

St Mary's, Wistaston

Structure for Service Orders

If you are planning to produce your own your own Service Order here is a guide to the structure of the service. Please use the headings given. It is always advisable to let the minister taking your wedding to have a look at a “draft” order before you print them.

Structure

(The numbers in brackets refer to the explanations over the page)

Introduction

The Welcome

Hymn

Preface

The Declarations (1)

The Collect

Readings (2)

Sermon (2)

Hymn

The Marriage

The Vows (3)

The Giving of Rings (4)

The Proclamation (5)

The Blessing of the Marriage (5)

Hymn

Registration of the Marriage (6)

Prayers (7)

The Dismissal

The Marriage service

Beginning the service

Traditionally, the bride and groom enter the church separately - the groom first with the best man, and the bride at the time set for the start of the service, on the arm of her father or another relative or friend (it does not need to be a man). However, the bride may enter alone if she wishes, or the couple may enter together.

The minister will welcome the congregation. Your family and friends have an important role to play as witnesses and supporters of your marriage.

The minister will read an introduction explaining what Christians believe about marriage. He or she will also ask, as the law requires, if anyone knows any reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.

(1) Declarations

You will be asked to promise before God, your friends and your families, that you will love, comfort, honour and protect your partner and be faithful to them as long as you both shall live.

The minister will also ask the congregation to declare that they will support and uphold your marriage.

(2) Readings and talk or sermon

You are required to have one or more readings from the Bible and the minister will generally give a talk or sermon.

(3) Vows

Turning to each other, the bride and groom take each other's right hand and make vows:

'to have and to hold, from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part'

(4) Rings

The couple then exchange a ring or rings as a 'sign of their marriage' and a reminder of the vows:

'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.'

(5) Proclamation

The minister will then declare that you are now husband and wife. The minister does not 'marry you'; you marry each other. The minister just directs you in this and then tells everyone that you have done it properly. The marriage is Blessed by the minister.

(6) Signing of the register

After you have exchanged your vows, the bride, groom and two witnesses must sign the register. This is a legal requirement and the minister will give you a copy of the marriage certificate.

(7) Prayers

In the prayers God's blessing and help is asked for you. There may be a prayer for the gift of children, but every couple will have their own feelings about this, so it's best to discuss the details with your minister. You may wish to help choose the prayers or to write your own.