came with this wedding planner. It will accommodate all of your wedding planning to-do lists, business cards, appointment schedules, contact lists, fabric swatches, samples, contracts, receipts, etc.

Also, make or buy a "Keepsake" box. In which to place samples, wedding invitations and all wedding stationery, the invitations to your engagement party, bridal showers and rehearsal dinner, mementos from all your pre-wedding celebrations, your lucky sixpence, favors, imprinted napkins, ceremony program, and any other items you had made, printed, honeymoon brochure and mementos, etc. If your box is large enough place in it your guest list card file, wedding accessories, cake top, decorations, etc. as well.

Q. We have been living together for quite a while and have set a lovely home. Can we ask for a money gift in our invitation?

A. We encounter this question very frequently. Asking for money is inappropriate. However, there are a few creative approaches you may wish to consider. Spread the word by others. Let your families know that you prefer monetary gifts and ask them to tell guests who ask what the Bride and Groom would like for a wedding gift, that they would prefer money, but that anything else will be appreciated. A most convincing case would be if the bride and groom have a special reason for preferring money such as, a down payment for buying a home, a car or a more luxurious honeymoon, for example. Then, there are the popular MONEY DANCE and the GIFT BASKET and - or CENTERPIECES AUCTION which is fun and exciting. Guests like them because they are not obligatory. Any guest may choose to participate or not. A GIFT REGISTRY note inserted with your invitation is acceptable. The gift registry may be with a store selling items you want or you may prefer a honeymoon registry with the travel agency in charge of your travel and honeymoon arrangements. The latter is quite popular because the money deposited by guests towards the honeymoon accumulates fast and often leaves enough for a second honeymoon or a nice vacation, later on. It is a good idea for the bride to have a MONEY BAG for the money dance, the gift basket or the centerpiece auction. After the dance and - or auction, while she is seated at the table, she may have the money bag on the table in front of her. However, brides are preoccupied with visiting guest tables, mingling, picture taking and performing ceremonies such as the cake cutting, bouquet toss and garter toss. So, whenever the bride leaves the table she should give the money bag to a reliable person for safe keeping. The same goes for money gifts.

Q. In the invitation wording who does the inviting? Do the bride and groom, the parents of the bride, the parents of the groom, or both sets of parents invite the guests?

A. The people who pay the majority of the wedding expenses are considered the hosts. The hosts invite the guests. So, if the bride and groom are paying for their wedding the invitation should say: Bride: _____ and Groom _____ request your ___ or invite you to ___ etc...

When one set of parents is the host, the invitation should say: Mr. and Mrs. _____ the marriage of their daughter to _____ or the marriage of their son to _____. When both sets of parents host, The invitation should read: Mr. and Mrs. _____ and Mr. and Mrs. _____ invite to the marriage of their children (bride) and (groom).

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Q. How can we assure the safety of Engagement, SHOWER and WEDDING GIFTS that are brought to these events?

A. Your best bet is to appoint a reliable person to be in charge of your gifts. Have this person write down who gave what and for which occasion. It is, of course, easier to do at an engagement party or a shower as the bride customarily opens her gifts and reads the cards for all to hear. As to wedding gifts, the Guest Book and Gifts person assigned to the task should make sure that the names of the givers are written on the wrapping before placing the gifts on the gift table. This allows even the busiest bride and groom, to have an account of who gave what, so that they can keep track of the gifts and send the appropriate Thank You notes. Make sure your "Guest Book" attendant stays with the gifts at all times or better yet, moves the gifts to a secure room during the reception. Additionally make arrangements ahead of time to have the gifts transported home by your family or friends.

Q. What is a guest book attendant?

A. Most guest books are placed on a GUEST BOOK table so guests can sign them as they arrive. In order to assure that all the guests sign the guest book, many bride and grooms assign one person from each of their families to personally lead guests to the guest book. The guest book attendant should also visit each reception table to verify that each guest signed the book and to inform that anyone is most welcome to write a short personal note, a marriage advice and - or a best wishes message for the newlyweds. The Guest Book should be on its special table at all times other than when the attendant is visiting guest tables. It is a good idea to place the Gifts Table next to the Guest Book table so that the Guest Book attendants can also be put in charge of keeping the gifts safe.

Q. Do we need to have a Ceremony rehearsal before the wedding? When? Who needs to participate?

A. It is advisable to have a rehearsal. You should schedule a ceremony rehearsal two days before the wedding. You may need to adjust if you have participants who come from afar and can only arrive on the day before the wedding. It is most important that the bride and groom, their parents and their attendants be familiar and comfortable with their roles and confident they know the procedure.

Q. This is a re-marriage for both of us and we plan a family wedding that includes our children. We plan to recite vows to each other. Should we recite vows for the kids?

A. This is one of the questions that we are asked frequently. By all means, recite vows to the children but select your words very carefully. The person who will become the step-parent must not present him or herself as mother, or mom or father or dad. For ideas about family weddings, family unity candle ceremony and more, go to <http://www.2.a-weddingday.com/weddings/blendingfamilyweddingceremony.html> and read the article "MAKE IT A FAMILY WEDDING".

Q. Do we need to give our guests wedding favors?

A. Favors are not mandatory. They are however, a nice gesture by the bride and groom thanking their guests for sharing in the happiness of their special day. Favors placed on the tables can be lovely decoration. Favors can also be given out by the bride and groom, as they circulate and visit each table handing out a wedding keepsake and thanking each guest for attending. Favors that are not edible provide a beautiful memento of the wedding day to family and friends. To save money, use personalized multi-function favors. Theme related items, place card holders, miniature frames, napkin rings, candles, favors that when put together create a centerpiece, etc. fulfill multiple tasks and are great memento gifts for the guests.

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Q. What is the UNITY CANDLE ceremony? This is my second marriage. Can my children participate in the unity candle ceremony?

A. The Unity Candle ceremony is a rather new but very popular and symbolic wedding tradition. The Unity Candle set includes a pillar candle and two tapers. Actually, you can adjust the unity candle ceremony and the number of tapers to your wedding. For example: If your wedding does not include the children of the bride, the groom, or both, you can honor the mothers with having them each light one taper candle. If you have two children who are old and responsible enough to be trusted with fire, they can light the tapers. If your children are too young they can light the candles with their grandmothers. If you have more than two children, have a taper for each child. After the officiant has declared you husband and wife, each of you will take one of the lit tapers and together light the pillar symbolizing that your individual lives have become one. You may have your children join you to indicate that you are now one blended family. If you have more than two children lighting the pillar together may become risky. So you, bride and groom may light the unity candle and have your children light their tapers from the pillar. This will signify that your love and warmth spreads to everyone in the family.

Q. What is the ROSE CEREMONY?

The Rose Ceremony is an add-on that takes place near the end of the ceremony, just "after" being pronounced husband and wife. The Bride and Groom give each other a single **red rose** which traditionally says **I Love You**. If you have children involve them in the ceremony. Unless they are too young, give each of them a rose in addition to the gift of jewelry you present them with. It is appropriate to incorporate the Rose Ceremony into the wedding or renewal of vows ceremony. As they begin to exit many brides and grooms stop and hand their roses to their mothers, whispering We Love You. Usually the groom gives his rose to the bride's mother and the bride gives her rose to the groom's mother. This is a nice way of honoring the mothers and involving them in the ceremony.

Q. Do we need to follow a specific reception schedule?

A. There is a general Reception Schedule. However, it is not written in stone. It is your wedding. Feel free to create your own schedule or adapt the following to your wedding.
Following are the basics in a nut shell.
Grand Entrance and Introductions of Wedding Party, followed by the Parents, and last but not least Newlyweds- Mr. and Mrs. _____
Blessing or Benediction,
Toasts by and to the newlyweds,
The buffet is opened or food is Served.
First Dance reserved to the bride and groom solo.
The Father/Daughter, Mother/Son dances are solo too.
Guests joining on the dance floor between courses.
Cake ceremony usually takes place about 30 - 45 minutes after the meal, followed immediately by the Bouquet Toss and the Garter Toss
Bride & Groom Exit as their guests observe and bid them a wonderful life together.

Q. Is the first dance reserved to only the bride and groom?

A. Only if the bride and groom request that it will be so. Unless they do, the bride and groom begin the first dance. After a few rounds, the parents join them on the dance floor. Next, the wedding party joins the couples on the dance floor. A few more minutes pass before the emcee opens the floor to everyone, encouraging the guests to join the bride and groom on the dance floor. Father daughter and mother son dances follow.

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Q. We are getting married in a church. My father is Jewish. Can he escort me down the aisle?

A. This is a question only the clergy of the church you chose for your ceremony can answer. Your father should definitely be the one to escort you. If this is not acceptable by the church consider choosing one that will accommodate both you and your father.

This question is raised quite often not only about parents of different religions, but of different denominations as well. Some religions and some denominations do not accept participation in religious rites by anyone who does not follow their specific branch. So, you may need to shop.

Q. We are getting married in a church. Can both my parents escort me down the aisle?

A. In Jewish weddings, both his parents escort the groom down the aisle leaving him at the altar before taking their seats. When her turn comes, both parents escort the bride following the same procedure. This is a beautiful custom that is becoming quite popular as non-Jewish couples wish to adapt for their ceremonies. Most clergy do not find having both parents escort objectionable and are glad to comply. However, many clergy still do not. So, consult the clergy of the church you chose for your ceremony.

Q. Who is supposed to make wedding toasts? Does the toasting have to be done with champagne?

A. Usually the Best Man is the first to toast to the bride and groom, followed by the Father of the Bride, the Father of the Groom, and then any guest who wishes to make a toast. It is also customary that following all other toasts, the groom toasts his bride. It is optional for the bride to toast her groom but many brides do. The bride and – or groom may proceed with a toast thanking their families, attendants and guests for sharing in their happiness and making their day very special. A toast is done with a raised glass. However, the glass does not have to be filled with champagne, wine or other alcoholic beverage. Toasts are just as celebratory with cider, non- alcoholic champagne, ginger ale, or any beverages chosen by the bride and groom.

Q. When during the reception should we have the cake-cutting ceremony and is there special etiquette we need to observe?

A. The style of reception dictates when you should perform the Cake-cutting. If yours is a desert and beverage reception, your cake cutting ceremony should be right at the beginning. If on the other hand your reception includes a meal, and the cake will be served as dessert, perform the cake cutting after the tables have been cleared from the main course dishes but before any dessert or coffee- tea is served. However, if you have a dessert in addition to the cake, you may wish to wait for an hour or so, after serving the main dessert, before cutting the cake. Traditionally, the bride stands to the left of the groom holding the cake knife in her hand. The groom puts his right hand over her hand, and together they cut a small triangular slice of cake. Make sure to take pictures. Place the cake server under the slice of cake, lift and remove it to the plate on the table. The bride should pick up a small piece of the cake slice in her right hand, and the groom should pick up a small piece of the cake slice in his left hand. In unison each should feed the other while looking lovingly into each other's eyes. After a few pictures have been snapped a kiss is most appropriate.

Q. How do we handle the traditional receiving line which seems to take too much time from the reception?

A. Have the reception line, or just the bride, groom and parents stand by the door exiting the ceremony. Guests can greet and be greeted as they leave the ceremony.