

Miscellaneous Ideas

Objection 1

Butterfly Release 2

Dove Release 3

Cardinal Directions 3

Basket of Stones 4

Anniversary Box 6

Commitment and Gifts 11

A Rose and a Vase 13

Handfasting 14

Tree Planting 22

Knot Tying 24

The Unity Heart 25

Objection

This is a risky thing to do if you have friends with a sense of humor – and we all do. Six times has Tom has been asked to say this. The friends kept quiet. In fact, no one took a breath – it was extremely silent each time – you could have heard a pin drop. Are all your friends this well behaved?

1. Objection - Traditional

Objection

Is there anyone here who has reason why this couple should not be joined in marriage? If so, speak now, or forever hold your peace.

Slight Pause

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2. Objection – Too Late

Objection

Is there anyone here who has reason why this couple should not be joined in marriage?

Slight Pause.

If so, it's too late now, you've had () years to say something.

3. Objection – Don't Want to Hear It

Not Really an Objection

If any of you has anything to say that might change their minds - they don't want to hear it.

Slight Pause for laughter

However, they do want to hear from you, and hope that you will always be their friend.

Butterfly Release

Butterflies can be purchased in separate small boxes or envelopes. The butterflies are distributed to the guests at the appropriate point in the ceremony. Here is a website for obtaining butterflies.
www.butterflyreleasecompany.com/

Butterfly Release

The Butterflies are distributed to the guests.

There is a legend about the Butterfly.

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The Legend of the Butterfly
To make a wish come true,
Whisper it to a Butterfly.
Upon these wings it will be
Taken to Heaven and Granted,
Because Butterflies are messengers to God.

Please hold your butterfly in your hands and make a special wish for Bde and Grm.

Pause

Now open the envelope/box and release your Butterfly. Your special wish will be taken on high.

Dove Release

Dove Release

Doves are brought forward by the Ushers at the end of the ceremony.

Grm and Bde, have chosen these Doves to symbolize the peace, love and hope in their marriage.

Doves mate for life, and like married couples they are not necessarily obligated to stay side by side every hour of every day. And although they may separate and each pursue an individual flight pattern for a period of time. In the evening, whether their day's journey has been together or apart, both doves always return home to the same nest.

The Doves are released.

Cardinal Directions

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Cardinal Directions

In times past, virtues were assigned to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home. The heat of the heart's passion. The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake. The swift excitement of the river. The refreshing cleansing of the rain. The all encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North. Firm foundation on which to build. Fertility of the fields to enrich your lives. A stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

Basket of Stones

The Basket of Stones

This wedding ceremony today marks Bde and Grm's commitment in the presence of loving family and friends to create a marriage built on a strong and lasting foundation. I'm sure you all noticed the basket of stones at the entrance when you came in, and I hope you each chose one

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from the basket. (In a few moments OR After the Ceremony) Bde and Grm would like to gather these stones from you to symbolically help them build this foundation, to create strong cornerstones and support for their life together. In the years to come, these stones will also remind them in a very clear, vivid and certain way to care for this foundation - to shore it up when necessary - to help it retain its ability to sustain them through life's challenges.

So to help them in this process, please hold in your hand the stone you have chosen. Now as you hold it, please call to mind a quality of your own personality that you would like to instill in this stone as a gift to the firm foundation of Bde and Grm's life together. It might be your great patience, your sense of humor, your resilience, or whatever comes to mind as representative of you. Bde and Grm will collect these stones and cherish them, and whenever they are in need of one of those qualities, qualities that at the time may seem to be far removed from themselves, they will remember this ceremony and bring those qualities, with which you have gifted them, into themselves.

In this way, they will take you with them on their journey, and you will help them build their unflinching and secure marital house. So let's take a minute to hold these stones while you think quietly about the image you have chosen to share.

Pause for a few minutes.

Now we will collect the stones - with Bde and Grm's heartfelt thanks.

OR Collected after the Ceremony

Pause for a few minutes.

Please hold onto your stones until the end of the ceremony. There will be a basket held by a Groomsman during the receiving line where they will be collected with Bde and Grm's heartfelt thanks.

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NOTE:

You could also personalize this by having black markers available with the stones and asking each person to pick up a stone and to print their name on it.

Anniversary Box

Here's an idea that will certainly grab the attention of the guests, add some pizzazz to your ceremony, and incorporate a new twist into your celebration.

Here is what you will need:

- A wooden wine box
- a bottle of your favorite wine
- two love letters sealed in separate envelopes
- a small hammer and several nails, or a custom made or purchased box with a lock and key.

A few weeks before the wedding, take some time to each write a letter to one another, expressing your thoughts about the good qualities that you found in your future partner, the reasons for falling in love with them and your hopes and dreams for the future. In other words, you write a "love letter" to each other and place it in a sealed envelope, with the name of your partner on the outside. Do not read what the other has written.

Be creative with the box by putting foam inside to support the wine bottle. Line the inside with satin material. You can also include CDs of your favorite music, favorite pictures of you together, and other mementos making it your own romantic time capsule. Keep the box in a place of honor as a constant visual reminder of your love and

commitment to each other. The box can be a life preserver in years to come.

The Wine Box should be opened on your 5th, 10th or 25th wedding anniversary.

There is only one other reason the box should be opened before your anniversary. If there should come a time when you hit a bumpy road in your relationship, before you give up or make any irrational decisions, open the Wine Box. The hope is that there will never be a reason to have to open the box except on your anniversary!

Hit a rough spot in your relationship? Sit down together, open the box, uncork the wine and unseal the envelopes that you wrote for one another before your wedding, go to separate rooms and quietly read the love letter.

Even if you are not seeing eye-to-eye at that very moment, it will remind you of all the reasons you choose this person as your partner and all the things that helped shape the life they've created together. Never take your blessings of being together for granted.

The romantic sentiments you wrote, the declaration of love, the clear thoughts about why you chose this person as your life partner will help put you back on even ground. This is the perfect ritual to remind you of your wedding day and your intention to love and cherish each other in good times and bad for as long as you both shall live.

You can also have a “time capsule” Anniversary Box – already sealed. See Sample 4.

Anniversary Box - 1.

Anniversary Box Ceremony

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Grm and Bde, I asked you to find a strong wooden box. In addition, I asked each of you to write a letter to one another, expressing your thoughts about the good qualities you have found in your beloved, as well as your reasons for falling in love with each other. I requested that in no circumstance were you to read each other's letter, and that you were to seal them in individual envelopes.

Now, please place the envelopes into the box.

Grm and Bde, should you ever find your marriage encountering serious difficulty, I ask that before you make any rash decisions, you open this box, together as a couple, and then venture off into separate rooms to read these letters you wrote to one another when you were first united in love. Read the letters and before any rift becomes irreparable, reflect upon the reasons that you fell in love with each other in the first place.

Dear Family and Friends,

Let us join together in silent prayer for Grm and Bde: that they never have reason to open this box (as long as they both shall live.) (until their 10th / 25th/ 50th Anniversary)

Moment of Silence

Anniversary Box - 2.

Anniversary Box Ceremony

Grm and Bde, I have asked you as a couple, to find a strong wooden box that will hold two bottles of wine and two wine glasses. In addition, I have asked each of you to write a letter to one another, expressing your thoughts about the good qualities that you have found in your future partner, as well as your reasons for falling in love with each other. I requested that under no condition were you to read each other's letter, and that you were to seal them in individual envelopes and put them in the box with the wine and glasses.

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Grm and Bde, should you ever find your marriage enduring serious difficulties, I am asking that before you make any irrational decisions, that you both, as a couple, open the box, drink some wine together, and then venture off into separate rooms to read the letters that you wrote to one another when you were united as a couple. By reading these love letters, you will reflect upon the reasons that you fell in love with each other in the first place. The hope is that there will never be a reason for you to open this box, unless of course, it's for your (10th / 25th) anniversary!

Grm and Bde, I now ask that you place these items into your anniversary chest and together seal it.

The Bride and Groom seal the Anniversary Chest.

Anniversary Box - 3.

An every Anniversary Opening of the Box

Anniversary Box Ceremony

I would like to draw your attention to the box sitting (over here/location of box). Grm and Bde have written letters to each other expressing their feelings as they begin their marriage. These letters will be placed in the box, along with a bottle of wine. On the happy occasion of their anniversary, they will open the box, read the letters, drink the wine, and add new letters to the box. As time passes, they will have a record of the yearly reflection on their relationship and a living document of the growth and depth of their ever-evolving love.

Grm and Bde, I now ask that you place these items into your anniversary box and together seal it.

Music

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*The Bride and Groom take the letters from the Maid of Honor
and Best Man.*

The Bride and Groom seal the box.

NOTE: Once upon a wedding, the couple found a wooden box at a wine shop that held two bottles of wine – with room for glasses and two letters. The lid slid shut in a groove in the wood. Couples have used nails and a hammer to nail the box shut – but, if you can find this kind of box, it works quietly and you don't have to bring a hammer to your wedding. If the box won't hold the glasses and two bottles of wine, just have one bottle of wine in the box.

One time a couple used a battery screw gun and screws to seal the box. Many times a lock is used. Once the bride's father built a box worthy of a museum with a fancy latch and lock. Woodworking was what he liked to do.

Anniversary Box - 4.

The Box is already sealed – A time capsule

Anniversary Box

Bde and Grm have chosen to create an Anniversary Box as part of their ceremony.

This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other. The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry. The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written.

Bde and Grm, you have created your very own "romantic" time capsule to be opened on your 5th 10th 25th ??? wedding anniversary.

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I recommend that you keep the box in a place of honor prominently displayed in your home as a constant reminder of your commitment to each other.

Ceremony of Commitments and Gifts

(No Rings are Exchanged)

Ceremony of Commitments and Gifts

We are here today because Grm and Bde have decided to commit themselves to one another as husband and wife. They have shared their lives together, and during this time, they have thought frequently about the meaning of commitment. Our ceremony today was chosen by the Bride and Groom. As I speak, I speak for them. I speak their thoughts and feelings on what it means to be committed to one another for life as husband and wife.

Throughout our lives, we commit ourselves to various careers, ideas, and beliefs. One of the deepest commitments we can make as human beings is to our spouse, our partner in life. When you examine the essence of commitment, you come to realize that there can be no commitment without there first being a choice. An ongoing commitment such as marriage therefore requires a continuous choice made by the husband and wife. When we commit ourselves to marriage, we commit ourselves to making the right choices. We commit ourselves to choose compromise over controversy and partner over self. We commit ourselves to choose the same path at every crossroads. We commit ourselves to choose giving over our expectation to receive.

When we begin a new marriage, we fully expect that the marriage will flourish and continue to grow. As we all know, sometimes this happens, and sometimes it does not. The difference is made by the daily gifts that one partner chooses to give the other. We need to constantly bestow upon our partners the gifts that make a marriage successful, because without this close attention, even the most beautiful flower will

fade. Like painters, we decide what kind of relationship we want to paint for ourselves.

Each stroke can either add or subtract from the overall beauty of our lives. Our Bride and Groom have spent years painting a very beautiful relationship together. They want to create the same kind of marriage – one filled with the greatest gifts they can give one another. Our Bride and Groom have chosen to forego the material gifts traditionally presented on a wedding day, and instead have chosen to present each other with gifts which more closely illustrate the choices they will make in their married lives together.

They choose to give:

The gift of Respect, so that each partner can continue to feel confident about his or her status as a good spouse

The gift of Dedication, so that the atmosphere in their home is one of a constant effort to try hard for each other, and for themselves

The gift of Loyalty, so that doubts cannot get the better of them and cause them to restrict the expression of their emotions

The gift of Support, because they realize that there are times when they will both need it from one another

The gift of Companionship, because life is just better with two.

The gift of Communication, because they are two separate minds trying to lead one life

The gift of Honor, as recognition for how hard they try, and how much they have grown

The gift of Humor, because you don't have a life if you don't have fun

And the gift of Love, because they feel it, and it is all they need.

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A Rose and a Vase

Note: The Groom will need to have a rose and the Bride will need a bud vase with water in it. Before the ceremony, the vase and rose should be placed in an easily accessible spot – on a table, for example. The Best Man, or the Maid of Honor, will get the rose and the vase just prior to this part of the ceremony.

A Rose and a Vase

This is a day steeped in tradition, a time when we are surrounded by symbols: Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. Today Bde and Grm begin a new tradition, a custom which now becomes uniquely their own.

*Judge Armstrong hands a copy of the ceremony to the Bride
and a copy to the Groom.*

Groom: Bde, I give you this rose. Because it grew from a tiny seed, becoming stronger and larger until it burst into flower, it symbolizes the way my love for you has grown.

The Groom gives the Bride the rose.

Each year on our wedding anniversary, I will give you another rose. I'll remember this day and renew the vows we've made.

Bride: Grm, I give you this Vase of Water.

The Groom takes and holds the Vase.

Because water is the one element without which we would perish, it symbolizes the importance of your love in my life. Each year on our

anniversary, I will refill this vase, offering it to you as a symbol of my ever renewing love.

The Bride puts the rose in the Vase and they hold the Vase together.

Groom: Without water the rose would die.

Bride: Without the rose, / the vase of water would not be beautiful.

Groom: My gift is enhanced by yours, just as my life is enhanced by yours.

Bride: My gift is lovely because of yours, just as my life is better because of you.

*The Bride and Groom hand the Rose and Vase to the Best Man
and return the copies to Judge Armstrong.*

On each anniversary, as you give and receive the rose and the water, remember with joy this day when you pledged your love and your lives to each other.

May this be only the first of many cherished traditions in a home filled with happiness.

Handfasting

Handfasting - 1.

Handfasting – Four Chords

To Bride and Groom: Please join hands and look into each other's eyes.

To Groom: Gm, will you cause her pain?

Groom: I may.

Is that your intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him pain?

Bride: I may.

Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made. Please join your hands.

First cord is draped across the Bride and Groom's hands.

To Bride: Bde, Will you share his laughter?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Grm, Will you share her laughter?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

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And so the binding is made.

Second chord is draped across the couple's hands.

To Groom: Gm, will you share her dreams?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride: Bde, will you share his dreams?

Bride: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Will you dream together to create a growing love, a stronger community, and a better world?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape third chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bde, will you honor him?

Bride: I will.

To Groom: Gm, will you honor her?

Groom: I will.

To Bride and Groom: Will you seek to never give cause to break that honor?

Bride and Groom: We shall never do so.

And so the binding is made.

Drape fourth chord across the couple's hands.

Tie chords together while saying.

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making of breaking of this union.

Once chords are tied together they are removed and placed on a table.

Handfasting - 2.

**Handfasting – Six Chords
and Declaration of Intent**

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be handfasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to your creative higher powers.

The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth.

To Bride and Groom: Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Bride and Groom: Yes, we seek to enter.

In times past it was believed that the human soul shared

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characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigned virtues to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body. Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home. The heat of the heart's passion. The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake. The swift excitement of the river. The refreshing cleansing of the rain. The all encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North. Firm foundation on which to build. Fertility of the fields to enrich your lives. A stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, I bid you look into each other's eyes.

To Groom: Grm, will you cause her pain?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that you intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him pain?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made. Please join your hands.

The first cord is draped across the Bride and Groom's hands.

To Bride: Bde, will you share his laughter?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Grm, will you share her laughter?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

The second chord is draped across the couple's hands.*

To Bride: Bde, will you burden him?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Groom: Groom, will you burden her?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that your intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride and Groom: Bride and Groom, will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the third chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bride, will you share his dreams?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Groom, will you share her dreams?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Bride and Groom, will you dream together to create new realities and hopes?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the fourth chord across the couple's hands.

To Groom: Grm, will you cause her anger?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that you intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him anger?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

Bride and Groom: We will.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the fifth chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bde, Will you honor him?

Bride: I will.

To Groom: Grm, will you honor her?

Groom: I will.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you seek to never give cause to break that honor?

Bride and Groom: We shall never do so.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the sixth chord across the couple's hands.

Tie the chords together while saying:

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making of breaking of this union.

Once chords are tied together they are removed and placed on a table.

Tree Planting

You will need a small tree in a small container so that it can then be put, with more soil, in a larger container. Since everyone is dressed nicely, there may be some dirt under the fingernails, etc. This would work well in backyard or outdoor wedding. Where getting soil from your first home, six states away, is not easy to do, the wording can be adjusted to just plain old dirt representing each of your families – the Bride's from Home Depot and the Groom's from Menards.

1. Childhood Homes

Tree Planting Ceremony

Grm and Bde love and value nature. So, they have decided on the day of their marriage to plant a tree. Like the tree, we hope their marriage will grow into something magnificent to behold. Their mothers

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have each brought earth from Grm's and Bde's childhood homes - representing their families and the experiences that formed the foundation of their personalities.

All living things need support to flourish, and a marriage is certainly a living thing. And just like the tree that they are planting, marriage requires constant nurturing and nourishment. As they provide the sun, soil, and water for this tree, they will provide the encouragement, trust, and love needed on a daily basis to consciously nurture and nourish their connection to each other.

Music

Mothers bring up soil, sapling, and water to plant while music is playing.

Tree Planting - 2. Parents' Gardens

Tree Planting Ceremony

Bde and Grm will now take part in a Tree Planting Ceremony to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as today they become each other's family.

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and to change. Let your relationship and your love for each other be like this tree you plant today. Let it grow tall and strong. Let it stand tall during the harsh winds and rains and storms, and come through unscathed.

Like a tree, your marriage must be resilient. It must weather the challenges of daily life and the passage of time. And just like the tree you are planting, marriage requires constant nurturing and nourishment.

The soil Bde and Grm will use to nurture this young sapling has been gathered from the gardens of their Parents' homes. Fertile by nature and nourished with love and attention, this blend of life's ingredients will be the foundation of great things to come.

Music

*The Bride and Groom each take a container of soil
and add it to the sapling.*

Knot Tying

1. Fisherman's Knot

Fisherman's Knot

Please bring the cords for a very unique wedding tradition known as the Fisherman's Knot.

The Best Man has the two cords.

Bde and Grm, these two lengths of cord represent your separate families and your individual lives before today. The Fisherman's Knot, also called the "true lovers knot," is one of the simplest and strongest knots to tie; it will not break, and will only become stronger when under pressure.

I ask that you each take one piece, and that together you bind them in a true lovers' knot. Tying this knot signifies that your two families and your two lives are now and forever bound together as one.

The Bride and Groom begin tying the knot.

As you intertwine your pieces, you are joining your two lives into one, representing the present. The finished knot symbolizes your future,

and how your love and marriage will continue to be strong despite any trials life may throw your way.

The Bride and Groom pull the cords together.

And so the binding is made. Let this knot be a reminder of the rewards of your working together to have a happy marriage and life. This knot is symbolic of the fact that you both share the same intentions concerning this relationship, that you will hold each other's heart tight, and form a strong bond from here to forever. Let this knot be a symbol of the strength of your love for each other.

The Best Man takes the knotted cord.

The Unity Heart

The Unity Heart is detailed at www.unityheart.com It can be purchased at that site. This is the suggested wording that goes with it. It can be changed to whatever you would like.

The Unity Heart

The Unity Heart signifies the wedding covenant. It is a lasting reminder of the Bride and Groom coming together with their faith in Christ, beginning their Life Long Journey as One.

The bold outer heart represents the Groom. He is the strength and cover for his family and home, yet without his Bride, incomplete.

The intricate inner heart represents the Bride. Beautiful and multi-faceted, she brings her creative abilities and wisdom.

The couple then Trust their hearts to one another combined with their Faith in Christ together, joining their pieces of The Unity Heart and demonstrating their commitment to each other.

Thus completing the sculpture . . . And the Two Shall Become One.

The Bride hands her flowers to the Maid of Honor.

The Bride and Groom complete The Unity Heart.