

## **Pre-Ceremony Announcement**

Good Afternoon, we are so glad to have you here on this beautiful fall day—before we begin Ryan & Alexis want you to be truly present at this special time. Please, turn off your cell phones and put cameras away. The talented photographer will capture how this moment looks — I encourage you all to capture how it feels with your hearts, without the distraction of technology.

## **Opening Remarks**

Dear family and friends, we are gathered here today in the sight of God and in the presence of this gathering to witness the union of Ryan and Alexis in marriage. Marriage is a holy estate given by God to fulfill us as individuals and as a couple. We come together not to mark the start of a relationship, but to acknowledge and strengthen a bond that already exists. This ceremony is a public affirmation of that bond and as their dearest family and friends, it is our honor and privilege to stand witness to this event. This day is made possible not only because of your love for each other, but through the grace of God and the support of your family and friends.

## **Opening Prayer**

Let us bow our heads in prayer. Lord, we thank you for gathering everyone here today. We ask that you help Ryan and Alexis to remember the strong love that they share. To work that love into practical things so that nothing can divide them. May their love always inspire them to be kind in their words, considerate of the others feelings, and concerned for the others needs and wishes. Increase their faith and trust in You. Bless their marriage with peace and happiness and make their Love fruitful for Your glory and their joy, both here and in eternity. Amen.

## **Address the Meaning of Marriage**

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; memories are fresher; commitment is stronger. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote: Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes in all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

While the commitment begins with the two of you, its effect radiates outward. It

touches your family and friends and ultimately all of society. When this commitment is seriously made and continuously fulfilled, it leads to the richest and most rewarding of human relationships.

This is, I am sure, what you Ryan, want for Alexis and it is also what you, Alexis, want for Ryan. It is also what your family and friends who are gathered here want for the two of you. When a couple treats each other with kindness, love, and respect, the best of what marriage has to offer is the result.

Your relationship will take more than love. It will take trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other. Dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so. And faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by. They are not a destination, but a journey. Marriage is a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

Your joining together today becomes all the more important to recognize the significance of a devoted and affectionate family life.

### **Recognition of Parents**

You are both blessed to have come from truly loving families who recognize the importance of marriage and the fundamental nature of the marriage commitment. They want everyone to know that who they are today is the result of many years of support and sacrifice by their parents.

### **Giving away the Bride**

Who presents this woman to be married to this man?

### **Address to the Couple**

Seeing that no moment is without meaning, we ask that you take this marriage as a beginning of your lives together. Today signifies the creation of a new home and a new family for you both. May you be fulfilled by each others love and friendship. May you be overjoyed by the promises you are about to make and the life together you will create.

Remember that in every marriage, there are good times and bad, times of joy and times of sorrow. Marriage is a journey – a time of adventure and excitement enhanced by the love, trust, dedication and faith you share in one another.

You are mature enough to know the difference between dreams and realities. You have youth and hope. You also know that good times are sweeter when shared and that difficult times are less harsh when borne by two. Continue to work to build a foundation that will support the lasting relationship that is marriage.

May the promises you make to one another today, be lived out to the end of your lives. Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys, but today is the day it all begins.

Ryan and Alexis, do you, with your family and friends as your witnesses, present yourselves willingly and of your own accord to be joined in marriage?

[We do]

Will you promise to care for each other in the joys and sorrows of life, come what may, and to share the responsibility for growth and enrichment of your life together?

[We will]

### **Vows**

Do you, Ryan,  
In the presence of God and these witnesses,  
Take Alexis, to be your lawful wedded wife.  
To promise to stay by her side  
In sickness and in health,  
In joy and in sorrow,  
Through the good times and the bad.  
Do you promise to love her without reservation,  
Comfort her in times of distress  
Encourage her to achieve all of her goals,  
Laugh with her and cry with her,  
Always be open and honest with her,  
And cherish her for as long as you both shall live

[I do]

Do you, Alexis,  
In the presence of God and these witnesses,  
Take Ryan, to be your lawful wedded husband  
To promise to stay by his side  
In sickness and in health,  
In joy and in sorrow,  
Through the good times and the bad.  
Do you promise to love him without reservation,  
Comfort him in times of distress

Encourage him to achieve all of his goals,  
Laugh with him and cry with him,  
Always be open and honest with him,  
And cherish him for as long as you both shall live

[I do]

### **Exchange of the Rings**

You will now seal your vows, "to honor, to love, to cherish," by the giving and receiving of rings. The unbroken circles of these rings symbolize a union between husband and wife with God that cannot be broken, they have neither beginning nor end, much like your love for one another. They are a symbol of the words that you speak today. As you wear these rings, may they be constant reminders of these promises you are making today.

Ryan, take this ring, place it on Alexis' finger and repeat after me.  
I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

Alexis, take this ring, place it on Ryan's left hand and repeat after me.  
I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you.

### **Sand Ceremony**

Ryan and Alexis, today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other.

Your relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand; each representing all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

Each one holds its own unique beauty, strength, and character. They can stand on their own and be whole, without the need of anything else. When the two are blended together they represent an entirely new and extraordinary love relationship. Each grain of sand brings to the mixture a lasting beauty that forever enriches the combination.

[The Bride and Groom pick up the containers of sand]

As you each hold your sand the separate containers of sand represent your lives to this moment; individual and unique. As you now combine your sand together, your lives also join together as one.

You may now blend the sand together symbolizing the uniting of the bride and groom into one.

The life that each of you have experienced until now, individually, will hereafter be inseparably united, for the two shall become one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage be.

### **Closing Prayer**

[Steve ]

### **Pronouncement and Kiss**

Ryan & Alexis, we have witnessed the pledging of your love and commitment to each other. We have seen the sealing of your solemn vows of marriage by the giving and receiving of rings. It is, therefore, my joy and privilege to declare you husband and wife. Ryan, you may kiss your bride.

### **Introduction of the Newlyweds**

Friends and family of the bride and groom, it is my pleasure to present to you Mr. and Mrs Welford!

### **Recessional**

### **Post Ceremony Announcement**

At this time the bride and groom would like to invite everyone to proceed to the reception located just a few blocks away. There is a map located on the back of your program with walking directions.