

Janet & Lee's Yosemite Wedding

Ceremony “Script”

[total estimated running time: 20 minutes]

Welcome

Officiant welcomes everyone and talks about why everyone is gathered, and the role of the community in witnessing the wedding and supporting the new partnership.

Welcome, family and friends. We are here today in this remarkable location to celebrate with Janet and Lee as they share their promises of love and commitment. They have opened their hearts to one another, and have chosen this time and place to pledge the vows of marriage.

Janet and Lee, as you begin your wonderful journey, know there is great joy to be found in the twists and turns along the way. Do not resist change, dear ones. Rather, allow change to flower in you, knowing that change leads you — both separately and together — to becoming more of who you are. Strive always to be excited, curious and open-minded to all experiences as this will help you become the highest forms of yourselves. Use these opportunities to hone your lives and souls as only could be done by the two of you together, hand in hand through life.

Remember always, that love will prevail. The love that you feel for one another will be the answer to all your difficulties. Love will be the miracle, always inviting you to learn and to grow. And it is this love — the love you are celebrating, embodying, and radiating on this special day — to which you must always return.

A minute for silent reflection

Officiant asks guests to reflect on their wishes and feelings for the couple being joined.

Marriage is one of the most marvelous and most courageous of human acts, the promise of two persons to share life together on all levels. It is a promise made in the face of the certainty of death, the certainty of change, and the uncertainty of everything else.

There is nothing else quite like this action — nothing so daring, nothing so profound.

To more fully appreciate the meaning of the ceremony unfolding today, let us pause for a minute of silent reflection. Please observe your thoughts as you consider the significance of pledging oneself to marriage.

[Ring Meditation Bowl at start and end. Steve to signal Emily when ~60 seconds has elapsed.]

“Thank you.”

Readings

Offered by friends and/or family This is one way to involve loved ones in the ceremony

A dear friend of the bride for more than 20 years, Linda Lynes (pron. "Lines") will now read "The Art of Marriage", by Wilfred Peterson.

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens—
a good marriage must be created.

In marriage the little things are the big things...

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking the other for granted;
the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,
it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives;
it is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude
of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation
and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience,
understanding and a sense of humour.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal,
dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

It is discovering what marriage can be, at its best.

Declaration of Intent

Here is the section we utter (not stutter) the phrase "I do."

Janet and Lee, you have come here today as two individuals to make a commitment of the oneness that has grown between you. And so it is that you bring individual strengths wisdom and knowledge to this union — committing yourselves, now, to a life journey together. Please acknowledge the past joyfully as you leave it behind and walk through the door to the future.

Janet, do you pledge to love Lee and throughout your years together to be honest, faithful, and kind to him? Do you pledge to respect him for who he is, not who you want him to be? Honoring your love as the truth of all that you are and all that you are becoming, do you desire to marry Lee, to happily hold him above all others, for as long as you journey through life together? [Janet says “I do.”]

Lee, do you pledge to love Janet and throughout your years together to be honest, faithful, and kind to her? Do you pledge to respect her for who she is, not who you want her to be? Honoring your love as the truth of all that you are and all that you are becoming, do you desire to marry Janet, to happily hold her above all others, for as long as you journey through life together? [Lee says “I do.”]

Family and friends, if you feel in your heart the desire to support and encourage Janet and Lee in fulfilling the promises they make here today, please respond with “We will.” [Group presumably says “We will.”]

Exchange of vows

Expressing our commitment to each other, Groom first (pre-printed on index card, for backup). Each vow was written uniquely for the other. [Sure to be tears and smiles.]

“Lee and Janet will now read their personalized vows.”

[Groom speaks personalized vow]

[Bride speaks personalized vow]

Lighting of Unity Candle

“Janet and Lee with their mothers, will perform the Lighting of the Unity Candle. This ritual signifies the joining of two individuals and two families.”

[Maid of Honor and Best Man bring tapers to the Bride and Groom, who bring them to the mothers to be lighted. Janet and Lee will then move to the alter and light the Unity Candle. (If a taper goes out, return to the mother for re-lighting.) Tapers will not be extinguished, but stand alongside the Unity Candle.][Music during this non-speaking section: Enya TBD]

[Officiant resumes speaking after Janet & Lee have returned to their positions.]

This center candle represents the union of Janet’s and Lee’s lives in heart, body and soul. As this one light cannot be divided, may its radiance be a testimony of their unity. Their two individual candles continue burning, as Janet and Lee will continue to be two unique individuals in the midst of their marriage — two persons who support and nurture one another and thus perpetually strengthen their union. May it always be so.

Exchange of Gift of Rings

Separate from the vows, the rings are presented and accepted as gifts.

And so we come to the presentation of rings; a gift you give each to the other; an offering that symbolizes your love and commitment.

May I have the rings, please?

The wedding ring is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites you. As circles are never-ending, so may your love be: true and never-ending. May these rings be blessed by the spirit of eternal love.

Lee, please place the gift you give upon the third finger of Janet's left hand, and repeat after me: [Groom takes ring from Officiant, places ring half-way onto Bride's finger]

"With this ring, I join my life with yours,
pledging my love and devotion forevermore."

[Groom gently pushes the ring all the way on Bride's finger]

Janet, please place the gift you give upon the third finger of Lee's left hand, and repeat after me: [Bride takes ring from Officiant, places ring half-way onto Groom's finger]

"With this ring, I join my life with yours,
pledging my love and devotion forevermore."

[Bride gently pushes the ring all the way on Groom's finger]

Blessing from Officiant

May the love you hold for one another, now sealed in marriage, be a source of strength and inspiration to yourselves, your families, your friends and the world. May they feel your gentle kindness and understanding, and may the circle of caring that surrounds you here on your wedding day become even more abundant.

May the two of you always be the answer to each other's questions, a gift for each other's needs, a source of each other's happiness... and may the love you are feeling now flourish as you travel through all your tomorrows.

Pronouncement of Union

Officiant pronounces the couple Husband and Wife, and formally presents the married couple.

As you, Lee, and you, Janet, have promised your love and commitment, it is with great joy I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may seal your vows with a kiss!

[smooch!]

"I present to you Lee and Janet Lukehart"

[Recessional: Bride & Groom walk to back of chapel and ring the chapel bell; invites everyone to come and witness the certificate signing. Leslie has been holding the certificate, which she gives to Steve to bring back.]

[the end and the beginning]

Order of Events

Prelude

While guests are waiting, a ~15-minute medley of favorite love songs will be playing. Due to the small size of the wedding, only the Bride will have a formal processional. Groom's mom and Bride's mother will be sitting together in the front-most pew; open seating for others.

Entrances

Officiant

Before the ceremony, Emily will chat with the Bride's & Groom's mothers and other guests.

Janet and Lee will arrive at the chapel together at ~2:20; Janet will take position at the back of the chapel as Lee enters informally to check audio/video recording equipment... visually checks with Janet and signals to start the ceremony.

Officiant, Groom, Maid of Honor, and Best Man all take their positions at the front; Tim goes back to escort Janet.

Bride and Escort

[timed to music: ~1 minute excerpt of Looking In the Eyes of Love]

Janet enters, escorted by brother Tim. They stop short of the altar, and Lee comes to them. Tim entrusts Janet to Lee, who brings her to the altar.

Main Ceremony

[Detailed in prior section](#)

Exits

Bride and Groom walk together up the aisle and ring the chapel bell.

[Music: 20-second excerpt from ABBA's "I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do".]

Because we have such a small group, we can make this much less formal. Invite all to the back as witnesses sign the marriage certificate.

Guests exit and line up outside to see Bride & Groom emerge.

Maid of Honor and Best Man slightly precede the Bride & Groom, leading them out (with officiant) to be received by the awaiting friends and family.

Bride & Groom emerge, legally wedded; signifies their entrance into the community as a married couple.

[Music: Entirety of Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World".]

First dance as husband and wife.

Portrait photos with guests (including solo portraits for attendants)

Break before dinner

Additional photography session for Bride & Groom only.

Saturday Key Times

7:00 AM	Breakfast
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Mom’s get dressed; head to Janet’s room
9:00 – 11:30 AM	Janet and both moms get hair and makeup done
12:00 PM	Rikki arrives Ahwahnee
2:00 PM	Steve and Connie, and Emily arrive at chapel to set up
2:20 PM	Lee, Janet, and Rikki arrive at chapel
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Ceremony
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Photos / Chapel cleanup
3:30 – 5:00 PM	Janet, Lee & Rikki go on photographic road trip
5:30 – 7:00 PM	Group dinner at Ahwahnee