

The Christian by Design Guide to Your Wedding:

Helpful hints for Planning a Christian Wedding

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Bride's To-Do List

Phase 1 (6 months plus before wedding)

- q Start looking for dresses
- q Pick out bridesmaids' dresses
- q Find organist (musicians) for wedding
- q Begin combing bridal magazines for tips

Phase 2 (approx. 6 months ahead)

- q Block hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- q Sit down with your pastor to go over logistics of ceremony

Phase 3 (3-6 months ahead)

- q Choose invitations
- q Choose Unity Candle, garter, glasses, ring pillow, guest book, etc.
- q Submit engagement announcement to papers
- q Finalize dinner menu for reception
- q See the hall actually set up for a reception (so you can see what it will look like)
- q Decide on and purchase final accessories for your dress and your bridesmaids
- q Buy shoes for dress
- q Pick Scripture to be read

Phase 4 (2-3 months ahead)

- q Set up bridesmaids' luncheon
- q Send luncheon invitations to your bridesmaids
- q Check with attendants re: hairdresser appointments, etc. (i.e. do they need anything from you?)

Phase 5 (6-8 weeks ahead)

- q Final fitting for dress

- q Formal bridal portrait (if you want it done in the studio; you can also have your formal portrait taken at the church the day of the wedding)

- q Choose gifts for bridesmaids, etc.

- q Confirm all contracts (cake, DJ/band, florist, photographer, honeymoon, limousine)

- q Mail invitations

- q Buy "first night" nightgown, dress for rehearsal dinner, and any outfits for the honeymoon (bathing suit, nice dress, etc.)

Phase 6 (1 month ahead)

- q Choose hair dresser

- q Finalize count of guests (call any who haven't RSVPed)

- q Check on changing all credit cards, driver's license, tax forms and life insurance

The Month Of

- q Submit wedding announcement and picture to papers

- q List of wedding pictures desired

- q Make a list of everything you need to take to the church. Be sure to include your dress, all make-up, any accessories (flowers, guest book, rings, etc.) and a bag to carry it all home in. Enlist one (or more) of your bridesmaids or family members to be in charge of making sure nothing is left at the church after the ceremony.

- q Buy wedding gift for Groom

- q Final count of guests and final payment to reception hall/caterer

- q Pack for honeymoon

The Couple's To-Do List

Phase 1 (6 months plus prior to the wedding)

- q Choose date, time and place of ceremony
- q Choose minister to perform ceremony
- q Pick reception hall
- q Make up guest list
- q Interview DJs or bands and decide on one
- q Decide on a photographer
- q Figure out the ceremony (what readings, what special additions – e.g. the Unity Candle, who will escort you, etc.) and who you want in it at each position (readers, ushers, attendants, ring bearers, etc.)
- q Start pre-marriage counseling (highly recommended and sometimes required)

Phase 2 (approx. 6 months before wedding)

- q Decide on music for wedding ceremony (Bridal March, Music during the ceremony, Recessional, etc.)
- q "Finalize" your invitation list (i.e. have input from all parental parties and your own lists)
- q Invite all of your attendants to participate in the ceremony
- q Go over actual ceremony with officiant

Phase 3 (3-6 months ahead)

- q Decide on a baker and a cake style
- q Pick Florist and flower arrangements
- q Have engagement announcement picture taken
- q Choose honeymoon spot and make reservations
- q Finalize bridal registry (china, silver, crystal, etc.) and give information to family and friends

- q Purchase wedding rings

Phase 4 (3 months ahead)

- q Choose invitations
- q Choose Unity Candle (if you are using one), guest book, glasses for the toast at the reception, ring bearer's pillow
- q Submit engagement announcement to newspapers
- q Choose final dinner menu for reception

Phase 5 (6-8 weeks ahead)

- q Mail out invitations (6 weeks before wedding)
- q Pick the first dance and any other special music you want at the reception

Phase 6 (2 weeks ahead)

- q Finalize the count of guests (CALL all those who have not responded)
- q Check on changing all of your credit cards, Social Security card, driver's license, tax forms, life insurance, etc.
- q Blood test and Marriage license (if required by law)
- q Plan wedding morning breakfast with families (separately, so you don't see each other!)
- q Order flowers (or other "thank you" gifts) for your parents
- q Make a list of wedding pictures you want taken – before the service, at the church, at the reception, etc.
- q Assign guest seating for reception (if you do not want to have “open” seating)
- q The day of your wedding, mail yourself a wedding invitation – then it will be postmarked the day you were married – for your wedding album
- q Pack for the honeymoon

Groom's To-Do List

Phase 1 (6 months or more ahead of time)

- q Decide on your best man and give him date and time of the wedding
- q Ask any out-of-town attendants to be in the wedding – they should have more warning than the others
- q Have tentative guest list done

Phase 2 (approx. 6 months ahead)

- q Invite the rest of your groomsmen, ushers, ring bearers, etc., to join in the ceremony
- q Start looking at rehearsal dinner possibilities

Phase 3 (2-3 months ahead)

- q Decide on rehearsal dinner guest list (do you want to invite all of your extended families or just those who are participating in the ceremony? Will you invite grandparents? Should you invite close friends who are not in the ceremony? Will you invite the officiant (and his or her spouse)? etc.)
- q Check to see if any of your guests will be bringing someone with them (e.g. a date) so you will have a *final* guest list and be able to address invitations properly
- q Pick out your tuxedos
- q Reserve the rehearsal dinner space

Phase 4 (1 to 2 months ahead)

- q Check with all of your attendants to see if they are going to need anything when they get here (do the guys want to get a haircut the day before the ceremony? When will they go in for a final fitting in their tux? etc.)
- q Get measurements for tuxes for your guys
- q Choose gifts for your attendants (it is customary to buy small "thank you" gifts for your attendants)
- q Start thinking about anything you may want to get before you leave for the honeymoon (shorts, swimsuit, new suits, new luggage, etc.)
- q Discuss bachelor party with your best man or whoever is in charge of it

Final Details (the month of)

- q Pack for the honeymoon

- q Buy wedding gift for the bride

- q Plan a wedding morning breakfast with your family

The Bride's Dress and Accessories

- q dress
- q veil
- q shoes (closed toe so the penny won't fall out)
- q "merry widow" and panties
- q pantyhose or garter nylons (decorative)
- q crinoline
- q garter (this is a good place to get your "something blue")
- q hairpiece
- q earrings
- q necklace
- q "something blue"
- q penny
- q bouquet
- q toss-away bouquet

The tradition is: "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue, and a Penny in Her Shoe...." for luck

Make-up, etc.:

- q base
- q powder
- q blush
- q mascara
- q eye shadow
- q eye liner
- q lip liner
- q lipstick
- q lip gloss
- q nail polish
- q clear nail polish for runs in nylons
- q curling iron
- q hair spray
- q gel
- q perfume
- q _____
- q _____
- q _____

Wedding Day "Emergency" Kit

(Take these items and place them in a pretty basket. Keep them in the bridal changing room at the church, and then make sure they are transferred to the reception. At the reception, the best place to put the basket is in the ladies' restroom, but only if your reception will be the only ones – or close to – using it. Otherwise, keep it near the head table.)

- q Small sewing kit and scissors (make sure both white or ivory thread – for the bridal gown – and a color matching the bridesmaids' gowns is available)
- q Pantyhose in assorted sizes (in case anyone has a bad run)
- q Clear nail polish (for small runs)
- q Tissues
- q Sanitary napkins and tampons
- q Small bottle of mouthwash
- q Antacid tablets (Tums, etc.)
- q Loose face powder and brush
- q Hard mint candies
- q “Shout” or other stain remover wipes (Club Soda also works well with most stains, and you can usually get that right from the bar)
- q Very basic first-aid kit: bandages; antibiotic cream; Tylenol, Advil or Aspirin

The bride may also want to pack a small make-up bag for herself, in case she needs a touch-up during the course of the day:

- q Facial powder
- q Blush and brush
- q Eye-shadow(s) and applicator
- q Lipstick
- q Small (travel-size) bottle of her perfume
- q Nail color

Ceremony Considerations

- q Music:
 - Do you want music before the ceremony? Vocal? Instrumental? What pieces?
 - What will the bridesmaids process in to? Will it be the same as the bride or something different?
 - What hymns, if any, do you want to sing during the ceremony?
 - Will there be any “special” music – during the lighting of the Unity Candle, during Communion (if you’re having it), at any other “quiet” spots in the ceremony?
 - What will you recess to?

- q Escorts:
 - Who will escort the bride down the aisle (traditionally it is her father)? Will he “give her away”? Will the groom’s parents “present” or “give” him away?

- q Vows:
 - Will you use the standard vows?
 - Will you create your own?
 - Do you want to memorize your vows or be led through them?

- q Special Additions to the Ceremony:
 - Will the bride have an aisle runner during the processional to protect her dress?
 - Will you light a Unity Candle?
 - If you are lighting a Unity Candle, who will light the tapers before the service? Your mothers alone? Or both parents together?
 - Will you each present your new in-laws with a rose (or other flower)? Or will you present each set of parents with a rose together?
 - Will you exchange crosses (in addition to your rings)?
 - Will you “pass the peace”?
 - Will you celebrate the Eucharist at your wedding?

- q Readings:
 - You’ll have to choose the readings for your ceremony (and who will do the reading). Your pastor will guide you on these.

- q Miscellaneous Extras:
 - Will the bride (and her bridesmaids) get dressed at the church or arrive ready for the ceremony?
 - Will you take pictures at the church before the ceremony?
 - Will you address the congregation before you say your vows (welcome, thanks, etc.)?
 - Will pictures be allowed during the ceremony?
 - Is rice, confetti, birdseed, rose petals, etc. allowed on the church grounds? (If yes, will you have someone there to provide it to your guests? And which do you want to use? If not, have you considered using bubbles?)

Will you have a wedding bulletin? Do you want to add a note to your guests? Do you want to put your new address in it?

Do you want to offer a nursery or babysitter for guests with small children?

Who will be in charge of making sure nothing gets left at the church? (NOT one of you!)

Do you have friends or family you want to work into the ceremony, without making them attendants? Some options: readers (for the Scripture – you can have just one, or one for each reading); ushers; people to carry the bread and wine up for the Eucharist; someone (usually a child) to stand by your guest book and make sure everyone signs it.

Will you have your receiving line at the church right after the ceremony or in the hall before the reception begins?