

## Symbols Used In The Wedding Ceremony

As brides and grooms create wedding ceremonies that reflect who they are as individuals and as a couple, an increasing number of them are incorporating symbols as a visible sign of their love. "Tokens of love enable a couple to take the invisible and intangible - their love and devotion for one another - and illustrate these feelings in a tangible way," said Charlotte Eulette, National Director of the Celebrant USA Foundation.

Ceremony symbols can range from traditional to dramatic to the unexpected. Below you will find suggestions on how to easily and appropriately incorporate symbols into wedding ceremonies.

### Symbolize Your New Family Bond

If you are bringing children into the marriage, bestow a token such as a family medallion in a ritual that includes them; or let them join in lighting a family candle to represent the new bond you all share.

### Honor Your Families

Perhaps the most powerful symbol is one that honors a family member or tradition. Brides can wear heirlooms from her or her husband's family, such as a bridal gown, a wedding ring, or a special piece of jewelry. Pouring libations, an African tradition where water is poured out on the ground or into a bowl to honor ancestors who are now in the earth, is also incredibly moving during a ceremony. And remember those who have passed by sharing a poem or prayer they taught you, or by lighting candles or incense in their memory.

### Symbols That Show Your Personality

For a casual fun wedding, brides and grooms have been known to wear their favorite frocks - those that reflect their true selves; a favorite color, style, designer and even Hawaiian shirts and plastic leis. Forego the traditional wedding march in favor of Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon" or another favorite melody. Ask your guests to wear your favorite colors, or choose an unusual cake decorated to reflect your new home.

### Symbolize Your Unity

Exchange gifts reflecting what you love about each other. Share foods from your cultures to represent your bond to each other and your heritage. Exchange roses that symbolize your feelings and say "I love you" and promise to do the same in the future whenever you have challenges, as a way to always profess your love for one another. Sign a ceremonial marriage contract and ask your guests to add their names to the scroll.

### Cultural Symbols

Do some research into your and your spouse's heritage. These age-old traditions are often simple yet powerful. Make Japanese good luck origami cranes, use a Huppah for all faiths made by friends and family; or take a cue from Orthodox and Jewish traditions and circle the ceremonial table to reinforce your marital bond. Jump the broom to honor your African-American heritage.

### Take Cues >From Your Surroundings

Reflect the season of your marriage by using blooming [flowers](#) from a backyard garden. Your choice of location - whether a quiet garden, a dramatic hilltop or a busy public square can be a symbol of your personalities and the values you share.

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