

Wedding Resources

# The Joy of Cana



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## About These Resources

These truly creative wedding resources include a collection of creative features and ideas for a pastor to use to conduct a memorable ceremony. Innovative suggestions for incorporating an interactive processional, a unity candle, original hymn lyrics, litanies and prayers are offered. The highlight is a collection of unique wedding sermon ideas which actively involve the bride and groom with physical object lessons they will remember their whole marriage long.

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## Introduction

*“Oh, Pastor, we want our wedding to be special!”*

Of course they do; every couple does. But while they may have made elaborate preparations for other aspects of the celebration—clothes, decorations, colors...and especially the reception... location, menu, music, decor—most couples look to the pastor to make the actual service as “special” as they say they want it to be.

That Galilean wedding Jesus attended was one that has never been forgotten—a wedding that was “special”—precisely because it bore powerful witness to him! The resources in this collection are offered with the prayer that they may help you accomplish that same purpose.

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## The Lord's Prayer

Tune.....St. Anne CM

Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne,  
Most holy be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
On earth-in heav'n the same.

Give us this day the food we need;  
Forgiven may we be;  
Into temptation do not lead;  
From evil set us free.

All rule and might and glory be  
To you while ages run  
And even to eternity.  
Amen. So be it done!

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## 1 Corinthians 13

(for the pastor and two readers)

¶ In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes: I want you to desire the best gifts. So I will show you a much better way.

*1 What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels?*

***2 If I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.***

*1 What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains?*

***2 If I do not have love, I am nothing.***

*1 What if I gave away all that I owned and even gave over my body to be burned?*

***2 If I do not have love, I gain nothing.***

*1 Love is patient and kind,*

***2 never jealous or boastful or arrogant or rude.***

*1 Love does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.*

**2** *Nor does it rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.*

*1 Love knows no limit to its endurance,*

**2** *no end to its trust,*

*1 no fading of its hope.*

**2** *It can out last anything.*

**P** It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.

*1 In this life we have three great lasting qualities—*

**2** *faith, hope, and love.*

*1 But the greatest of them*

**2** *is love.*

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## A Cord of Three Strands

A Rite of Ribbons

*A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NASB)*

Call to Worship

- Ⓟ A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Those words by the “preacher” of the Book of Ecclesiastes teach us that a purposeful and meaningful life is based on a person’s relationship with God and with others. Today we gather to join in marriage the life strands of a man and a woman in the presence and with the blessing of the God by whom the strand of life begins and in whom the strength of marriage lies. We begin in his name—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Processional Music Anthem begins.

*THE FIRST STRAND involves the processional cross bearer, Christ Candle bearer, the pastor(s) and the banner bearer. A long white ribbon is attached to the Christ Candle.*

*When the group has arrived at the chancel, the music ends and the following is read responsively by a reader and the pastor.*

- Ⓡ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the earth.” So God created man in his own image, male and female he created them.*

- P** God himself is present here today. He is the creator of life. He instituted and blessed marriage as an honorable estate. May this ribbon symbolize God's partnership in this marriage. *(The ribbon attached to the Christ Candle is placed on the kneeling bench.)*

*THE SECOND STRAND involves the procession of groomsmen, best man, parents of the groom, and the groom. A long white ribbon is held by the mother of the groom in such a way that it trails behind the group. The Processional Music Anthem begins again, concluding when the group arrives at the altar. Then following is then spoken:*

- R** *The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and care for it. And the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

- I** *(Groom's father reads:) (groom's name) was born into our family in (month) of (year). With God's guidance and blessing, (groom's name)'s mother and I shared in his growth to manhood. In love we accompany him to this altar. This ribbon placed here symbolizes our joy in his marriage today. (The mother of the groom places the ribbon on the kneeling bench.)*

*THE THIRD STRAND is the procession to music of the bridesmaids, maid/matron of honor, parents of the bride and the bride. A long white ribbon is held by the mother of the bride in such a way that it trails behind the group. The Processional Music Anthem begins again, concluding when the group arrives at the altar. Then following is then spoken:*

- R** *The Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they shall become one flesh.*

- II** *(Bride's father reads:) (bride's name) was born into our family in (month) of (year). With God's guidance and blessing, (bride's name)'s mother and I shared in her growth to womanhood. In love we accompany her to this altar. This ribbon placed here symbolizes our joy in her marriage today. (The mother of the bride places the ribbon on the kneeling bench.)*

*Later in the service, after each person speaks his/her vow, the pastor attaches to that person's wrist the ribbon brought by his/her parents—groom's right wrist, bride's left. At/after the exchange of rings, the pastor takes the ribbon from the Christ Candle and attaches it to the wrists of both bride and groom, allowing enough slack for movement. The couple says:*

- C** **We bind ourselves with these ribbons as a symbol of our lives intertwined and strengthened by God.**

*At the recessional, the couple turn and go with the third ribbon connecting them while their family ribbons also flow from their wrists.*



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## The Unity Candle

A Rite of Light

**P** You see before you three candles. Two are lit, while one remains unlit. The lighted candles represent \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ whose lives have been illuminated by the Light and Love of Christ.

But now as \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ come to share Christ's love, they do so no longer separately, but together. They have promised each other their lives, have exchanged rings in the name of the Triune God and have been pronounced husband and wife in that holy Name.

As a sign to the world of the end of their own separateness and the beginning of their new life together, their becoming one flesh in the Lord, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ together light the Marriage Candle from their separate candles.

By so doing, they show their two lives becoming one, joined together by God's Love and God's Presence in the holy estate of marriage. They have now become one, inseparable before God. They share the Light of Christ in their new life together and celebrate the joining of their two lives into one life in Christ.

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## Together Is Better

### Sermon Starter 1

**P** Have you ever tried to wash one hand? (I had to for a few weeks once, when I had stitches and was instructed not to get that hand wet.) Have you ever tried to clap one hand? In the case of hands (to use an obvious example), two are better than one. Or, to put it another way—a way that you or one of your guests might want to embroider into a wedding motto—TOGETHER IS BETTER.

That is the reason you are here today, of course, and God agrees. “It is not good that one should be alone,” the Lord God said in the beginning (Genesis 2:18). TOGETHER IS BETTER. And Adam admitted it immediately: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). TOGETHER IS BETTER. Our Lord Jesus Christ agreed as well: “What God has joined together, let no one put asunder” (Mark 10:9).

The whole history of God’s love might be summarized here. When sin undid what God had made good (and remember, sin is separation, the opposite of together), it showed in the way Adam and Eve began accusing one another. (Some phrases from 1 Corinthians 13 might sound familiar here: “arrogant, rude, boastful, self-centered”—words that indicate you are concerned about yourself alone, the opposite of together.)

But God said, “It is not good for one to be alone...” and remedied that situation by sending his own Son to be (what we call him especially at Christmas) “Emmanuel = God with us.” God did that because God knows TOGETHER IS BETTER.

Even as our Savior was dying on the cross he made a promise: “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43)—because TOGETHER IS BETTER. And as he was about to ascend into heaven, he left us this assurance: “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). TOGETHER IS BETTER.

And in the meantime: “Behold, your son,” he said from the cross; “Behold, your mother” (John 19:26-27). He was concerned about the family, even in the midst of his great suffering, concerned because TOGETHER IS BETTER.

And he is still concerned. That’s why he placed each of you into a family: TOGETHER IS BETTER. In your baptism, he drew near to claim each of you as his dear child, because TOGETHER IS BETTER. At the altar, he continues to offer you Communion (which is a fancy word for TOGETHER).

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## A House Built on a Rock

### Sermon Starter 6

**P** “Those who are wise build their home on a rock,” Jesus said (Matthew 7:24), and that is what we all want for the two you, why we have come together to witness your vows and encourage you with our prayers. We pray that your marriage will have a solid footing, a firm foundation, that it will be built on a rock—no, more to the point, that it will be built on *the* Rock, the Rock of our salvation, the Rock of ages, the Church’s one Foundation, the stone rejected by the builders that proved to be the Cornerstone, the most important one of all—Jesus Christ.

It’s a message God wanted you to hear—and to share—so badly that once he moved a great stone, the stone covering our Lord’s grave, to show you the power of his love.

It is possible to use biblical pictures of rocks and stones to describe some of the pitfalls and problems of marriage:

- In the wilderness Satan tempted Jesus to “turn this stone into bread” (Matthew 4:3)—and that temptation still exists, to desire something other than what the Lord provides.
- The picture is used the other way as well: “If your child asked you for bread, would you give that child a stone?” (Matthew 7:9)—love that has forgotten that its purpose is to give, to care, to provide—the ultimate selfishness.
- To the point where the Bible even speaks of having a “heart of stone” (Ezekiel 36:26)—the very opposite of the kind of love which God’s Word urges upon you as husband and wife, the kind of love with which your Lord loved you.

In order to melt our hearts of stone, Jesus Christ walked the rocky roads of life with us and for us. He knelt by a rock in Gethsemane, stumbled on the stone pavement on the way to Calvary and was laid to rest in a rock-hewn tomb, sealed with a great stone.

And then the stone moved. God has that kind of power...and he has that kind of care...strong enough and loving enough to topple tombstones...and to melt hearts of stone and make them real and loving again. That is the foundation on which a marriage can be built, the Lord's strong and caring love, the very love he offers you today.

Tune.....Cradle Song 11 11 11 11

A musical score for a piece titled "Cradle Song 11 11 11 11". The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, in a 2/4 time signature. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the Treble staff, featuring a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The Bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line in both staves.

Tune.....Darwall's 148th 66 66 88

1

1

This system contains measures 1 through 5 of the piece. The treble clef staff begins with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a quarter note G4 in measure 2, and then chords of G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4-B4 in measures 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The bass clef staff begins with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a quarter note G2 in measure 2, and then chords of G2-A2, G2-A2-B2, and G2-A2-B2 in measures 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The time signature is common time (C).

6

6

This system contains measures 6 through 10. The treble clef staff has chords of G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4-B4 in measures 6, 7, and 8, followed by whole notes G4 and A4 in measures 9 and 10. The bass clef staff has chords of G2-A2, G2-A2-B2, and G2-A2-B2 in measures 6, 7, and 8, followed by whole notes G2 and A2 in measures 9 and 10. The time signature is common time (C).

11

11

This system contains measures 11 through 15. The treble clef staff has whole notes G4 and A4 in measures 11 and 12, followed by chords of G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4-B4 in measures 13, 14, and 15. The bass clef staff has whole notes G2 and A2 in measures 11 and 12, followed by chords of G2-A2, G2-A2-B2, and G2-A2-B2 in measures 13, 14, and 15. The time signature is common time (C).