

Participation of Parents

Parents (and other family members) can play an important part of a wedding. After all, the two of you did not just come into being out of thin air. Sometimes only the father of the bride participates by giving away his daughter (This option A. and C.). This is fine, but there is much more possible. If your parents don't feel comfortable providing special music, reading scripture or other reading, leading prayer, or giving a short statement about family traditions or history, they can openly share their love and support in other ways (These options D--L).

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- A. Who presents (gives) this woman to be married to this man?
(I do) or (Her mother and I do) or, in unison (We do).
- B. Who presents (gives) this woman and this man to be married to each other? (All parents answering in unison: I do or We do.)
- C. Doubly blessed is that couple which come to the marriage altar with the approval and blessings of their families and friends. Who has the honor of presenting this woman to be married to this man?
- D. Will the parents of the bride and the parents of the groom please stand. _____ have nurtured and cared for their daughter in a multitude of ways. Likewise _____ have nurtured and cared for their son. _____ and _____ who we know _____ and _____ express gratitude for the inspiration of your love that enabled you to bring forth your children for us all to know and enjoy. As you have held them close, fitting them for maturity, will you now willingly and freely release them to love and care for each other? And will you support and encourage their life together that it, too, may be a blessing for generations to come? (Response in unison: We do).
- E. That couple is richly blessed who comes to the marriage altar with the blessing of family and friends. Will the parents of the bride and the groom please stand?
_____, it was your joy to give birth to _____ and to nurture her in her years of childhood and growing maturity. You have invested your love and joy in her. Do you now give your blessing to her marriage?
_____, it was your joy to give birth to _____ and to nurture him through his childhood and into maturity. You have invested your love your joy in him. Do you now give your blessing to his marriage?
- F. Parents are very special to a bride and groom. They have helped shape life to this point. Their continued love and support are needed. We want to give the parents of both the bride and groom the opportunity to publicly affirm your relationship.
Groom's parents: We welcome _____ into our family and give our blessing to this marriage.
Bride's parents: We affirm your relationship, welcome _____ into our family, and give our blessing to your marriage.

- G. When a man and woman marry, they form a new family unit. The Gospel of Mark states it this way, “From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man (and a woman) shall leave (their) father and mother and be joined to (each other), and the two shall become.’” (Mark 10:6-8 RSV)

A man and a woman leave their respective homes, but they do not leave their relationships with their parents and families. These relationships take on a new dimension. It is important for the bride and groom to feel the support of their parents. And so we ask the parents of both bride and groom, do you give your blessing to this marriage?

Both sets of parents: We give our blessing to this marriage.

- H. As _____ and _____ become husband and wife, they leave their separate family units to create a new one. As their parents, your relationship with them enters a new phase. They are still your children, but they are also adults creating a new family unit. As their parents, how do you greet the new relationship into which they are entering?

Groom’s Father: We are glad you have chosen each other.

Groom’s Mother: We welcome _____ into our family.

Bride’s Mother: We welcome _____ into our family.

Bride’s Father: We bless your marriage with our approval and support.

- I. Will you, _____ and _____’s parents, now give them your blessing and pledge them the love and support they need? Will you share your experiences and wisdom with them in a caring and sensitive way?

Parents: We are glad that they have chosen each other. Their acceptance of the responsibility of marriage marks for us a new phase in our relationship with them. We celebrate their growing relationship, as well as the new possibilities in our relationship with them. We bless their marriage with our approval.

Will you, the families of this couple, give your blessing to _____ and _____? Will you support them and love them no matter what happens? Will you, while respecting their independence, try, with the greatest love and wisdom you command, to do all you can to help them grow as persons and in relationship?

Parents, or the entire family, reply, “We will.”

- J. Family and friends, the rhythm of life seems to demand a time for holding and a time for releasing what is held close.

Mr. and Mrs. _____ have nurtured and cared for their daughter in a multitude of ways.

Likewise, Mr. and Mrs. _____ through their love have nurtured and cared for their son.

Mr. and Mrs. _____ and Mr. and Mrs. _____, we who now know _____ and _____, express gratitude for the inspiration of your love that enabled you to bring forth your children for us all to know and enjoy.

As you have held them close, fitting them for maturity, will you now willingly and freely release them to love and care for each other? And will you support and encourage their life together that it, too, may be a blessing for generations to come?

The parents respond. “Yes, we do”

- K. After one of the above statements, sometimes a token of thanksgiving is shared by the bride and groom with their parents. A rose for the mothers, or some other symbol that will have meaning for those who spent so many years of their lives loving and raising you and now releasing you into the arms of another.
- L. Sometimes, the parents come forward as part of the service to light the candle which will later be used as part of the *Unity Candle* Service.
- M. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, the apostle Paul writes of the love between a husband and wife, and how it involves putting the other first, submitting to one another – which is not an easy task. The journey together toward being able to do this involves releasing a bit of the past. Quoting the second chapter of Genesis, Paul wrote that “*a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh,*” something he went on to call “*a great mystery*” (5:31-32). Of course, such a “leaving and cleaving” doesn’t happen overnight. Parents gradually release their children, just as those children move, step by step, toward maturity. In recognition of this, we pause just now to speak some words that are needed for this leap of faith, this mystery called marriage.
- _____ and _____, _____ and _____, would you please stand? You brought _____ and _____ into this world. One of life’s blessings is to be entrusted by God with the precious lives of our children, to raise them, nurturing and challenging them to become the fine man and woman who stand before us today. Your role in their lives continues, but it also changes in these moments of worship. We want to officially give you the opportunity to release _____ and _____, an act that helps them travel down the road of marriage. If it is your desire to let them go into this next chapter of their life, together, would you look them in the eye and say, “Amen!”