



# Rehearsal Guide

Use this wedding ceremony rehearsal guide to run your own wedding ceremony rehearsal. There are different variations to the ceremony order; this guide focuses on a traditional wedding ceremony.

## Who's In Charge?

At the rehearsal, you are only practicing walking in and walking out, and making sure everyone knows where to stand. Since the officiant is typically the first person to enter the celebration space, it's impossible for the officiant to cue each person for their entrance. This task is normally handled by the venue's coordinator or your Day-Of Coordinator. If you need someone to handle this at your ceremony, you should choose a friend or family member who is not in the wedding party to help you. Share this guide with them before you arrive, and also give them a copy of your final ceremony document.

## The Rehearsal

Follow these steps to rehearse the wedding ceremony.

1. **Get everyone into place where they will be standing during the ceremony.** Have everyone evenly spaced and standing at a slight angle in relation to your wedding guests, with the attendants at each end a little more forward than the Maid of Honor and Best

Man. Bridesmaids should hold their bouquets in front of them with both hands, and groomsmen should decide on clasping their hands in the front or the back of their body. It's important that everyone do the same thing.

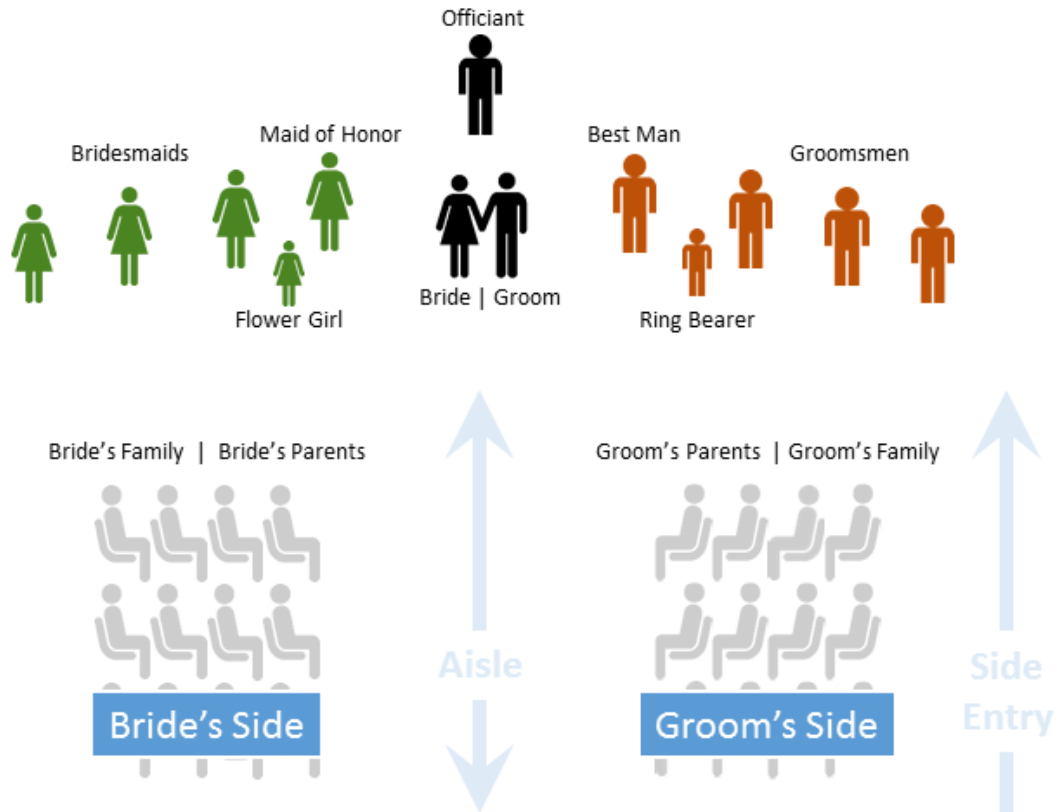
2. **Read through the headings aloud,** so everyone knows roughly the order of the ceremony. Don't read through the entire ceremony

word-for-word or say the vows, save that for the actual wedding. Double check that any items needed during the ceremony like candles or a table will be there that day.

3. **Practice the recessional as if the ceremony has just ended.** Start by saying the actual final words that the officiant will say, then exit in the proper order. The Bride will take her bouquet from the Maid of Honor and exit with the Groom. Typically, the wedding party will exit in pairs even if they enter separately, followed by the Flower Girl and Ring Bearer and then the parents and grandparents. Walk SLOWLY and leave plenty of room between couples.
4. **Now, practice the entrance.** Line everyone up in the order they will enter. The Bride and her escort (typically her father) should not enter until the entire wedding party has entered and is in place. Normally there is a separate piece of music for the Bride's processional, and the officiant will usually say something like,

"please stand as we welcome the bride" which prompts your guests to stand.

5. **The last item is the "hand-off" ...** what happens when the Bride and her escort make it to the front of the ceremony. If the escort is a parent of the Bride they should give her a kiss and congratulate her. The escort then typically shakes the Groom's hand, the Bride hands her bouquet to the Maid of Honor and steps forward next to the groom, and the escort moves to where they will be seated. The Bride and Groom should then be standing facing one another, holding hands in front of the Officiant. At this point, the Maid of Honor can hand off both sets of flowers to one of the Bridesmaids and fix the Bride's dress.
6. **Do it again.** Now that everyone is in place, practice walking back out and back in one more time. The rehearsal should not last more than 20-30 minutes.



Entrance Order (Processional)	Exit Order (Recessional)
1. Grandparents of the Groom	1. Bride and Groom
2. Grandparents of the Bride	2. Maid of Honor + Best Man (paired)
3. Officiant, Groom, Best Man and Groomsmen (side entry)	3. Bridesmaids and Groomsmen (paired)
4. Parents of the Groom	4. Flower Girl and Ring Bearer
5. Mother of the Bride	5. Parents of the Bride
6. Bridesmaids	6. Parents of the Groom
7. Maid of Honor	7. Grandparents of the Bride
8. Flower Girl	8. Grandparents of the Groom
9. Ring Bearer	9. Officiant
10. Bride and Escort	10. Wedding Guests

*Please excuse the lack of gender-neutral terminology in this guide. For common variations of this order, including ideas for our LGBTQ couples, please consult Randy Taylor Weddings.*