

A Native Wedding Ceremony

Brief Summary of the Ceremony

The Native Wedding Ceremony is one that takes place outdoors, with Father Sky as the roof of the most sacred cathedral, and Mother Earth at your feet to hold you, and the trees and plants to surround you and embrace you. The circle will be saged by the Minister, Sacred Tobacco given to the grandfathers & grandmothers of the plants and stone people as gifts for allowing us to do our ceremony in their space.

All the guests will be invited into the Medicine Circle - the Sacred Medicine Wheel that is symbolic of Life and the connection and Continuity of all living things. As they enter the Circle, they will be saged (cleansed and purified), and symbolically enter the womb. For when you leave the circle, you are reborn as anew: a married person - not just to each other, but to the family and the community, and they to you.

The Wedding party & parents will be in the center of the Circle, and will be saged. The Sisters/mothers will carry the baskets, and will hand them to the Bride & Groom during the Basket Exchange which symbolizes the tangibles of how the couple will take care of each other during their marriage.

The families and the guests in the Circle will be invited to come up and give a personal Blessing to the Couple, everything from a hug and kiss to reading a poem, or whatever. Everything is appropriate. This allows the Community to be a part of the Ceremony as well as symbolically welcoming them into the Community.

The Wedding Blanket is carried by sisters/siblings, and the tying of the Blanket symbolizes the Union of the two lives. It will be folded and carried to a safe place by the Mothers after the ceremony. It may not touch the ground until the Wedding has been consummated.

The Wedding Baskets: Basically, the baskets will contain whatever is symbolically important to you.

Bride's Basket: Groom's Basket: (both lined with cedar & covered with a red cloth)

Possible choices to include in basket: 2 ears of corn, Beef Jerky, 1 Squash or gourd
Hide, Beans, Tobacco, Peaches, Grapes and Strawberries.

(Optional) Marriage Branch: Cedar branch with a fork, to be hung over the bed.

Circle: North: Elders, South: Young married couples & children, East: Young men, West: Veterans & warriors

There should be chairs for the elders who cannot stand.

Wedding Ceremony

Introduction by Minister, Sageing of all guests, and Wedding Party.

If anyone present knows a reason why GROOM and BRIDE may not lawfully marry, please declare it now or forever hold your peace.

GROOM and BRIDE, if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, please declare it now.

(BRIDE), what do you provide for this union of marriage?

Mother of Bride will hand Bride the Bride's basket.

Bride: I provide these things to my husband and home. They are a symbol that I will care for you and love you always.

(GROOM), what do you provide for this union of marriage?

Mother of Groom will hand Groom the Groom's basket.

Groom: I provide these things to my wife. They are a symbol that I will provide, love and protect our family always.

(Minister to Bride & Groom): You may exchange baskets.

Bride & Groom to set baskets in front of them, and hold hands.

~A Reading or a Native Blessing

Now you will feel no rain, for you will be shelter to each other.

Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there is no more loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other.

Now you are two bodies, but there is only one life before you.

Soon you will go to your resting place, to enter into the days of your togetherness.

May your days be good and long upon the earth.

(To the Couple) ~A Native Blessing

Above you are the stars, below you are the stones.

As time does pass, remember;

Like a star should your love be constant.

Like a stone should your love be firm.

Be close, yet not too close.

Possess one another, yet be understanding.

Have patience with the other; for storms will come, but they will go quickly.

Be free in giving of affection and warmth.

Make love often, and be sensuous to one another.

Have no fear, and let not the ways of words of the unenlightened give you unease.

For the Great Spirit is with you, now and always.

Blessings by Family and Wedding Guests

Traditional Vows (if desired)

I, (GROOM) take you (BRIDE) as my wife.

I do solemnly avow my love for you. I will comfort you, keep you, love you, defend you in sickness or in health, in riches or poverty, in sorrow or joy, seeking only to be with you until death parts us. All these things I pledge upon my honor.

I, (BRIDE) take you (GROOM) as my husband.

I do solemnly avow my love for you. I will comfort you, keep you, love you, defend you in sickness or in health, in riches or poverty, in sorrow or joy, seeking only to be with you until death parts us. All these things I pledge upon my honor.

The Mothers will wrap the wedding blanket around Bride & Groom.

(RING BLESSING)

Circles have no beginning and has no end, and so in the long and sacred tradition of marriage rings have come to symbolize eternal love and endless union of body, of mind, and of the spirit... Aho!

(EXCHANGE RINGS)

This ring is a symbol of my love and faithfulness, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, and pledge to you my love and life.

(Blessing of the Baskets)

Father Sky and Mother Earth, creator and nurturer of all life, we give heartfelt thanks for the moment that brought (GROOM and BRIDE) together in the Holy State of Marriage.... Aho!

Now as you (GROOM) and you (BRIDE) have consented together in matrimony and have pledged your faith to each other by the giving and the receiving of these rings before your family and Community; by the authority vested in me under the Marriage Act of the Province of Ontario, I declare that from this day until the end of all days, you are now husband and wife.

GROOM, you may kiss your Bride.

Signing of the Marriage Register

Minister walks Bride & Groom to the blanket spread on the ground. Minister unties the Wedding Blanket.

Sisters will fold the blanket and put it in a safe place.

Optional:

(Groom): "This marriage branch is a symbol of our love for each other, and for our lives becoming as one."

Bride & Groom will notch the branch while Best Man gently shake the turtle rattle.

The drums will begin and guests will dance around the couple 7 times placing gifts on the blanket before them.

The Wedding Blanket is folded and tied by Bride & Groom and taken on the honeymoon. The blanket will not touch the ground until the marriage is consummated.