



# Together in Christ

Christian Wedding Planner

## Utilizing this Wedding Planner

You'll find general guidelines, suggestions and ideas for planning your wedding day, as well as worksheets and checklists to help you stay organized.

Use the 3-ring binder to add articles, contracts, information, and build your personal planner.

The clear, sleeve pages are for saving pictures, swatches, and other items you might find.

I hope this planner gives you a place to start with all the thought and planning that will go into your very special day. Use the ideas you like and then add your (and your fiancé's) personal touches to create a celebration that fits the two of you.

And most importantly, thank and keep the Lord in all your planning...He'll be overjoyed at being included and will help everything go smoothly before and after the wedding day.

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# To the Groom

## *Just Between Us Guys...*

A note from the author's husband...

Guys I wanted to take a moment to talk to you and give you a little advice that may help your wedding go well. The women get this whole planner, us guys only get/need a couple pages. (That's because we don't have as much to say.) This page is meant to be a little humorous, and I trust that you are wise enough to mine the little nuggets of truth in here.

### **The Most important day of her life!**

The first thing to remember is that this day is what your wife-to-be has been dreaming about for a long time. We know it's only one day. She probably at some level knows this as well. And yet this is what she has been waiting for in most cases since she was a little girl. What that means for you is that this day better go right! Of course you want it to go right as well because you love her. But let me tell you, there is more to it than that.

Gentlemen, if you pull this day off, it will be a blessing to you the rest of your life. Every time you mess up (and there will be times, believe me, I know), no matter how deep a hole you dig, you can always bring up your wedding day. If you did a good job on that day it will be a fond memory that she can always recall. The other side of course is true as well. If you mess up this day, you will hear about it for the rest of your life. You're future friends will get to hear the story as well. And in that heated argument when you are 80 and your wife is 75, she will still remember that you tripped and knocked over her perfect wedding cake the morning of the wedding! So here are some things you can do to help your bride to have an awesome wedding day.

### **Be interested and involved!**

Frankly guys, I could care less about the colors of the bridesmaid dresses, the little things they are putting on the tables, and whether or not little Johnny should be allowed to carry the rings down the aisle. There will no doubt be some things that you are not super excited about at your wedding. The temptation will be to ignore those things and leave them to your bride. She may tell you not to worry about it and that she is happy to take care of those things. Don't Believe Her!!!

What she means is that she is happy to work on these things, but she wants to know that you care about them. She wants to hear your opinions on these things. She wants to see that you are interested in this day, that you care about it because she does, and that you are involved.

That doesn't mean, guys, that you have to be wimps and go to all the wedding showers with her (that is beyond the call of duty and may even be wrong!), but it does mean that you will learn to listen to her. When she asks for help, you need to give it. When she asks your opinion you will not say, "Whatever you want." That may be true, but she really wants to know what you think because she loves you. (I don't know why, but she does.)

It's all attitude.

## Be Romantic!

This is a hard one for us guys. Did you know that it is a custom to give your wife a gift on her wedding day? I had no idea. Frankly, from my perspective, she was getting me—what more could she want? (My wife is so lucky to be married to me!) I initially even thought it was a stupid custom. After all, we were spending all this money and time on the wedding itself. Now I had another thing to add to the "to do" list.

Of course that is not the way to look at these things. Gentlemen, we need to look at the wedding day as a Romantic endeavor. We need to put time and thought into this day to show our wives that we are happy they foolishly decided to marry us! So do something Romantic on your wedding day. Get her a special gift, have a special flower delivered to her the day of the wedding with a love poem, or sing her a song at the reception (I did that and proved that it really is the thought that counts). Go that extra mile and make her feel like she is the luckiest woman in the world to be marrying you

## Be a Man!

Finally be a man! I can't say that enough. Your wife, your bride, doesn't want or need to be married to another girlfriend. She wanted a man of God because God made man and woman to be together and to complement each other in a wonderful and miraculous union. God wants you to be a man. He wants you to be a leader who leads as Jesus did; a man who takes responsibility for himself and all those around him; a man who puts the needs of others first and uses his power and authority for their benefit.

In practical terms, that means that you need to lead your wife to pre-marriage classes. You should talk to the pastor and be involved in the worship service. You can arrange these things; don't put them on her. At the rehearsal dinner you set the tone. Let the men and women in the wedding party know that your wedding is a sacred day when you will be worshipping and appearing before the Lord of Heaven. Let them know that you will not tolerate anything inappropriate for the people of God—at the wedding, at the bachelor party, or anywhere else.

One of the best ways you can be a man is to lead your wife in worship and Bible study. Start now! Set aside time to read the Bible with your fiancé. Pray with her. This will strengthen your marriage more than anything else. And make it your goal to be a man of God before the wedding, the day of, and always.

"But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." 1 Timothy 6:11-12

God's blessings on your marriage!

—The husband of the author

*Thank you to my husband for giving me the experience, the nudge, and the joy of reliving our own wedding in putting this planner together.*



# The Checklist

## 6 to 12 Months Before the Wedding

- Set the date
- Help orchestrate a meeting of your parents and future in-laws (typically, the groom's family makes the first move to become acquainted with the bride's family)
- Discuss the budget with the groom and both families
- Find photographs and your favorite ideas from the pages of Bridal magazines.
- Send announcements of your engagement to your fiancé's and your hometown newspapers, as well as the newspapers in the town or towns where you both now live
- Choose and reserve the wedding and reception sites
- Meet with professionals to discuss budgets and options
  - Florist
  - Caterer
  - Cake baker
  - Photographer
  - Videographer
- Choose the bridesmaids and groomsmen / ushers
- Select your dress and headpiece, and schedule appointments for custom fitting
- Choose the bridesmaids' gowns with the help of your honor attendant (remember to get a fabric sample if the bridesmaids will need to dye shoes to match)
- Develop your own record-keeping system for invitations, gifts and thank-you notes (See Ceremony Section of Planner)
- Meet with your Pastor to discuss the service and any premarital counseling. (Then meet to discuss the details two months before the wedding.)

*You can plan a wedding in as little as 2-3 months.*

Just get the ceremony and reception sites reserved, and take care of anything that needs to be ordered. The rest of the plans will follow.



# Ceremony

## *The Scripture Principles*

At one time – and not too long ago – it was common in some areas for weddings to take place during the Sunday morning worship service. After the sermon, the couple would step forward and make their vows in the presence of the congregation. A reception was held later, if desired. It was, at that time, thoroughly understood that the Christian wedding was a worship service. When a wedding takes place in God's house, it is not just a wedding that happens to be taking place in a church. It is a worship service with the purpose of praising God for all his blessings, among them the gift of spouses and life long companions which he gives us to support, comfort, and strengthen each other on the journey of life.

Today, unfortunately, television, bridal magazines and those who have made weddings their business often have a distorted view of the meaning of a "Christian wedding." So many weddings become pomp and pageantry. They become all about the flowers and dresses and parties. And the only criteria necessary to make any wedding a Christian wedding is that there is a Pastor and a church involved. It's all about location and setting.

More and more, couples who are looking to "keep it simple" and be married without the pageantry are heading to the courthouse. Any Justice of the Peace can perform a marriage ceremony. God has given the government the right to perform marriages and to establish laws to guard and protect them. A couple will be just as married by a Justice of the Peace as they will be by a Pastor and it will cost them a lot less in time and money.

So, then, what is the purpose of having a Christian worship service and wedding? It is so that Christ may be glorified, and that those being joined might ask Him to be a part of their wedding and their future lives together. The vows spoken before God, in the church or wherever, during the worship service, indicate that Christ is foremost in the lives of the couple being married. It is a celebration of God's goodness to us. It is a testimony of faith to the friends and family of the bride and groom. Contrary to popular belief, the bride and groom are not the center of the Christian wedding; Jesus is. It is a misunderstanding on the part of the bride or groom to say, "This is our wedding; we'll do what we want." With any Christian couple, their wedding is a worship service to praise and thank the Lord for each other and ask for His guidance in their lives together, be it in a church or under a pavilion at a local park. With this in mind, let's approach the Christian wedding with a God-pleasing attitude, seeking to glorify the Lord in every aspect of the wedding and your marriage.

The Bible is the book we live by...for life now and for life forever.  
The Bible is pure Word of God and we look to our God for guidance in all things.

# Planning the Ceremony

## The Worship Service

The order of worship generally used for Christian marriage in our Wisconsin Synod churches is found on page 140 of *Christian Worship; A Lutheran Hymnal*. “This order of worship celebrates God’s gracious gift of marriage. The congregation shares the joy of the bride and groom as they publicly promise lifelong love and faithfulness to each other.”

It follows this basic format:

Call to Worship	
Word of God:	Lessons (Optional placement for Christ Candle)
	Sermon
Marriage Rite	
Marriage Promises	(Optional placement for Christ Candle)
Exchange of Rings	(Optional placement for Unity Candle)
Declaration of Marriage	
Marriage Blessing	
Hymn	
Prayers & Lord’s Prayer	
Blessing	

## The Readings and Sermon Text

Often, one of the last things decided upon by a couple is the sermon text or scripture readings that will be read at their wedding. This may happen because the Bible is always available and doesn’t need to be reserved a year in advance (like so many other of the wedding arrangements), or maybe because it seems like one of the easier things to decide upon. Either way, when you do find the time to sit down with your future spouse and/or your Pastor in an effort to choose the parts of scripture that will reflect what you believe and want to share with your wedding guests, you may feel a little lost. Where do I start? Your Pastor should be able to help with that. He may have a list of readings that he and his members have used. But if you want to start thinking about it before you get to meet with him, here are a few suggestions that you could start with.

### Suggested Scripture Lessons

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a	The creation of man and woman
Genesis 2:4-10, 15-24	Becoming one flesh
Proverbs 3:3-6	A seal upon your heart
Song of Solomon 2:10-14, 16a; 8:6-7	Love is strong as death.
Isaiah 43:1-7	You are precious in God’s eyes.
Isaiah 54:5-8	Your maker is your husband.
Isaiah 55:10-13	You shall go out in joy.
Isaiah 61: 10-62:3	Rejoice in the Lord.
Isaiah 63:7-9	The steadfast love of the Lord
Jeremiah 31:31-34	New Covenant
Matthew 5:1-10, 13-16	The Beatitudes
Matthew 7: 21, 24-27	A house built upon a rock
Matthew 19:3-6	One flesh
Matthew 22:35-40	Love, the greatest commandment
Mark 10:6-9, 13-16	No longer two, but one
Mark 10:42-45	True greatness
John 15:9-17	Remain in Christ’s love
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18	The life of a Christian
1 Corinthians 13	The greatest of these is love
2 Corinthians 5:14-17	In Christ we are a new creation



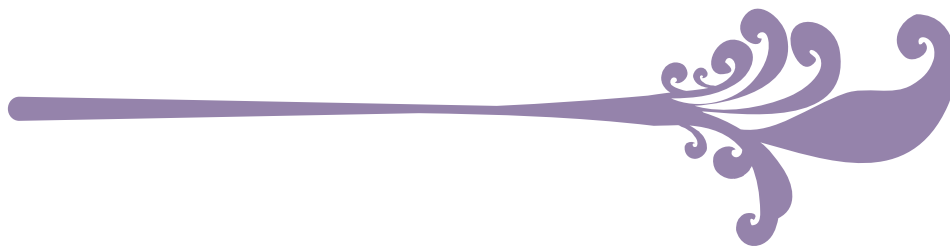
# The Reception

## *A Few Words to Get you Started*

Often, the wedding reception becomes the focus of the wedding, rather than the ceremony. It's easy to see how that happens. Where as the ceremony is often just a matter of choosing some songs and Bible readings, the reception involves food, music, decorations, hall managers, favors, personal displays, programs, and months of planning. Not to mention the time of the wedding day devoted to each; an hour ceremony as opposed to an average six hours of eating and celebrating. As Christians, we want to keep this all in perspective and balance. Even though the reception will most likely take up a good majority of your planning time, don't make your wedding all about the party.

This balance can be achieved by keeping a few simple things in mind. Remember to take the time to carefully consider the few arrangements necessary in planning your worship ceremony. Then, let those readings, songs, and symbolic choices set the tone for your party plans. Doing this will bring your faith and Christian joy into your reception, instead of leaving them at the church doors. Jesus would love an invitation to the party too. Our Savior's presence at the wedding in Cana is a testimony to His desire to celebrate the joy of the union of a new bride and groom.

This section of the planner will try to help you out with decoration ideas, tradition suggestions, and other ways to make your reception a personal evening and testament to your faith as well as your love for each other. But, probably the best thing to do with each plan and decision you consider is to ask yourself, "Would this be appropriate if Jesus were seated among the guests?" Because He is. And He's happy to be there!





Planning your wedding, whether it's a big or small one, can be a lot of work. There are a lot of details to take care of beforehand, but also many things that will be happening the day of the wedding that you will not be able to, or want to, worry about yourself. That's what your wedding party is for.

Traditionally, bridesmaids and groomsmen are chosen from our family and friends. They are people close to us who we want to have a special role in this very important event in our lives. They stand at the altar with you, close to your side, as you are joined to the person you will spend the rest of your life with. But they also serve another very valuable role, they are your gophers. These people love you and will be honored to help make sure your "special day" goes smoothly and without catastrophe.

Here are some of the traditional roles which bridal attendants have filled for the engaged couple. Some things might not be necessary in the plans you have for your wedding and don't be afraid to ask your attendants to help with other things that arise in your planning that aren't on these lists. I'm sure they will be willing to help out wherever they can.. However, don't expect your bridesmaids and groomsmen automatically to know what you'd like them to take charge of. Be sure to ask specifically (and be sure to say please) or give them a copy of these lists, underlining or high-lighting what you'd like them to do for you

## *The Maid (or Matron if married) of Honor*

- Leads the bridesmaid troupe. It's the maid/matron of honor's (MOH) job to direct the other maids through their duties. Make sure all bridesmaids get their dresses, go to dress fittings, and find the right jewelry. Also provide them with the 411 on all pre-wedding parties.
- Helps shop for dresses (the bride's and the bridesmaids'). The MOH pays for her own wedding outfit (including shoes).
- Offers to help the bride with pre-wedding tasks; from addressing invites to choosing the wedding colors to nodding enthusiastically when she waxes poetic about wedding cake.





Professionals will be taking care of a large portion of your wedding day. Most couples will hire at least one or two outside parties to be a part of their day. Whether it's a professional photographer or the DJ for the dance, the toughest part of hiring is finding someone who is reliable, trustworthy and will fulfill their duties well on your wedding day.

This section contains some vocabulary, questions, and hints that will help you interview prospective professionals. The best way to ensure you get the caterer who will serve the food you desire at the correct time and with professionalism is to know their business. Don't assume anything. Ask every little question you think of. You won't look stupid. Better to ask the question then to find out later they thought you understood something you didn't. And most professionals will appreciate knowing they've answered all your questions and know exactly what you expect of them.

## The Wedding Planner

Planning a wedding can be a stressful time, especially for the bride and groom who do not enjoy planning and making so many arrangements. A wedding planner can take care of any item, no matter how small, and free up the couple's time leading up the wedding.

Wedding planners are becoming more common since they are no longer something only the wealthy can afford to hire. Many planners offer very affordable rates for the average couple. Or you could hire a planner to take care of only a portion of the planning. This would still free up your time, but cost slightly less.

### A Wedding Planner will...

- Work according to an established timeline and let you know what should be done, at what time.
- Assist you in establishing a realistic budget that is tailored to meet your most important aspects of your special date.
- Haggle over prices and negotiate discounts so you can have what you want at the lowest price. She'll help you save money.

# Reception Music Worksheet



D.J./Host/Bandleader: \_\_\_\_\_

We are Having:	Time:	Notes/Songs/People:
_____ Arrival of wedding party	_____	_____
_____ Announcements	_____	_____
_____ Prayer before dinner	_____	_____
_____ Sit-down Dinner / Buffet Dinner	_____	_____
_____ (Champagne) Toast(s)	_____	_____
_____ Cutting the cake	_____	_____
_____ The Grand March (attach list of wedding party)	_____	_____
_____ Bride & Groom first dance	_____	_____
_____ Father/daughter dance	_____	_____
_____ Mother/son dance	_____	_____
_____ Other special dances	_____	_____
_____ Garter removal / toss	_____	_____
_____ Bouquet Toss	_____	_____
_____ Dollar Dance	_____	_____
_____ Other events	_____	_____
_____ Newlyweds departing early	_____	_____



# Organization

## Making your Personal Arrangements

This section of the planner is about making your life, leading up to your wedding, as easy and stress-less for you as possible. If you're an extremely organized person, then you might not need the hints in this section, but the worksheets and checklists might come in handy. If, on the other hand, you use your hand as a calendar reminder, this might help a lot. Here are some easy ways to keep things together and ready-to-go ahead of time so you won't be scrambling at the last minute or forget anything... anything important anyway.

1. First, get a few larger boxes, or even better, Rubbermaid containers. Label one "church," another "reception," and depending upon your wedding plans, label others "guest bags, rehearsal, wedding night, etc." You get the idea.

Now, every time you purchase or get something for the wedding, place it in the appropriate box. And don't forget the little extras for decorating; like tape, scissors, staplers, water pitchers for filling vases, paperclips, etc. Then, when the weekend comes and you're headed to the church or packing your overnight bag, grab that box and you're ready to go...everything's in one spot.

2. As you decide on decorations, favors, and gifts make a list of everything you'll need. Be sure to include all the little details...like scissors for cutting the ribbons, tape for attaching those note cards, or tacks for hanging decorations. Then gather those items together before you sit down to assemble the favors or bags...no last minute runs to the store. (Use the worksheets and lists in this planner or make your own and keep them all together. The key is to write things down when you think of them...things you'll need to do or buy or ask people for. Don't wait, and expect to remember it later...you won't.)
3. Use the schedule sheet to start keeping track of all the things that are going to need to be done during your wedding weekend. Don't wait until the week before to jot the jobs down...write them down as you think of them and just estimate when you think it would work to accomplish them and who might help you with each thing. Then, as you get closer and things start to get "figured out," erase, cross out, and rewrite. Your list doesn't need to be perfect looking. (But if you are a perfectionist, like I am, photocopy the worksheet first and save the original for a final draft a week or two before the wedding.)