

Marriage



The ceremony and vows

- The purpose of the lesson is so that you can know and understand the purpose of marriage and what these promises mean.
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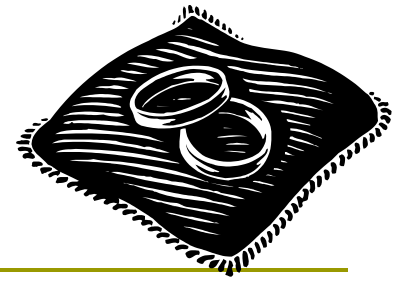
- The vows are made before the priest and the wedding guests and more importantly before God.

- They are an expression of what a Catholic marriage should be

Exclusive

Permanent

Life giving



The Marriage vows

When a couple get married within the Church they make certain promises or vows.

Can you think of any other ceremony or act that you need to make promises at?
(think about other sacraments of commitment).

Preparation for Marriage

- ❑ Before a marriage takes place, a couple must spend time with the priest to talk about the sanctity of marriage and their role within the church in preparation for their life together. Questions concerning family and children, money issues, lifestyle choices and religion will be asked.
- ❑ These marriage preparations are known as *pre-Cana*. It is an educational and maturing process for married life. Pre-Cana can take place over six months or an intensive weekend course and is compulsory for Catholics wishing to get married.



- The fact that the vows are made before God, in his Church and before witnesses should help the couple to recognise how important they are and encourage them to endeavour to overcome whatever difficulties there are in marriage.

- What could these difficulties be?



The Ceremony

- ❑ Catholics choose to get married in Church and the wedding service often takes place in a mass, this is called a Nuptial Mass.
- ❑ People choose to get married this way because they want to receive the blessed sacrament (Holy Communion) at the start of their new life to give them strength and Grace (God's Love)

The Ceremony

- Entrance rite: there is a procession, which may include a hymn. The priest greets the congregation then the Penitential rite and opening prayers are said.
- Liturgy of the Word: Bible readings, one from the Old Testament, a responsorial psalm, a New Testament reading, a Gospel acclamation, a Gospel reading and a *homily* (a practical sermon, not a theological one)

The Ceremony

- The rite of marriage: questions are asked about the couples' faithfulness to one another and their willingness to bring up children. Then the vows are made and the rings are exchanged.

Questions asked:

- Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourself to each other in marriage?
- Will you love and honour each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?
- Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

The Ceremony

- Liturgy of the Eucharist: gifts are presented and the altar is prepared. Then the Eucharist prayer is said. Then the following are sung: *Sanctus Sanctus*, *Memorial acclamation* and *Great Amen*.
- Communion rite: The Lord's Prayer is said which is followed by a nuptial blessing. Then follows the Sign of Peace, *Agnus Dei* and Communion Hymn (sung).
- Concluding rite: The final blessing is made, there is a dismissal and the couple kiss. The couple sign the register (a legal requirement). There is a recessional hymn which accompanies everyone out of the church.

Signs and Symbols

- ❑ Rings: The rings show everyone that you are married. They have no beginning or end which reflects the couples love for each other everlasting.



White dress

- The white dress is a symbol of purity.



The Priest

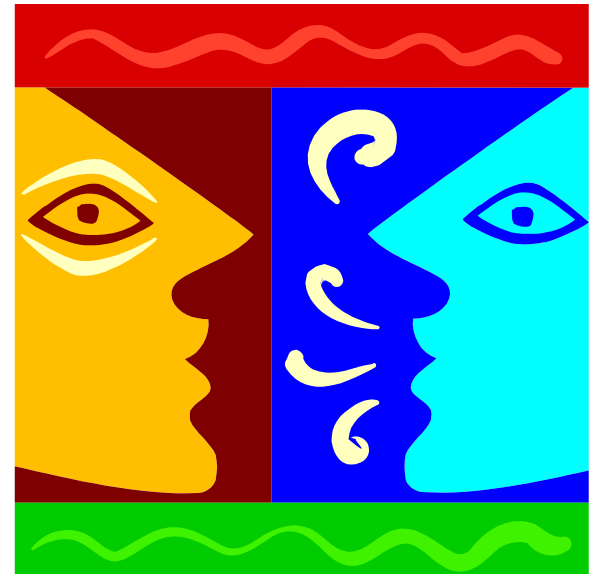
- The priest is a witness for God. The couple carry out the sacrament to each other. The priest is a witness to them coming together.



The Vows

- The vows are a verbal contract between the bride and the groom for their married life. They promise to stay with each other throughout the good and bad times.

Look at the actual vows on the next page.



- Couples wed in the Catholic Church will essentially make the same pledge to one another.
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There are two possible options for vows:

- I, _____, take you, _____, to be my (husband/wife). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.
- I, _____, take you, _____, for my lawful (husband/wife), to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.