



Frequently Asked Questions

Every bride wants the most important day of her life to be perfect!

So that you can help her plan her perfect day, we have compiled a list of the most frequently asked wedding questions. Answers have been derived from authoritative sources on wedding etiquette, from the engagement to the wedding reception.

Q: If this is a second marriage for the bride and first marriage for the groom, is it proper to give the bride-to-be a bridal shower?

A: Yes, it is proper to throw a shower for a bride even if it is a second marriage. The shower gifts are for both the bride and groom. Without a shower, the new groom would be missing out.

Q: Is it proper for the bride on a second marriage to wear white?

A: Usually a bride that is getting married for a second time will wear off white, although the newer fashions have first time brides wearing off white as well. Be sure the groom wears an off white shirt under his tux; when standing next to the bride for pictures, they should match and you don't want her dress to look yellowed when standing next to the groom. Brides sometimes wear white for second and even third marriages. Age of the bride will play a role. If she is a younger bride, i.e. under 30 years old, white wouldn't be questionable. If she is older, a classier bride would wear the traditional off white and still look just as beautiful.

Q: Is an engagement ring necessary?

A: No. However, the wedding ring is an integral part of the wedding ceremony.

Q: Are engagement presents given?

A: They are not necessary but on occasion the families or close friends may give small gifts.

Q: May relatives give showers for the bride?

A: This is not considered appropriate.

Q: Should the church and reception invitation be sent out by the bride's parents or should it be sent out by the bride and groom?

A: This depends on several factors such as age and financing. If the bride is under 30, you should mention the parents on the invitations, especially if the parents are helping with the wedding plans. If the bride is over 30 it depends on how much the parents are involved in the wedding. If they are contributing financially they should be mentioned in the invitation. If they are not and will be attending as a guest, the invitations should be sent out by the bride and groom.



Q: When should invitations and announcements be ordered?

A: Approximately two - four months prior to the wedding.

Q: When are invitations for a formal wedding mailed?

A: Approximately three to four weeks prior to the ceremony.

Q: Does the fact the groom has been married before affect the bride's wedding plans?

A: No, plans do not differ.

Q: If the bride is a young widow, does her family send invitations?

A: Yes.

Q: Are reception cards included with invitations?

A: Yes, along with reply cards and envelopes with the home address printed on the reply envelopes.

Q: Should invitations be engraved?

A: If the bride wishes. However, simulated engraving is very satisfactory and less costly.

Q: When should announcements be mailed?

A: Approximately a day or two following the wedding.

Q: When should at-home cards be mailed?

A: Normally with the announcement.

Q: Are announcements sent to anyone who has been invited to the ceremony or reception?

A: No. Announcements are sent to acquaintances of the bride and groom who are not attending the wedding.

Q: May guests be invited to the reception and not the wedding?

A: Yes, if the ceremony is to be attended by only relatives and close friends.

Q: If the bride's parents are divorced, who handles the invitations and plans the wedding?

A: The bride's mother.

Q: Does the formal invitation to a church wedding require an answer?

A: No.



Q: Are wedding invitations sent to those in mourning?

A: Yes.

Q: How are envelopes of invitations addressed formally?

A: No abbreviations except for Mr., Mrs., Jr., Dr., etc.

Q: Is it proper to use "and family" on invitation envelopes?

A: No. Separate invitations should be mailed to adult sons and daughters. Small children's names should be listed on the inner envelope with only first names under the parents' names.

Q: How should the invitation be inserted into the envelope?

A: The invitation is folded with wording outside and placed in the inner envelope (unsealed) with the folded edge down. The inner envelope is placed in the outer envelope facing the flap.

Q: Who provides the wedding and reception?

A: The parents of the bride.

Q: What does the bride give the bridesmaids?

A: A small lasting gift such as a piece of jewelry.

Q: What does the groom present to his bride as a gift?

A: Usually a personal gift such as jewelry.

Q: How are the wedding bands engraved?

A: Inside the band, first with the bride's initials, then the groom's and then the date of the wedding.

Q: How many ushers are needed?

A: Usually figure one usher per 50 guests.

Q: Is it required to have the same number of ushers as bridesmaids?

A: No.

Q: Where can receptions be held?

A: The bride's home, the home of a friend, a hall, a hotel, wedding facility, outdoors, or a club.



Q: Where does the bride sit at the Bride's Table?

A: Always on the groom's right.

Q: Do parents sit at the Bride's Table?

A: Yes, or they may have their own table.

Q: If the reception is given by the bride's divorced father, what is the mother's position?

A: The mother is an honored guest, but if this poses a problem, she should refrain from attending.

Q: Are gifts brought to the reception?

A: No. However, many guests will still bring one so have a gift table area available at the reception.

Q: Are identifying name cards placed with presents on display?

A: No.

Q: Are checks displayed with other wedding gifts?

A: No, but they can be noted on a card.

Q: Is it correct to exchange duplicate gifts?

A: Yes.

Q: Who should read congratulatory telegrams for the guests?

A: The best man.

Q: Who gives the first toast to the bride?

A: The best man.

Q: Which side of the church is to be reserved for the bride's family and friends?

A: The left is for the bride, the right for groom. In some synagogues this procedure is reversed.

Q: If the church has two center aisles, what should be done?

A: Choose one aisle only and conduct the wedding as if it were the only aisle. If you wish, you may use the right aisle for the processional and the left aisle for the recessional.

Q: Is wearing black acceptable by any of the feminine members of the wedding party?

A: Traditionally not, but today black and white weddings are very popular.



Q: Are divorced parents of the bride seated together?

A: No, the mother is seated in the front row with her new husband, if remarried; the father in the third left-hand pew.

Q: Where do the groom's parents sit if they are divorced?

A: The mother in the front right-hand pew, the father in the third pew.

Q: Does the groom always kiss the bride following the ceremony at the altar?

A: This is ruled by the church ceremony. The clergyman will advise the couple.

Q: Who handles the clergy's fee?

A: The groom pays the fee, but the best man presents it to the clergy either before or after the ceremony in a plain white envelope.

Q: Is the clergyman invited to the wedding reception?

A: Yes, along with his wife, if married. He is seated at the parents' table.

Q: Do ushers and best man stand in the receiving line?

A: No.

Q: Should the bride and groom smoke or hold drinks and food in the receiving line?

A: No.

Q: Should the groom dance with others?

A: Yes, with his mother, mother-in-law and the maids of honor.

Q: What is "boxed" wedding cake?

A: Individual pieces of cake in small white boxes for guests to take home. This is done at very elaborate weddings.

Q: Can a home wedding be as formal as a church wedding?

A: Yes, but usually there are not as many attendants.

Q: How is a recessional conducted at a home wedding?

A: The couple simply turns around after the ceremony to receive the best wishes of the guests.



Q: How are wedding gifts displayed if a home reception is not planned?

A: A tea or cocktail party may be held for close friends several days prior to the wedding.

Q: Who cuts the first piece of cake?

A: The bride with the groom's right hand over hers. They then break the slice and eat it together. A friend or a waiter then slices the rest of the cake.

Q: How is the reception dance begun?

A: The bride and groom should be honored with the first dance. However, if guests have already started when the couple enters the dance floor, the dancing stops and the couple dance once around the floor alone.