

## The Rehearsal Guide

The purpose of the rehearsal is for everyone to become familiar with the wedding space and know what they do when – who’s ahead of or behind them, who’s walking with them, what cues are used, etc.

### Who should be there?

Parents who are walking down aisle or being seated, bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girl, ring bearer (and a parent), best man, maid of honor, and anyone reading. If you are inviting others to the rehearsal dinner, have them meet you at the dinner.

### What do you need to bring?

It’s important to have your processional outline, including the formal seating, and know the order people will stand in at the “alter.” This should be organized with the venue manager or minister BEFORE the rehearsal. Bring a copy of your ceremony outline if the minister is not coming. If the minister is coming, bring your marriage license and any balance you owe. It’s a good idea to practice any special ceremony, such as handfasting, sand ceremony, or candle lighting. Bring whatever you’re using with you (cord, some sand and a practice container, candles and candle holder, etc.). If the venue has a sound system, please ask them to have it ready. If someone is running an iPod during the service, they should practice cueing and playing the music. If bridesmaids are wearing heels higher than they are used to, it’s a good idea to wear them during the rehearsal.

### Running the Rehearsal

Start BACKWARDS! First position everyone where they will be during the ceremony, including the people seated. Next, practice any movements that will happen during the ceremony. Practice the recessional. Then practice the processional last. The thought is, if everyone knows where they are going, then it is much easier to line up for the processional *and* everyone knows exactly where to go. Ceremony text, vows, ring exchanges are NOT practiced during the rehearsal.

### Step-By-Step Rehearsal Procedures

- I. **Before the Wedding Party Rehearses**
  - a. Gather readers, musicians or iPod, and any camera people
    - i. Show the readers where they will stand when they read and seat them on an end, close to where they will be.
    - ii. Make sure people practicing music or camera shots know where they will be.
    - iii. Check with anyone practicing music to make sure they know which songs to cue when.
    - iv. Seat everyone that is part of the formal seating where they will be during the ceremony.
- II. **Line Up at the “Alter”** (when facing the alter, guys at right, girls at left)
  - a. Line up the guys first, starting with the far end and moving to center (the best man is closest to the groom)
    - i. Remind the guys to keep hands out of pockets. Tell them all to decide to either put their hands in front, in back, or keep them at their sides.
  - b. Line up the girls, starting with the far end and moving to the center (maid of honor closest to the bride)

- i. If the flower girl and ring bear are standing, they can either stand close to the maid of honor and best man, next to a parent, or by someone they know very well. Otherwise they should go sit with a parent, so the parent should be seated somewhere close.
- ii. Take a step back, look towards the front and be sure everyone is centered. Then tell them to find a visual somewhere in the room, so they know they will be in the exact same spot when they line back up (this makes pictures look much nicer).
- iii. Ask the bride's escort to stand at the front row, where the bride will be "presented"
  1. The groom comes forward to shake hands with the escort.
  2. The bride and escort hug.
  3. The bride and groom take their place in front of the minister, facing each other.
  4. If the bride's escort is her father or someone else NOT in the wedding party, the escort takes a seat when the minister asks everyone to be seated. If the escort is in the wedding party, they take their spot at the "alter" instead.

### **III. Practice Special Ceremonies**

- a. Using the ceremony outline, make a point to tell any readers, musicians, or other people that DO something during the ceremony what they do, when.
  - i. Readers practice getting up and down.
  - ii. Decide who will have the rings and how they will they get to the minister when she asks for them.
  - iii. Practice any special ceremonies, i.e. sand ceremony, tying the knot, etc.
  - iv. Practicing THE kiss is not bad luck!

### **IV. Practice the Recessional**

- a. The bride and groom go first, just after the minister announces them as a newly married couple. They will know to start walking either when the music plays and cues them, or the minister cues them (most often a slight tap on their back). The flower girl and ring bear follow after (or can walk with someone else they know in the wedding party).
- b. The best man and maid of honor come together, then walk when the bride and groom are just passed the last row.
- c. The next two move towards the center and walk when the pair before them gets to the middle row.
- d. Repeat until the wedding party is gone
- e. At this point, the minister will make any announcements, dismiss guests, and join the wedding party.

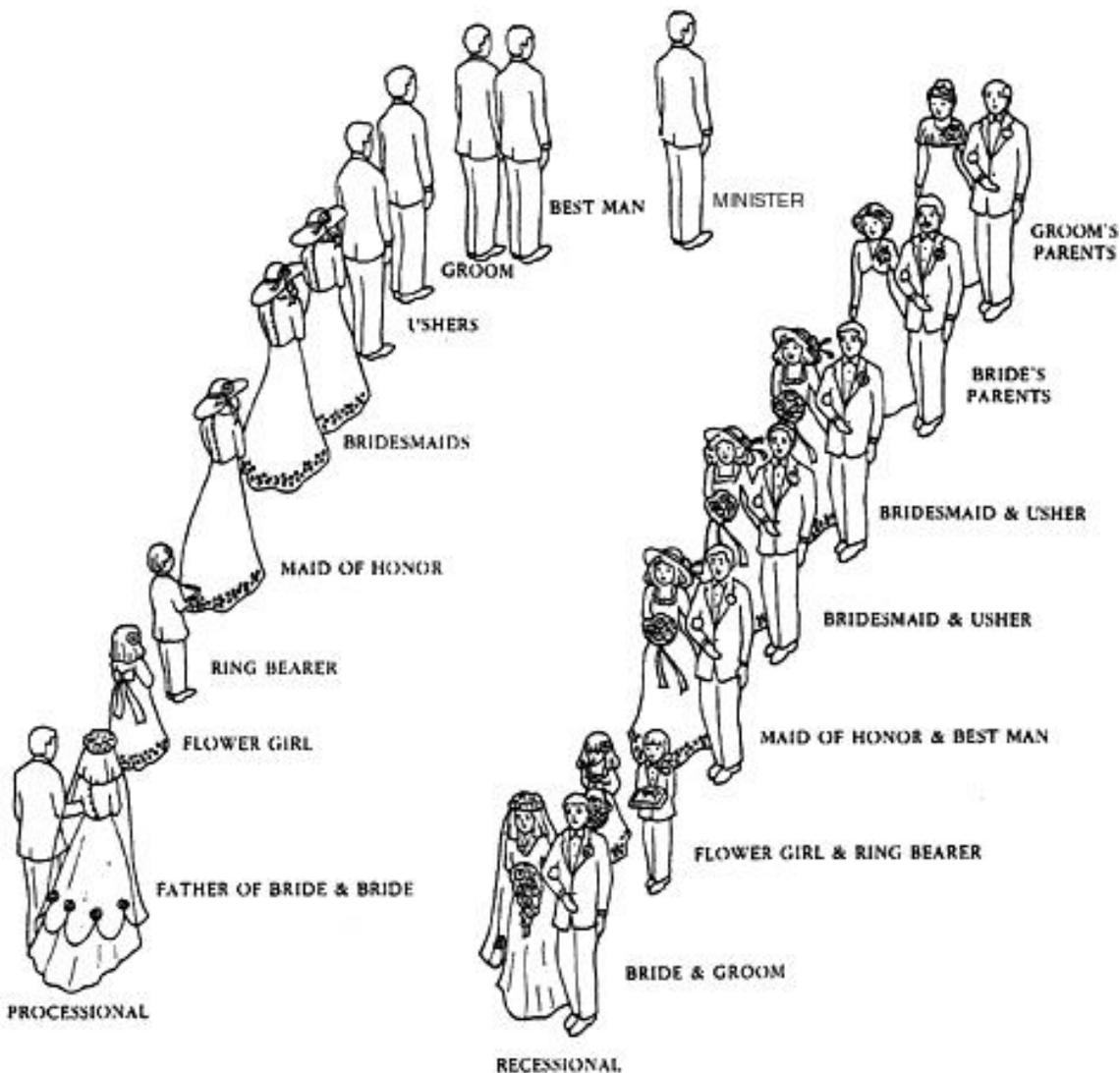
### **V. Practice the Processional**

- a. Line up those in the formal seating first.
- b. The wedding party lines up so the people standing farthest from the bride and groom go first, and those standing closest go last.
- c. The first to walk is either cued by the music (so they need to know what song they walk to) or they walk just after the groom and minister take their place at the "alter."
- d. The next in line walks when the one before gets to the middle row.

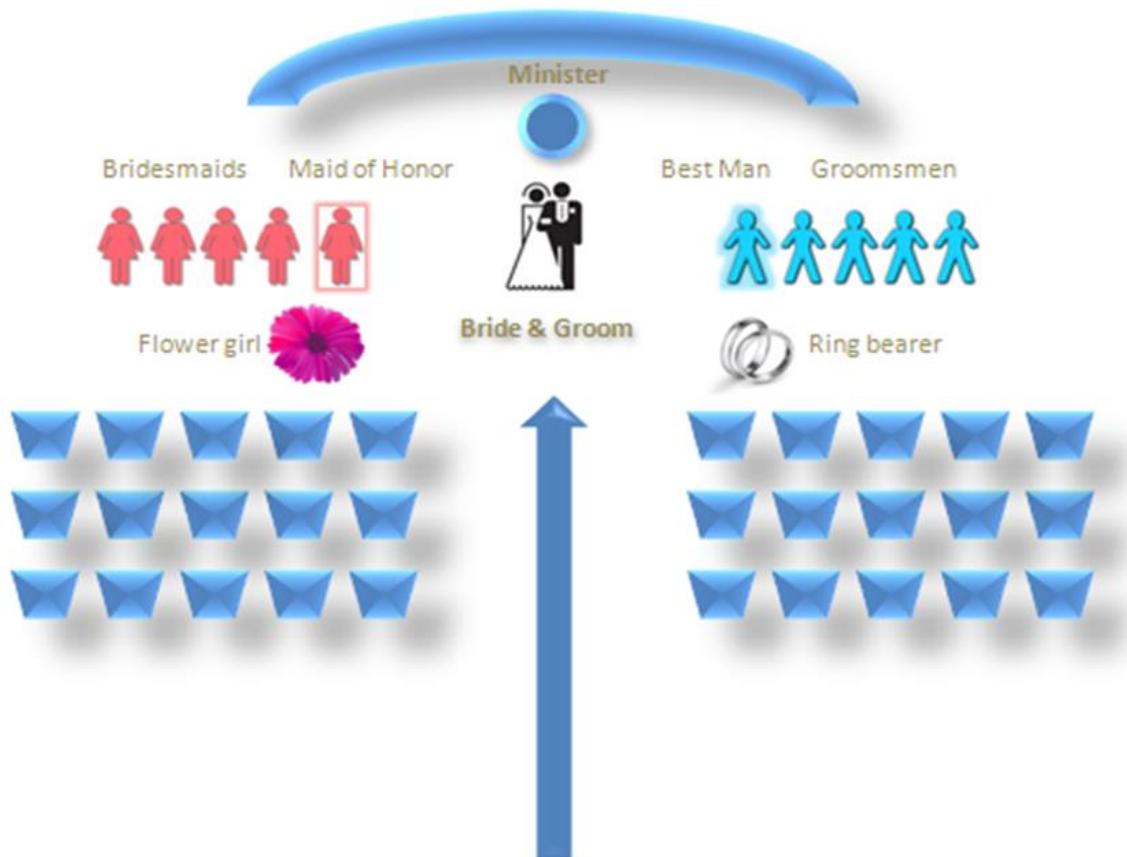
**VI. After the Wedding Party Rehearses**

- a. If there are any special instructions about what to do immediately following the ceremony (regarding pictures or receiving line), let everyone know.
- b. Be sure to tell everyone when to arrive at the venue and where to go.
- c. If your license and balance have not been given to the minister, assign someone who will hold these and give them to the minister when she arrives.
- d. Double check with anyone who will be holding rings or taking care of props (aisle runners, sand ceremony, flowers, etc.) to make sure they know where to get them and what to do
- e. o with them when they get to the venue.

**SAMPLE LINE UP**



## Rehearsal Quick Start Guide



1. Seat anyone involved in the formal seating, ushers, readers, and parents of flower girl/ring bear.
2. Line up the wedding party at the "alter" and make sure they are centered.
3. Practice any actions that will happen during the ceremony.
4. Practice the recessional; Couples pair off to walk to designated location or receiving line.
5. Line up the processional, with those involved in the formal seating first, then those farthest from the bride and groom next, and those closest to the bride and groom last.
6. Practice the processional.
7. Repeat recessional and processional practice if needed.
8. Give announcements and reminders.