

Wedding Guide



מזל טוב!

Wedding Ceremony Traditions and Rituals

The wedding ceremony marks and celebrates the joining of two loved ones in the sacred bond of marriage. In the Jewish tradition, this is seen as the first step in the creation of a new family setting the stage for the next generation of the Jewish people.

This document provides some generic descriptions of the wedding ceremony and related items as well as some practical guidance on planning a wedding at Temple Emanuel. This document is organized into the following sections:

1. Practical guidance on planning a wedding at Temple Emanuel.
2. Information on ceremonial items.
3. What happens before the ceremony.
4. The basic outline of the wedding ceremony.





Practical Guidance on Planning a Wedding at Temple Emanuel

Temple Emanuel is an egalitarian and inclusive congregation affiliated with the Conservative movement.

We welcome Jewish couples who are members or children of members of Temple Emanuel, both straight and gay, to be married by our clergy.

If you are a Jewish couple, not a member of Temple Emanuel, seeking a warm, welcoming place to have your wedding, we hope you will consider Temple Emanuel as the place to have your very special day. Rental information is available from our Programming and Events Manager who can also help you select a Conservative Rabbi if you do not have one in mind to perform the ceremony.

As a Conservative movement congregation, we do not perform interfaith marriages but are delighted to speak with you about the conversion process if you are interested.

Temple Emanuel Facilities

Among Jewish Life Cycle events, weddings are especially joyous occasions. Under the *chuppah* and surrounded by your loved ones, the spirit of *kedusha* (holiness) fills the sanctuary. There can be no more auspicious way to celebrate your *simcha* (happy event) than with the elegance and traditions of having your wedding in a synagogue setting.

You can choose from several spaces at Temple Emanuel for your wedding ceremony and reception. We can accommodate wedding ceremonies from 2 – 700 people and a wedding reception up to 300 guests. We will help you select from a list of approved Kosher caterers to assure that your day is perfect in every way.

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Temple Emanuel Programming and Events Manager

If you are interested in having your wedding at Temple Emanuel, the first step is to get in contact with our Programming and Events Manager, Erin Moseley, and make an appointment to meet with her to discuss your big day. All details of a wedding at Temple Emanuel will be discussed including available dates, wedding packages, and a tour of the various locations for the ceremony and the reception. The ritual aspects of Jewish weddings at Temple Emanuel will also be discussed. As the planning for your wedding proceeds, our Programming and Events Manager will be happy to work with your florist, photographer and others to help coordinate this special day.

Erin can be reached at 617-558-8127 or by e-mail at

Emoseley@templemanuel.com.

Cantor Elias Rosenberg. Contact Tessa Amantiado at 617-558-8111 or by e-mail at tamantiado@templemanuel.com.

Temple Emanuel Clergy

Temple Emanuel has two Rabbis, a Cantor and a Hazzan Sheini/Ritual Director that are available for wedding ceremonies. Their names and contact information are listed below:

Rabbi Wes R. Gardenswartz. Contact Joan Mael at 617-558-8101 or by e-mail at jmael@templemanuel.com.

Rabbi Michelle S. Robinson. Contact Shira Starobinski at 617-558-8141 or by e-mail at sstarobinski@templemanuel.com.

Cantor Elias Rosenberg. Contact Shira Starobinski at 617-558-8111 or by e-mail at tamantiado@templemanuel.com.

Daniel Nesson, Hazzan Sheini. Contact Tessa Armantiado at 617-558-8111 or by e-mail at tarmantiado@templemanuel.com.

Conversion

Even though Temple Emanuel does not perform interfaith marriages, Temple Emanuel does welcome interfaith families through our Keruv committee. The Hebrew word keruv means “drawing near.” Temple Emanuel has many opportunities to welcome interfaith families into our community by drawing us nearer to one another. Below is a link to a booklet titled, “Temple Emanuel Welcomes Interfaith Families.” In the context of weddings, there is a section in the booklet on conversion for those who are interested.

<http://www.templemanuel.com/InterfaithFamilies>

Ceremonial Items

Aufruf

Temple Emanuel welcomes you on Shabbat morning before the big day for your *Aufruf*. The *Aufruf* recognizes the bride and the groom by calling them up to the Torah on the Shabbat immediately preceding the wedding.

Chuppah

The *chuppah* is a wedding canopy under which loving partners, the bride and groom or the spouses in a same sex marriage, stand during the ceremony. Hung from four poles, the canopy may be made of decorated cloth. Often a *tallit* (prayer shawl) is used for the *chuppah* canopy.

Marriage is the establishment of a home, an island of serenity. The chuppah is symbolic of the home the couple will build together. The chuppah is open on all sides, like Abraham's tent, signifying that visitors will always be welcome in the couple's home. This "home" initially lacks furniture as a reminder that the basis of a Jewish home is the people within it, not the possessions. Its fragile structure also reminds us that a home is built upon the love within, rather than the walls outside.

Traditionally a groom enters the *chuppah* first to represent his ownership of the physical house on behalf of the couple. The bride responds by circling the groom, a reminder that a house is not a home until both are providing for each other not only materially but spiritually within it. In modern weddings, it is sometimes preferred that both partners circle each other, representing that they are equal partners fulfilling the needs of each other.

Ketubah

The ketubah is the Jewish marriage contract. Historically, a document of ritual acquisition of the bride, the traditional *ketubah* is essentially a statement of the husband's obligations. Modern *ketubot* speak to a more egalitarian vision of responsibilities of both partners toward each other. Ketubot include the date and the place of the wedding and the Hebrew names of each partner.

At Temple Emanuel, we recommend that the *ketubah* have a Lieberman Clause which protects a woman who wants a divorce from being an agunah, anchored against her will to her husband, and it protects the husband from the corrosive effects of his anger.

In a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony at Temple Emanuel, the ketubah is signed by two witnesses and part of it is read out loud under the chuppah. The witnesses must be *halakhically* competent witnesses, which mean they must be adult Jews who are not blood relatives of the couple. The couple can choose an intimate *ketubah* signing with only close family, friends or relatives invited to join the witnesses for the signing of the *ketubah* before the wedding ceremony or they may invite all their wedding guests to celebrate this moment together with them. After the signing, the *ketubah* will be displayed on an easel next to the chuppah during the wedding ceremony.

Ketubot are often hung prominently in the home by the married couple as a daily reminder of their vows and responsibilities to each other.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר ברא ששון ושמחה, חתן וכלה,
גילה רנה וריצה וחדנה, אהבה ואהבה,
ושלום ורעות. מהרה יהוה אלהינו
ישמע בערי יהודה ובחוצות ירושלים
קול ששון וקול שמחה, קול חתן וקול
כלה, קול מצחלות חתנים מחפתם
ונערים ממשחה נגינתם. ברוך אתה יהוה
משמח חתן עם הכלה.



Kiddush Cups

The Jewish marriage ceremony is bookended by two sets of blessings, the *Erusin* (Engagement) and the *Sheva Brachot* (seven blessings), made over two cups of wine. We encourage couples to use two special cups with family or sentimental importance for these blessings as they begin their married life.

Wine

Kosher, white wine or grape juice.

Glass for Breaking

One spouse breaks a glass, crushing it with the right foot and the guests shout Mazel Tov.



Before the Ceremony

Aufruf

Aufruf is Yiddish for “calling up”. It is the custom at Temple Emanuel to have the Aufruf for the couple on a convenient Sabbath prior to the wedding. Both are called up to the Torah by the cantor, who uses a special melody to “announce” them. The couple recites the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah www.templemanuel.com. In some families, it is traditional for the couple to also read from the Torah or chant the Haftorah. At Temple Emanuel this would be possible if there were no Bar or Bat Mitzvahs on the day of the Aufruf.

It is the custom of our congregation at Temple Emanuel to shower the couple with candy, symbols of sweetness we hope the couple will enjoy all their life. It is optional for the families to sponsor or co-sponsor the Kiddush www.templemanuel.com. This is an important opportunity for the family to bask in the joy and honor of having a child approach marriage with the congregation.

Signing of the Ketubah

Just prior to the wedding ceremony, there are two private ceremonies, which are often, today, joined into one, the ketubah signing and the bedeken (veiling ceremony). Traditionally the ketubah signing ceremony consists of the signing of the document by the two witnesses. Today there are often, but not always, signature spots for the couple themselves as well as clergy.

Bedeken

In a Bedeken (veiling), the bride, bridesmaids, Mother of the Bride, Grandmothers of the Bride, Mother of the Groom (optional), and Grandmothers of the Groom (optional) will gather and await the arrival of the groom, groomsmen, Fathers and Grandfathers of the Groom and Bride and rabbi. The couple may decide whether to only include immediate family members to participate in the signing of the Ketuba and Bedeken ceremonies or if they would like to invite all of their guests to participate with them in joy. The bride is seated as with her entourage at her side as the groom and his party arrive. The rabbi proceeds with the Ketuba signing and Bedeken ceremonies.

The veiling itself is a symbol of choosing each other, based upon the verse in connection with Rebecca meeting Isaac for in the Torah we read that Rebecca “took her veil and covered herself” (Genesis 24:60) the first time she saw her future husband, Isaac.

The practice of the groom uncovering the veil during the ceremony comes from when Jacob married Leah by accident because her face was veiled, when he really wanted to marry Rachel.

I am my beloved's



And my beloved is mine



The Ceremony

Once the partners enter the chuppah, the ceremony begins with a prayer on their behalf, Erusin, which is actually a formal engagement blessing.

Birkat Erusin and Kiddushin (Presentation of the ring)

Blessings are recited before the betrothal. The Birkat Erusin represents the formal engagement being blessed under the chuppah over a glass of wine which the couple drinks to mark the sweetness of their impending marriage. This is followed by the ring ceremony. This ritual constitutes the sealing of the act of Kiddushin (betrothal). The rings are initially placed on the right index finger, a custom said to be nearly a thousand years old. It stems from an ancient belief that a vein in this finger runs directly to the heart. The rings are plain unending circles of metal with no jewels representing the continuous and unending love which the marriage will bring.

Ketubah Reading

A portion of the Ketubah is read as part of the wedding ceremony.

Rabbis' Words

The rabbi will speak to the couple.

Sheva B'rachot

The Sheva B'rachot, or seven blessings, are recited by the hazzan or rabbi, or by select guests who are called up individually. Being called upon to recite one of the seven blessings is considered an honor. The 1st blessing is a sanctification of the fruit of the vine; the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th praise G-d for creation; the 4th and 7th give praise for marriage; and the 6th concerns the importance of family life. At the conclusion of the Sheva B'rachot, the couple drinks from the second cup of wine.

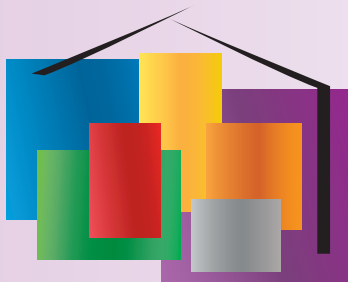


Breaking of the Glass

Finally, the groom breaks a glass, crushing it with his right foot and the guests shout Mazel Tov. For many years people used a light bulb instead of a glass because it is thinner, more easily broken, and it makes a louder popping sound. Today we recommend a special glass for this purpose which can be ordered at Judaica stores nationwide.

Yichud

Yichud takes place immediately following the recessional. The couple is sequestered for a period of time, usually 10-15 minutes. Today, especially for brides and grooms who have been fasting for the day, Yichud is a time to eat and their first moments together as a married couple before joining their guests.



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