

# Our Family Wedding

Bride's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Groom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Wedding Guide for Couples who are Remarrying or Renewing their Vows

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Congratulations!

You are engaged to be married.

You are at the door steps of the most exciting time in your life.

Enjoy it!

You have a lot to do preparing for your big day. Though there are many details to attend to, don't stress out! Instead, concentrate on your dream wedding, read articles and utilize this wedding planning organizer.

Remarriages as well as renewal of the vows are on the rise. Many brides and grooms are confused about what to do at and about their wedding. Though some had lavish weddings in the past, while others eloped or had only a simple ceremony, their concerns need to be addressed. It seems that even if both bride and groom plan their wedding together, most often the brides are the ones looking for information. A frequently asked question is about wedding etiquette for a second marriage.

Being aware of wedding etiquette for a second marriage and renewal of the vows weddings, will make planning your big day less stressful for you and your families. This is your wedding, your celebration your special day. Plan it as you desire. The people you invite are there for only one reason. They want to share in your happiness.

### The appropriate order for announcing Your Engagement:

#### Share your news with:

- **Your children first.** You do not want them to hear about your engagement from someone else.
- The next to be informed are **your parents.**
- After them inform **your ex**, especially if you have arranged joint custody of your children.
- Following will be **the rest of your family and other relatives**
- Followed by **your friends.**

### Who should you invite to a remarriage wedding of divorcees?

Anyone you want to invite with the exception of former in-laws and ex-spouses, unless of course your children request that their other parent will be present and your fiancé agrees. In general, ex-spouses and their parents are not appropriate guests. Neither are any of your ex spouse's friends that you didn't keep in touch with.

### Who should you invite to a December or renewal of the vows wedding?

If you are a widow(er) and kept good relations with your departed spouse's family, by all means, invite them. If you renew your vows, this is a non- issue.

**ARTICLES: Links List** <http://www.a-weddingday.com/archives/articles.html>

**A Family Wedding - A What?** <http://www.a-weddingday.com/weddingcommunity.html>

**Blending Families! Sounds So Simple - But Is It?** <http://www.a-weddingday.com/blendingfamily.html>

**The Blending Family Ceremony Includes Kids.** <http://www.2.a-weddingday.com/weddings/blendingfamilyweddingceremony.html>

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## A Wedding Guide and Tips for Couples who are Remarrying or Renewing their Vows

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The following etiquette points are for your information. You are not bound by them.

### **The wedding dress and jewelry**

Widows as well as divorced brides may wear white as it has become the symbol of JOY. Pastels and even bold colors are appropriate too. Young brides can often get away with slinky slip dresses -- whether they're long or short -- and therefore, have more options than mature brides. Older brides may feel more comfortable in something like a cocktail dress, or a dress with a matching jacket. However, they do not need to limit themselves to solid colors. Prints and floral print dress are fine too, providing the chosen style complements them and they feel comfortable wearing it. A fairy tale gown and - or a train, though not inappropriate, are seldom worn by a remarrying bride and a veil and tiara are often replaced by a hat or a floral headpiece.

If you are a remarrying bride, take off any rings given you by your former husband and wear your new engagement ring. Your fingers should show your commitment to your fiancé alone. Forget old flames, as soon as you become engaged and begin planning and announcing your re-marriage wedding.

To read more about wedding attire for the remarrying bride, read the article:

**So what is a re-marrying bride to do? Choosing the wedding attire.**

<http://www.a-weddingday.com/weddingattire.html>

### **Who should you invite to a remarriage or renewing of the vows wedding?**

There are no restrictions on the number of guests. However, most often only immediate family and close friends are invited to remarriage or renewal of the vows ceremonies.

### **What kind of wedding is appropriate?**

Depending on your budget, you may have any style wedding you choose ranging from an intimate, small and quiet wedding, to a large formal one. Re- marriages are usually, though not necessarily, less lavish affairs in terms of receptions, than first marriages. This is why destination weddings are popular choices. However, if the bride has never had a wedding and this wedding is her first, even if it is not the first wedding for the groom, it is proper for the bride or her parents to have a "first" wedding reception.

### **Invitations**

While, cream or pastel stationery with raised lettering is customarily used for remarriage and renewal of the vows weddings, you can be creative with the colors, fonts, prints, and even pictures. Choose your words carefully and respectfully and if you have children, include them. The major difference in invitations is not the style but the wording. The bride and groom usually host their own remarriage, December or renewal of the vows wedding reception, and the invitation should reflect it.

### **Who Pays?**

Unlike first weddings, re-marriage or renewal of the vows weddings signifies the formalization of a relationship by two adults and should be hosted and paid for as a combined effort of both, bride and groom. Both bride and groom should pool their resources and share in the expenses. To what degree depends on either of their financial and budget considerations. Yet, it is not uncommon for the parents of both the bride and the groom to offer some financial support.

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## The Blending Family Ceremony Includes Kids.

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**If you have children or step-children read the section OUR FAMILY WEDDING and Go to <http://www.a-weddingday.com/weddingcommunity.html> and read the article:**

A FAMILY WEDDING - A WHAT?

This article is dedicated to couples that will have a "blended" family once they are married. That is, children will have a new parent and possibly new siblings. So, if either one or both of you have children, yours is not just a blending of two people, but of two families.

A family wedding is very important when either or both bride and groom have children. Children must always feel that they are IMPORTANT especially now, when their parent is marrying a new life partner. There are two main reasons. One is that children need reassurance. They need to know that they are important to and welcome and wanted by both, parents and new siblings. The other is that most parents WANT their children to be an integral part of the wedding and celebration, as they are a part of the newly created, blended family.

So, be sure to include the Children in the ceremony. Older children can serve as attendants or even give away the bride. Younger children can participate as flower girl(s) or ring bearer(s). You may wish to involve them in the Unity Candle ceremony too. They should also receive jewelry items and be told that they are welcome and are an important part to the new family.

Many re-marrying couples, as well as couples with children, who are planning to renew their vows, ask if we could suggest how they can integrate the children into the wedding ceremony and / or reception in such a way, that it will become a Family Wedding. That is, a wedding that creates a new family.

The following are ideas, implementation of which depends on the ages - abilities of the children and the degree of involvement the marrying couple wishes to dedicate to them.

### Invitations to Family Weddings

Choose your words carefully and include your children.

**For example:**

Bride  
and  
Groom  
Together with our children

**OR**

Bride  
and  
Groom  
Together with our children  
Children's names

**OR**

Bride  
Groom  
and  
Children's names

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### The Family Ceremony Responsibilities

Let's start with the obvious roles. Children or grandchildren should be given the duties of:

Flower Child(ren), not the hippies of the sixties, but the bearer of the wedding flowers basket with flowers or rose petals, and Ring Bearer(s). That is right! You may have more than one flower child and more than one ring bearer.

I bet you wonder why I did not say Flower Girl. This is because a boy can be a flower child just as a girl can be a ring bearer.

If they are old enough, the children may monitor the Guest Book, asking the guests to sign it. They may serve as attendants in the wedding party and/or be put in charge of leading the guests to their seats.

Another way to bestow honor to teen age or older children, is to have the son(s) walk the bride and / or the daughter(s) walk the groom down the aisle. The son can be either the bride's or the groom's and so can the daughter be.

### The Family Unity Candle

Children, who are old and responsible enough, should participate in the Unity Candle ceremony. Here there are a few options.

If only one or two children are involved, they should be given their own tapers and join the bride and groom in lighting the pillar candle.

However, if more than two children are involved, they should receive their own tapers but rather than light the pillar candle, light their tapers from it.

The candle lighting ceremony is a perfect opportunity for children who are old enough and wish to, to congratulate the bride and groom and acknowledge the new family union. This must be initiated by the kids without any coaxing or expectations.

A friend who recently got married told us about the Unity Candle ceremony at her wedding. She had ordered a personalized pillar candle and seven personalized tapers from Candles by Nily and gave each child a personalized taper. The ceremony was actually a Family Unity Ceremony. All five children (his two and her three), all above 10 years old, wrote a congratulation and thank you note to the bride and groom.

Once the Unity Candle was lit, they took turns lighting their tapers from the pillar and surprised their parents as in unison they recited the following:

"As I light my candle from the Unity Candle, I feel the warmth, love and excitement of my new, larger family. Thank you Susan (BRIDE'S NAME or MOM or MOTHER), and Bill (GROOM'S NAME or DAD or FATHER), for having given me an extended family to love and to be loved by. Congratulations! I love you!

It was such a touching experience that there wasn't a dry eye in the room!

Right after the Family Unity Candle ceremony, Susan and Bill exchanged their first gifts as a husband and wife and gave each of the children a personalized Family Unity Ring and a BIG welcome hug.

Susan and Bill engraved the 3 in 1 ring as follows:

Band 1 **Child's name**

Band 2 **Love Mom & Bill** (GROOM'S NAME) to Susan's kids and **Love Dad & Susan** (BRIDE'S NAME) to Bill's.

Band 3 **Wedding Date.**

Notice that they did not put Mom and Dad on the ring.

Rachel and Tony added a touch of their own to the ceremony.

After the unity candle ceremony, they had the Best man hand them a silk rope akin to the one used as a curtain tie. The bride and groom tied the first knot and each child added a knot. The knotted rope was later placed in a shadow box with the candles, sixpence, glass slipper, hankie, and tiaras.

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### Vows and Jewelry Exchange

During the ceremony, after the bride and groom exchange vows and rings, they may integrate vows dedicated especially to the children, followed by the presentation of gifts of jewelry such as an engraved ring. Be very careful about your vows so that you'll not encounter the experience that will be forever etched in the hearts of Ben and Barbara. Both had previously been married. Ben had 2 kids ages 8 and 12 and Barbara a daughter age 5. Barbara presented her vows to the children in a way that required a response. This is what she said: "I hope that you'll accept my promise to be the best mom I can be to you. I promise to love you and support you and be fully involved in your life." Barbara wanted to make her vows less solemn and more appealing to the kids, so she ended with "Do we have a deal?" What a mistake!!! The 8 years old did not answer but the 12 years old did. In front of all the guests he said: "You may love us and support us but you'll never be our mom. We already have a mom." Lesson learned! Vows should always be one sided. They are to be given with no strings attached and no expectations. Your vows are your promise. Word it wisely. Do not request the kids to make any promises and do not put them in a position where they have to protect, or not hurt one of their parents.

Following are two other examples of vows that are worth noting.

There are many styles of vows. Most are written by the bride and groom or by a hired vows writer. For illustration purpose, I'll have the bride and groom recite these traditional remarriage vows. The last part is an adaptation of vows to the children, making the vows ideal for blended families.

Or are they.

### Vow 1 - exchanged with bride and groom's vows.

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my lawful wife - husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part."

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you now, in the presence of God and these witnesses, to be my wife - husband. I vow that I shall love you, honor you, respect you, cherish you and uphold this promise in good times and in bad as long as we both shall live."

"\_\_\_\_\_, I promise to be a good and faithful husband - wife to you, and as importantly a patient, loving father - mother to (children's names), caring for them, supporting them, and providing for them as my own. I promise to be their strength and their emotional support, loving them with all my heart forever."

Is this an ideal vow to present the children?

Did you notice that the vow was actually given to the bride rather than be directed to the children? Did you also notice the promise to be a loving mother - father?

If the children have a living mother – father, they will resent this promise. If their father – mother is deceased they would be even more upset as no one can replace their departed parent. So, be thoughtful when you choose the wording for your vows to the children. Be sure not to begin your life as a new family having caused bitterness or resentment.

**Notes and Comments:**

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### Vow 2 - Given to children by the groom at the time of gifts presentation

The following was a vow from a groom to his bride's children.  
He vowed as he presented each of the children with a Family Unity Ring.

"Today, as I married your mother, you became my family.  
I am delighted because I love you.  
I promise you that I'll always shower you with love, take care of you and do my very best for you."

Is this an ideal vow to present the children?

It may not be ideal but close to it.  
Did you notice that it was directed to the children?  
It was a vow substantiated by facts. Though the groom states that the kids became his family he does not presume to present himself as their father or even parent.  
He seems to promise them what is already in his heart.  
Without fancy words, he basically promised to do his best for them.

### Vow 3 - Just imagine the following scenario. It actually happened.

The officiant at a blending family wedding thought the kids should respond in kind. So after the bride and groom made their promises to the kids, he initiated the following saying:

"And now, (children's names) that you are a part of a new loving blended family- please say ("I do") or("We do") after each question:

- Do you promise to love and respect your parent's new husband -wife?
- Do you promise to support their marriage and your new family?
- Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being their child(ren), and to encourage them and support them in your new life together?"

### Do Not Do This!

Never expect the children to make promises to the bride and groom or to each other.  
Why not?

The vows must come from parents to children as a ONE SIDED COMMITMENT and must be carefully worded.  
Do not expect the children to present the bride and groom with vows, unless of course the vows were the kids' idea and they wrote them on their own maybe even as a surprise to the bride and groom.

### Our Vows: