

Sample Interfaith Ceremony

PRELUDE

A selection of music to be played as guests arrives for ceremony, and take their seats.

J.S. Bach, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"

Albert Hay Malotte, The Lord's Prayer

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Joseph Mouret, "Rondeau"

André Campra, "Rigaudon"

Silent Night

Handel, Hornpipe

Johann Pachelbel, Canon

PROCESSIONAL

Selected music for the entrance of the Bridal Party. (Love Theme from St. Elmo's Fire)

Groomsman escorts mother of the Bride

Officiant enters followed by Best Man and Groomsman.

Groom enters escorted by his parents, followed by (2) Maids of Honor, then Ring Bearer. Parents take their seats in front row.

Change of music for the entrance of Jen and her father. ("Trumpet Voluntary")

All Rise.

Officiant asks, "Who presents Jennifer to be married to Jason?"

Father responds, "I do!"

Father kisses Bride

Jason steps forward and escorts Jennifer to the front.

They face each other in front of the officiant.

Maid of Honor takes the bouquet from Jennifer.

OPENING WORDS

Today we have standing before us a bride and a groom who are of different faiths. They symbolize a lesson in Love, Brotherhood, and Harmony, encouraging us to seek and find the spiritual elements that bring us closer to one another. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Creator of the Universe, our hearts are filled with great happiness. This is the wedding day of Jennifer and Jason. They come before you pledging their love and their hearts to one another.

Grant that they may ever be true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring shame or heartbreak into their marriage. Temper their hearts with kindness and understanding. Help them to be companions, friends and partners. Together may they meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. As the years pass, let their love deepen and mature. May their home truly be a place of love and harmony for the family they start and where your spirit is ever present. Bless this, their wedding day, and walk beside them through all their years together. We also ask your blessings upon their parents whose love and caring sustained their bodies and nurtured their souls.

Jews and Christians gather here today, sharing much of a common religious heritage, and sharing totally in the common humanity we often forget we have –not to be further divided, but to be drawn even closer to one another, as we celebrate the joining together of the lives of Jennifer and Jason. Their marriage is beyond all that it means to them of the human love of man and woman for one another. The love that Jennifer and Jason share for one another is so pure. They wish to embrace all of each other including the differences they have. Each is one half of the other and as they join in marriage before us, they now become whole.

FIRST & SECOND READINGS

Our first reading is taken from the book of Solomon

(Song of Solomon 2:10-13)

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

This is the word of the Lord.

People reply: **Thanks be to God.**

Our second reading is taken from the book of Sirach (Sirach 28:1-4, 13-16)

Blessed the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days;
A worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life.
A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the LORD;
Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face.

A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;
A gift from the LORD is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.
Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste person.
Like the sun rising in the LORD'S heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance
of her home.

This is the word of the Lord.

People reply: **Thanks be to God.**

CUP OF WINE

There are a number of symbols common to both Jewish and Christian wedding ceremonies. One of these symbols is the bride and groom sharing a cup of wine. As Jennifer and Jason drink from this common cup, we are reminded that in all of our relationships, we draw strength and nourishment from one another even as we do from God. As together you now drink from this cup, so may you, under God's guidance, in perfect union and devotion to each other, draw peace, comfort and happiness from the cup of life. And thereby may you find life's joys doubly gladdening, its bitterness sweetened, and all things hallowed by true companionship and love.

(While the wine is being drunk) As you share the wine from this cup, you affirm your commitment to share all of life's experiences together.

Before we proceed, I would like to congratulate Jennifer and Jason's parents. On their behalf, and in behalf of all those here, I thank you for the part you played in raising two people who are both full of love, kindness and understanding. I ask you, Jennifer's parents to take this man, Jason, as your son. I ask your family to take him into your hearts as a son and that Donald and Frank receive him as your brother for he is dear and beloved to Jennifer, and shall be so to all your family.

And of you, Jason's parents, I ask the same. I ask that you take this woman, Jennifer, into your hearts, that she might live from this day forward as your daughter for she is dear and beloved to Jason and shall be so to all your family.

May the miracle of this marriage extend throughout both your families.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS and RINGS

Another symbol common to both Jewish and Christian ceremonies is the wedding ring itself. The wedding ring is the outward and visible symbol of the inward and spiritual bond, which joins two hearts in love. It is a circle, which has no end, and so is the symbol of eternity. A circle is the symbol of the sun, the earth, the universe, wholeness and peace. May your life together come even closer to such perfection and be an ever-growing unity of love and spirit and purpose.

Jennifer, repeat after me:

I, Jennifer, take you, Jason, to be my husband. My constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. You are the calm I feel when in a storm. You are my cool breeze that refreshes my soul. With this ring, I give to you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live. (*Jeff hands ring to Jennifer who places the ring on Jason's finger*)

Jason, repeat after me:

I, Jason, take you, Jennifer, to be my wife. My constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. You are the calm I feel when in a storm. You are my cool breeze that refreshes my soul. With this ring, I give you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vows to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live. (*Jeff hands ring to Jason who places the ring on Jennifer's finger*)

BLESSING THE RINGS

Bless, O God, these rings, that the giver and the wearer may dwell in the richness of your love, living together in growing appreciation and respect, one for the other. Amen.

UNITY CANDLE

Selected music for the lighting of the Unity Candle. (Ave Maria)

Marriage brings together two people in a unique relationship. In their togetherness, they may share many experiences as if they were one person. However, each retains

his or her own identity. The miracle of love is that it allows us to overcome our sense of isolation, yet permits us our uniqueness as individuals.

I invite Jennifer and Jason's mothers, Maris and Doris to light the two side candles, flanking the unity candle.

(As the candles are being lit) Jennifer and Jason, as your mothers light the candles, I ask you to pledge yourselves to a lifetime of caring for one another. May your togetherness bring you joy and comfort and may your uniqueness continue to challenge you to live your lives with courage and creativity.

Will you now please take the two candles and combine your lights and light the center candle to symbolize the strength and beauty you bring to each other as husband and wife.

(As the candle is being lit)

May the candle that you light signify the creation of your union to each other, but may the individual candles continue to burn representing your individuality.

SIGNING THE KETUBAH

Now, Jennifer, Jason and I will sign the marriage Ketubah. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, let me explain that a Ketubah is a Jewish marriage contract which has quite an interesting history. It was conceived of about 2,000 years ago with the primary purpose of protecting the finances of a Jewish wife.

In ancient times, if a couple was divorced or the husband died, the entire estate would be taken over by the husband's family – leaving the wife and children with nothing. The Ketubah stipulated that the wife be paid 200 Zuzim, which was considered the sum to support oneself financially for a year. At the time, it was a groundbreaking document. Nowadays, as we all know, 200 Zuzim doesn't go very far.

In modern times the language in the Ketubah is similar in tone to the wedding vows. It was originally written in Aramaic. Today Ketubahs have the Aramaic text is on one side, the English on the other. Aramaic, incidentally, is the language that Jesus spoke. If you get a chance to look at this, either today or in Jennifer and Jason's home, you'll see that it is quite beautiful.

READING THE KETUBAH

With these rings we unite our hearts in tenderness and devotion.

We will honor each other's culture as we link customs to form a trusting relationship. We will protect, support, and encourage each other as we create a loving future together. May our lives be intertwined forever and be one in faith and in hope. As we share life's everyday experiences, we promise to strive for an intimacy that will enable us to express our innermost thoughts and feelings; to be sensitive at all times to

each others needs; to share life's joys; and to comfort each other through life's sorrows; to challenge each other to achieve intellectual and physical fulfillment as well as spiritual and emotional tranquility.

We promise to establish a home for ourselves and our children shaped by our respective heritages; a loving environment dedicated to peace, hope, and respect for all people. A family filled with love and learning, goodness and generosity, compassion and integrity. ~ *Mickie Caspi*

BREAKING THE GLASS

Breaking a glass is an ageless symbol that has many interpretations. The traditional meaning has to do with the custom being a reminder of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem almost 2000 years ago. The custom has also come to symbolize the shattering of the old and the beginning of the new. Since this is an interfaith marriage which brings together two people of different religious backgrounds, let us, with this symbol, become especially mindful of the barriers that people erect between another, and try to think, with the breaking of the glass, of breaking down some of those barriers and helping create a world of love, unity, and peace.

Jason, I want you, as hard as you can, to stomp on the glass when I tell you. The more pieces the better, for each piece symbolizes years of happiness. May you break the glass into so many pieces that it will take a lifetime to put them back together and grant you and Jennifer a lifetime of happiness and joy.

(Prompt Jason to stomp on glass)

MAZEL TOV!

Jennifer and Jason, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the laws of the State of New Jersey, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

You may now kiss your bride!

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present Jennifer and Jason as husband and wife.

RECESSIONAL

Music rises for exit of the Bride & Groom (Wedding March)

Bride and groom exit.

Best Man exits with Maid of Honor

Groomsman exits with Maid of Honor

Ring Bearer exits.

Remaining Groomsmen leave as a pair.

Officiant exits.

Parents of the Bride exit.

Parents of the Groom exit.

Family of the Bride exit.

Family of the Groom exit.

Change of music as Guests exit. (Joy to the World)