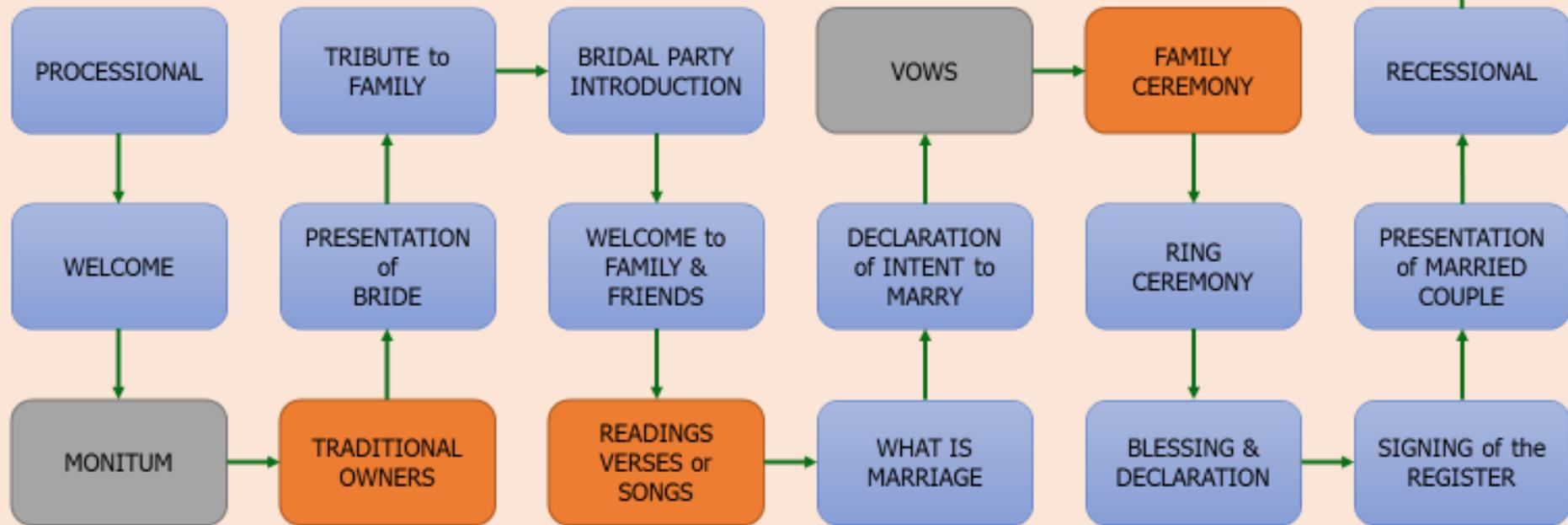


Designing Your Wedding-The Big Picture-Flow Chart



Designing Your Wedding – The Big Picture



- You have complete freedom to include this step or not and make any changes you wish.
- This step is an optional inclusion and can occur anywhere you wish within the ceremony.
- This step contains legal wording which may not be changed but can be added to.

Your Wedding Ceremony Planner

Step 1

Ceremony Step
Processional The time from when the Ushers begin their setup to the point where the bride takes up her position beside the groom at the front of the ceremony.

Welcome to a wedding; the Groom and his wedding party are patiently waiting at the top of the aisle with the Celebrant; the Bride has alighted from her transport and now has her bridesmaids fussing over last minute adjustments. The Bride's wedding party now moves into place anticipating the first musical notes of the processional that will send them on their way.

But wait, before we move down the aisle, let's take a step back for a minute. In designing this wedding, you have made decisions about who is going to participate in the ceremony; you could do this because you'd constructed a ceremony outline and that outline included what roles were necessary for it all to work. Once you'd decided what the roles were that needed filling; you were then able to decide who was best equipped to fill them? You might still create additional roles to specifically include a relative or friend in the ceremony but that is cosmetic rather than functional.

Now I'm sure it comes as no surprise to you that the creation of the outline and the roles is the easy bit; filling those roles is what causes the people involved the greatest amount of angst, but it needn't. Have you ever heard that an elephant is a horse designed by a committee; well "family" with the addition of "friends" represents one monstrous committee and that committee can create havoc as it tries to influence you in your choice of people to participate in your wedding.

Without the proper management, the committee has a potential to get things off on the wrong foot. You see it would seem logical that everyone involved in the planning has the same goal in mind; a well-designed, thoughtful ceremony that has the bride and groom's happiness as its focus. And, in most circumstances that is the case; however, the more people you give a blank sheet of paper to and invite them to be involved in the design, the greater the number of contentious decisions that will need to be made. Sometimes there are two, maybe three people from whom the Bride and Groom might choose to fill a role in the ceremony. It is not unusual for some of the contenders for that role to use emotional leverage trying to ensure they become the chosen one; this becomes even more difficult when others decide to support their claim on the role.

Imagine this theoretical scenario: there are three possible choices for the role of Maid / Matron / Man of Honour, the Bride's only sister (Mother of the Bride's choice) and the Bride's best friend (Bride's choice) and the groom's only sister (Groom's Mother's choice). I'm sure I don't need to describe the discussions that might occur nor do I need to highlight the emotional strategies family and friends might employ to secure the role for the person of their choice.

So, what's the answer? There are two things I suggest you do; as soon as you can after your engagement:

- Firstly, design your ceremony early; this will give you a list of the roles you want to fill and then you can add the name of the person you believe most suited to the role. For any role where there are multiple contenders go through a process of elimination until you have made your final choice. This first step is something the Bride and Groom can do alone or maybe with the assistance of their Celebrant.
- When the list of roles and the names of those chosen for each role is complete, reveal the list to both families in its finished form and invite comment. This will need to be done diplomatically and it will test your communication skills. Make it clear that you are asking for their opinion and that having listened you will decide the degree to which you are going to be influenced by their advice. In true negotiating style look for a "win-win" outcome rather than a "win-lose". Reality tells us there will need to be give and take from all involved; look for creative solutions, but remember the final call should be with the Bride and Groom. And remember if it all gets too much, there is always elopement!

Let's take a few moments to think now about what roles you might be wanting to fill. In listing all these roles I'm not in any way suggesting that a wedding needs all of them. In fact, I come from a long line of KISS proponents (Keep It Short & Simple). But in case you do have twelve first cousins between you and want each of them involved in your ceremony here are some possible roles:

Who is it?	What's their role?
Ushers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of decorations • Distribution of the "Order of Service" • Directing or escorting, as appropriate, family and/or friends of Bride & Groom to their seating. • Mustering people for photographs • Providing directions to the reception • Removal of decorations and clean-up after the wedding.
Significant Relatives Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No individual participation in the ceremony • Escorted by a relative or usher to their seating
Grandparents of Bride & Groom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No individual participation in the ceremony • Escorted by Grandchildren, Bride & Groom's siblings or Ushers, to their seat.
Mother & Father of the Groom ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No individual participation in the ceremony • Escorted by the Groom, relative or Usher to their seating • Contributes financially
Mother of the Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escorted by a relative or Usher to their seating, or • Might walk the Bride down the aisle (Alone or with Father of the Bride) • Contributes financially
Groom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marries the Bride • Contributes financially • Takes Bride on honeymoon.
Best Man / Woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groom's personal assistant • Groom's Fashion consultant • Gets Groom to ceremony on time • Looks after the rings; attaches and detaches rings from ring pillow if required • Acts as Adult witness during registry signing • Pays the Celebrant or any contracted contributor to the wedding e.g. singer.
Groomsmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Groom & Best Man • Partner Bridesmaids as required • Supports others as needed e.g. elderly guests

¹ The Mother and Father of the Bride or Groom may be their Birth Parents or someone who has acted in that role or someone specifically chosen by the Bride & Groom.

Who is it?	What's their role?
Maid / Matron / Man of Honour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride's personal assistant • Bride's fashion consultant • Gets Bride to the ceremony on time (or just a little after) • Acts as Adult witness during registry signing • Adjusts Bride's hair, makeup, dress, bouquet, as required • Provides tissues as needed
Bridesmaids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Bride • Supports the Maid / Matron / Man of Honour • Supports others as needed e.g. elderly guests
Junior Bridesmaids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Bridesmaids • Supports others as needed e.g. elderly guests
Flower Bearer / Ring Bearer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking cute, Flower Bearer distributes flower petals down the aisle • Ring Bearer carries rings down the aisle
Father of the Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks the Bride down the aisle (possibly with Mother of the Bride or specifically chosen person) • Presents the Bride for Marriage representing the family. • Contributes financially
Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marries the Groom • Contributes financially • Takes Groom on honeymoon
Relative / Family Friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an item selected by the Bride & Groom as significant to their Ceremony. (poetry, verse, song, band). This role can occur multiple times during the ceremony as designed

Note: There are many examples of lists, on the Internet, indicating potential roles for people during a wedding, it really comes down to the "style" of ceremony" you want and the level of creativity within the group of people you choose to assist you in its design.

Just a quick reminder about how we became involved in the above discussion; we were talking about the “Processional”. In finishing this week’s chat, I want to just quickly look at some of the issues you might need to think about for the “Processional”:

Order	Who is it?	Things to Think About
1	Ushers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride’s family / friends sit to the left of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony. • Groom’s family / friends sit on the right. • When choosing the Ushers, it is helpful if you choose people from each family as it makes recognising significant Relatives / Friends easier. • It will also help if you write the Ushers a list of people you want to receive VIP seating.
2	Significant Relatives / Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are chosen to receive VIP seating and are escorted to their places.
3	Grandparents of Bride & Groom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escorted to their seat, by Usher (with a family link to the Grandparent) or a relative.
4	Mother & Father of the Groom ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escorted by the Groom to their seat. Groom then returns to the back of the Ceremony. • They occupy seat one and two (closest to the aisle) in the front row, on the right of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony.
5	Mother of the Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escorted by son or daughter, relative, friend or Usher, to their seat. • Sits in the second chair in from the aisle; in the front row on the left of centre, when viewed from the back of the ceremony
6	Groom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groom should give a copy of his personal vows to the Celebrant before the ceremony begins • Celebrant leads the Groom’s procession to the front of Ceremony. • Upon reaching the front the Celebrant stands in the centre and turns to face the guests. • The Groom stands turned in facing the Celebrant (with a view back down the aisle) a little to the right of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony.
7	Best Man / Best Woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands to the right of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony, fanning out from the Groom on their left.
8	Groomsmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands to the right of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony, fanning out from the Best Man / Best Woman on their left.

² The Mother and Father of the Bride or Groom may be their Birth Parents or someone who has acted in that role or someone specifically chosen by the Bride & Groom.

Order	Who is it?	Things to Think About
9	Maid / Matron of Honour Man of Honour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of the Bride's wedding party is known as the Maid of Honour if she is not married and Matron of Honour if she is. A male in this role is called the Man of Honour regardless of his marital status. • Proceeds the Bride & Father of the Bride (and possibly the Mother of the Bride) to the front of the Ceremony • Supports the Flower Bearer - Ring Bearer as they walk in front of her/him to the front of the ceremony. • Stands to the left of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony and leaves room between herself and the Celebrant, for the Father of the Bride and the Bride. • Holds the Bride's bouquet during the ceremony.
10	Bridesmaids / Junior Bridesmaids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand to the left of centre when viewed from the back of the ceremony fanning out to the left of the Maid / Matron / Man of Honour • Assists the Flower Bearer/s and/or Ring Bearer
11	Flower Bearer/s, Ring Bearer ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks down the aisle with the Bridesmaids in front and the Maid / Matron / Man of Honour behind them. • Ring Bearer carries a cushion (with the rings securely fixed) and presents the cushion to the Best Man for later presentation to the Celebrant. • Handing the Ring Cushion to the Best Man / Woman frees up the Ring Bearer to sit if required • Any Bearer can stand at the front with the Bridesmaids or can sit with Grandparents or other family members once they arrive at the front of the ceremony. It's a judgement call based on the child's ability to last through the Ceremony.
12	Father of the Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Giving the Bride away" has transformed into "Presenting the Bride"; most Brides still ask their father to escort them down the aisle. • It is also becoming popular for either or both parents to walk the Bride down the aisle.

³ Due to the unpredictability of young children, I would always suggest they walk down the aisle toward someone they know (Maid/Matron of Honour or Bridesmaid). This means placing them in the middle of the Processional rather than first.

Order	Who is it?	Things to Think About
13	Bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride should give a copy of her personal vows to the Celebrant before the ceremony begins • Since the Bride is going to leave her Father's arm at some stage in the Ceremony it might be easier for the Father of the Bride to be Left of centre and the Bride right as they walk down the aisle but there is no "correct" side.
14	Relative Family Friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The involvement of family or friends or professionals takes many forms; ranging from the reading of a verse or poetry to a string quartet or a band (with or without singers). • Whilst not part of the Processional you will need to think about where to seat them.

Final Comments

It is logical to assume that the more effort you put into planning the "Processional" (indeed the wedding), the better it will go; however, there is nothing that can go "wrong" that can't be fixed or laughed about. So just keep reminding yourself that staying cool, calm and relaxed is the goal and "The Perfect" wedding might be a very dull and boring event to attend, anyway.