

PLANNING:

KEY STEPS TO CHECK OFF IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR CEREMONY

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout offers prompts and a format to help you plan for your ceremony (other elements of your big day – for example, arranging for dresses, catering, and photographers, if these are important for you – are not included here).

Some of the suggested activities may seem a little daunting (e.g. planning for contingencies if a person who is planned to play a part in the ceremony is suddenly unavailable on the day), and may never need to happen, but are worth taking time to think through now, to avoid the slightest possibility of having to deal with the unexpected on the day. Others, especially the celebrant, should hopefully take on the worry for these things on your behalf – but they'll usually need to know what's expected from them ahead of time!

The headings for each part of the table should be self-explanatory. The status column can be updated whenever you review your progress against the plan.

1. CEREMONY PLANNING

Activity	When due / planned	Who will be responsible to ensure this is done (also note with an * others who may need to be involved)	Status (one of: complete, in progress, scheduled, overdue)
Has who will be involved in the ceremony been agreed?			
Has the ceremony content been agreed or is being shaped? e.g. including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Readings - Music - Ritual - Prayers - Blessing 			
Has the ceremony been scripted in draft?			
Is your minister / celebrant engaged and familiar with what you want? Have they worked with you in creating your ceremony / understands what you plan?			

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<p>Has the ceremony content / order been discussed with the people who you want to play a part in the ceremony? Have any suggestions of their own been taken into account? Are they comfortable with what's expected of them?</p> <p>Do they know when to arrive, what to wear, where to be sitting/standing at the ceremony (both when they are "playing their part" and at other times)?</p> <p>Participants may include those giving readings, singing songs, playing music, supporting you as you arrive/stand, looking after and handing over rings (or other symbols), greeting guests, looking after sound systems/recorded music, setting up and packing down seats and props, etc.</p>			
<p>Are contingencies in place if those playing a part in the ceremony become unavailable on the day?</p>			
<p>Have any family interests / concerns been listened to and catered for (if appropriate)?</p>			

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<p>Have venue arrangements been made (e.g. agreeing the set up for seating, props, flowers, CD/music and PA systems)? Does the venue handle any required licenses (e.g. for music) and public liability insurances? Do you know is the contact at the venue is?</p>			
<p>If the ceremony (or a part of it) is planned to take place outdoors, are contingency arrangements in place in case of bad weather? Will what's being said be audible for the audience (bear in mind that the wind may play quite a role here)?</p>			
<p>Have any props been arranged? Who will look after these on the day - remembering to take down as well as set up?</p>			
<p>Has the seating layout and access routes been worked out, taking account of any special accessibility needs (e.g. for wheelchairs)?</p>			

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<p>Has the altar been arranged (if appropriate)? Where will this be sited? What does it represent / should include? Will candles be used, and (if so) who will light and extinguish these?</p>			
<p>Have you thought through your vows and shared these with each other (if appropriate)?</p>			
<p>Have any other words that you plan to say been thought through and shared (e.g. words to accompany your ring exchange, if appropriate)?</p>			
<p>Has a rehearsal, venue visit (if appropriate / feasible) or run-through been scheduled?</p>			
<p>Has an Order of Ceremony sheet / song sheets or other handouts and gifts that might be offered to guests been printed or arranged for?</p>			

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Other activities / points to check:			

