



Rev. Ann Fuller

Readings

Readings can add a surprisingly personal touch to any wedding. Your officiant needn't be the one doing the reading either. This particular element is a great way to honor someone who was not able to be a member of your wedding party (great-aunt Edna doesn't look so great in strapless tangelo taffeta) or simply capture a facet of marriage you wish to highlight in your wedding ceremony. Readings work very well immediately after the opening words or right after the exchange of rings or a unity ritual or other such ceremonial element.

Readings can consist of scripture, poetry, song lyrics, excerpts from books, etc. Yes, anything that captures what you wish to express is fair game. A quick internet search for wedding readings or a romp through wedding planning books will provide you with oodles of ideas.

A few notes of caution:

Readings are the best place to “lose” your guests. I have a great view of your family and friends and you are just going to have to trust me that this is where they tend to squirm and check their watches the most. I highly encourage couples to include no more than two readings for their wedding and try to keep each reading to a reasonable length – i.e. short. Long readings or too many readings are a great way to hypnotize your guests and I suspect that's not the goal.

If you want someone else to read besides your officiant, it is generally a good idea to ask that individual first. I have been in the position of inviting someone forward to read who had no idea they were going to be asked to do this. Public speaking is unnerving to many people and should never come as a surprise.

It is always a good idea to give your readers a copy of their text well in advance of the wedding so they can practice. I have seen people become needlessly embarrassed stumbling over some pretty tough words. This is not something to thrust in their hands moments before the ceremony begins.

Music

Music evokes strong emotion so it is a natural part of ritual. Most of us are familiar with the music played during the processional and the recessional, but you can include music within the ceremony itself. I had a soloist sing a piece at my wedding my parents had sung at theirs. Though being way back in 1993, I can't remember when in the order of service she sang it.

If you would like to include music within the ceremony, I encourage you to have something else going on at the same time. The two and a half minutes it takes to sing a song feels like an eternity when you are standing in front of your guests staring at one another. Consider greeting your guests, having witnesses come forward to sign your license and certificate or present your parents or attendants with a token of your appreciation.



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Unfortunately, music rarely works well during rituals such as the unity candle and sand ceremony. These rituals do not last very long and are generally accompanied by the officiant guiding the couple through the ritual while explaining the symbolism. Soft background music can work nicely to capture the mood during these rituals, but the music itself will not be the focal point and should not drown out your officiant's voice.

Brevard Minister