

# Wedding Rehearsal Checklist

## REHEARSAL CHECKLIST

- \_\_\_ Arrive before the bridal party, making sure the rehearsal area is arranged properly.
- \_\_\_ Check that all lighting, audio, video, and musician's needs are available and ready to go.
- \_\_\_ Greet bridal party and answer any questions you can before rehearsal begins – where are restrooms, dressing rooms, other miscellaneous questions about the facility or the schedule.
- \_\_\_ Align bridal party, then seat parents and grandparents in the places they will be after the processional has ended and the ceremony begins.
- \_\_\_ Allow time for the bride and groom to introduce the wedding party before the rehearsal officially begins.

### PRACTICE CEREMONY

- \_\_\_ Allow officiant to rehearse the ceremony from beginning to end as many times as needed. Make sure he/she practices with the father of the bride any words he may say during the 'hand-off' of the bride to the groom at the beginning of the ceremony.
- \_\_\_ Instruct the maid/matron of honor to take the bride's flowers before bride and groom move to altar area.
- \_\_\_ If the bride's dress has a train, the maid of honor should pass off all flowers to next bridesmaid and set the train for the bride as she moves to the altar area. After bride and train are in place, flowers should be passed back to maid of honor. This may have to be repeated if bride and groom move at other times during the ceremony. The back of the dress will show up in every picture of the ceremony, so do what is necessary to make it look perfect!
- \_\_\_ Remind the maid of honor to pass flowers back to bride prior to recessional.
- \_\_\_ Rehearse the passing of rings at the appropriate time during the ceremony.

### PRACTICE RECESSIONAL WITHOUT MUSIC

- \_\_\_ Wedding party practices exiting the ceremony area to a designated receiving line or holding area. Determine if ushers/groomsmen will return to escort parents and grandparents from the venue and who they will be.

\_\_\_ Have the parents and grandparents practice exiting the ceremony area to a designated receiving line or holding area.

\_\_\_ Determine how guests will be released – on their own, row by row by ushers beginning at the front, row by row by bride and groom, or some other method. Are there specific instructions that the guests need before they depart (proceed to receiving line, proceed to reception, gather at exit to see off bride and groom, etc.)? These instructions should be given to the audience after the bridal party has departed the ceremony area.

#### *PRACTICE PROCESSIONAL WITHOUT MUSIC*

\_\_\_ Grandparents are ushered in and seated, typically groom's grandparents first, then bride's grandparents.

\_\_\_ Parents are ushered in and either seated or escorted to altar to light candles, etc. If straight seating, the groom's parents go first, then the bride's parents (just the mother if dad is walking her down the aisle, this varies). If mothers are going the altar to light candles, etc., the groom's father should stand at the parent's row until the mothers are ushered back to the row and seated.

\_\_\_ Officiant enters with groom and groomsmen (unless groomsmen are escorting bridesmaids down the aisle).

\_\_\_ Bridesmaids enter, followed by maid/matron of honor, ring bearer, and flower girl. Each person should allow the person preceding him/her to get half-way down the aisle before proceeding.

\_\_\_ Bride (and father if being escorted) enters. Mother of the bride stands when music for bride begins, cuing the rest of the guests to stand.

\_\_\_ Determine whether the officiant will instruct the guests to sit at the appropriate time, or if the mother of the bride sits as a cue.

\_\_\_ When entire wedding party is in place, stop and have the wedding party check for spacing and have each one find a reference point to they can land in the same place on the big day.

#### *PRACTICE RECESSIONAL WITH MUSIC*

\_\_\_ Practice recessional same as above with musical cues as many times as needed.


#### *PRACTICE PROCESSIONAL WITH MUSIC*

\_\_\_ Practice procession same as above with musical cues as many times as needed.

#### *FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REVIEW*

\_\_\_ Review the seating of guests. Will ushers be used? Will traditional seating be used (bride's guests on right, groom's guests on the left looking from the front of the ceremony area), or should the guests be seated equally on either side?

\_\_\_ Should ushers direct guests to a guest book or provide a program prior to seating?



\_\_\_ If there is no receiving line after the ceremony, instruct bridal party and other key participants where to go and what to do. Designate a waiting area if necessary, especially if you want to keep everyone assembled for pictures after the ceremony area has been cleared of guests.

\_\_\_ If bride and groom are being transported to another venue after the ceremony, discuss those arrangements (where will the car be, who has the keys, etc.)

\_\_\_ If moving to another venue, assign someone (not in the bridal party) to collect any personal belongings from the ceremony venue and perform any necessary cleanup the dressing areas (a requirement at many venues, especially churches that need to transition quickly for other activities).

\_\_\_ **LAST BUT NOT LEAST**, make sure everyone understands the itinerary for the day of the wedding. I strongly recommend that you create a written schedule and hand it out to each participant that explains when and where they should be so there are no misunderstandings. This includes the bridal party, photographer, officiant, musicians, parents, and grandparents.