

Chad and Mary Wedding Ceremony

9:00 a.m.: Wedding party photos.

Melody, Emily, Anna, Lisa. Austin (Ames), Tony, Jimmy, Kyler.

11:00 a.m.: Kerry is already standing at the front before the ceremony begins.

11:00-11:29 a.m.: People are walking in, taking their seats.

Musical Preludes: Brandon May on the Harp

11:29 a.m.: Kerry announces:

“Please silence your cell phones. More importantly, photos are prohibited due to a health issue of someone who is present today. The risk of accidental flash is too high, so we implore you to respect the health needs of the wedding party by taking no photos. Thank you.”

Procession

11:30 a.m.: The wedding party makes their way to the front.

Processional music: Eric Barfield: Music selection for Bridal Party and Ring Bearer/Flower Girl:
Theme from Contact

When Mary is ready to process, Kerry motions (if necessary) for all to stand.

Music for Mary's Entrance: “Here Comes the Sun”

When Mary arrives, Kerry says (if necessary): “Please be seated.”

Chad and Mary take up positions facing each other, to the left and right (and slightly in front) of Kerry. Chad and Mary can face Kerry or face each other as they wish.

Who presents this woman in marriage?

Answer (MB): “Her mother and I do.”

[Then MB sits down.]

Invocation

Dear friends who have traveled from far and near to be here today, we are gathered in the loving fellowship of each other, and in the joyful presence of God, to celebrate with Chad and Mary this dawn of their new life together, their union as husband and wife.

Mary, I'm so glad that I've known you since you were a little girl with the curiosity and wonder of Kendra, your flower girl. You were and remain an utter delight to everyone who knows you. For all these years, your friendship, along with your sister and brothers, has meant so much to my family. Chad, I remember you said that finding Mary was like "meeting a best friend who I didn't know, yet it felt so natural, I could be myself." You've already taken me for a short spin in your wilderness-seeking Jeep. I can't wait to hear of all the great times you two will have camping and traveling together as you journey on from this day.

Words on Marriage

For those who enter into it, the gift of marriage is a relationship like no other.

Chad and Mary: God is saying to you today, Surprise! See how much I love you. I have never forgotten you, I know you, I see you. You are not alone. From this day forward, whenever you look at each other, know that you are looking at a precious gift of God. You are looking at a beloved child of God, the beautiful one whom God has chosen as your companion on this journey of life. Today,

God and all the holy angels are rejoicing, celebrating your love for each other.

The Triune God — Father, Son, and Spirit — are by their very nature an eternal communion of love. That is why Jesus honored marriage at the wedding feast in Cana. There, at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus changed water into wine. At the wedding party, Jesus brought the wine! And He is still doing so today. Drinking the wine signals that marriage, for all time, is a sacred and joyous celebration, an image of a future Day when He shall come for His beloved, His bride. All our earthly joys and longings dimly testify of that future Day.

For Love is forever. 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, says:

“Love is patient and kind. It is never jealous or envious, boastful or proud. It is never haughty, selfish, or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

Your love for each other will awaken you to a life of love and a love of life. In the Song of Solomon we read:

“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death. Love burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.”

When you truly love someone, you want them to live forever. To bring us life and love forever is why Jesus came, so that we too might participate in that eternal divine communion. Be confident that love never ends. Your journey here together is a beautiful beginning of everlasting love.

Chad and Mary, your love will wake something up within you. By entering into marriage, you will love more deeply than you ever thought it possible to love before. Your love for each other, and God’s love for you, will sustain you through unfathomed depths of sorrow and through unexpected heights of joy. In marriage, you are moving “further up and further in” to the everlasting mystery of love in the cosmos.

*Declaration of Intent*¹

Chad, do you take Mary to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, for as long as you both shall live?

[Chad: I do.]

Mary, do you take Chad to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, for richer or poorer, for as long as you both shall live?

[Mary: I do.]

Vows Exchange

Join your right hands and give heed to the vows you shall make to each other:² [Give microphone to Chad]

[Chad's vows] [Give mic to Mary]

[Mary's vows] [Replace mic in stand]

¹ The declaration of intent is the verbal representation of signing the marriage license. It is the couple's public declaration that they are knowingly and willingly entering the contract of marriage. Their oral statements are analogous to their signatures on the marriage license.

² Just paste in your own vows in place of the sample vows provided here. For the vows, let me know which you prefer: You can read them from your own cards, have me read them and you repeat after me, or memorize them (??).

With this exchange of vows you are entering into communion with each other and with God. Though your way will not always be easy, the Lord in His grace will sustain your marriage. He will renew your love for one another, for He is the “giver of all good and perfect gifts.”³ A “threefold cord” is not easily broken.⁴

Rings Exchange

As God pointed to the rainbow as a sign of his promise to Noah, have you a sign of your promise to each other?

[Chad and Mary:]

“We have these rings.”

[Chad and Mary take rings from their company, prepare to give to each other.]

Chad and Mary, the ring is a symbol of the unconditional love you have for each other. Its unending circle represents the eternal quality of love, and the gold represents its purifying fire. As a ceaseless reminder of this hour, and as a seal of the vows you have taken, now give and receive your rings.

³ James 1:17.

⁴ Ecclesiastes 4:12.

[Chad (prompted by Kerry):]

I give you my name
and this ring
to wear with joy
as a sign of my love and
vows before the Lord.

[Mary (prompted by Kerry)]

I receive your name
and give you this ring
to wear with joy
as a sign of my love and
vows before the Lord.

Pronouncement

Chad and Mary, it is not a minister standing before you that makes your marriage real, because marriage is the gift of God. Your relationship is part of the eternal YES spoken to you by the God who is the source of love. So in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and by the authority vested in me by the State of Missouri, we acknowledge that you are indeed husband and wife!

Chad and Mary, you may kiss your beloved!

[Kerry moves off to the side so photo may be taken]

[Affirmation of Children⁵]

As the story of your life together now unfolds, God may entrust you with the gift of children. Receive them as a precious gift from the Lord, just as your parents received you. They will be blessings to you. No matter what may come, Christ's unconditional love will hold you close in steadfast love that cannot be shaken, though the world may end.

[Congregational Affirmation]

You who witness these vows, will you support and uphold this marriage of Chad and Mary sealed before you this morning? If so, say, "We will."

[Congregation:] "We will."

[Presentation]

May I present Mr. and Mrs. Chad and Mary Skinner!

[Ed Crimm: Photos]

Recession

Recessional music: Eric Barfield plays medley of I'm on Top of the World and I Really Want It
Chad and Mary recess first, followed by bridesmaids and groomsmen.
Then remaining family

⁵ The affirmation of children and the congregational affirmation here serve as an addendum, after the pronouncement, since children are not necessary to a marriage, nor is a congregational affirmation.

Kerry: “Please remain seated for one group photo. After that, Chad and Mary would like to invite you all to the brunch, catered by Mas Tacos, right here, in a little while. But meanwhile, please enjoy refreshments at the cocktail bar. Now for the group photo.”

Finally others are dismissed.

Kerry is the last to leave.

Afterward

Chad, Mary, Kerry and others as needed sign the marriage license (provided by Chad and Mary), and the marriage certificate (provided by Kerry).

Marriage License

Our full names:

Chad Michael Skinner

Mary Lynn Barfield → Mary Lynn Skinner

On the marriage license, Kerry's title is "Minister," church affiliation (if needed) is "American Marriage Ministries," and religious denomination (if needed) is "Non-denominational." The ceremony type is "Religious" (not "Civil").

Witness signatures. Chad and Mary: Please ask when you obtain the license if witnesses are needed, and if so, what are their requirements. I believe Missouri requires no witnesses, and there will be no lines on the license for them to sign. But if there are witness lines, you could ask the Maid of Honor and Best Man to sign if you like.

Return the license to the County "Recorder of Deeds" within 15 days. Who returns the marriage license? Usually it is the couple, but in some states it might be the officiant. Chad and Mary, please ask about this when you arrange for the license. Usually it can be mailed in rather than returned to the issuant office. A few weeks after the wedding, the couple should receive a certified copy of the marriage license. That certified marriage license copy is proof that the marriage is legal.

Mary and Chad: Contact the St. Charles County Recorder of Deeds...

- Phone number:
Address (if an in-person visit is required):
- We are getting married on August 31 at Klondike Park, Augusta, MO, in St. Charles County.
- In Missouri, a wedding license needs to be obtained by the couple within 30 days of the ceremony, right? Do we come to your office to pick it up or can it be sent by mail?
- In Missouri, the couple (not the minister) returns the wedding license after the ceremony, right?
- Do we return it to you via postal mail? or do we drop it off in person?
- Within 15 days of the ceremony?
- When we enter our names, do I (Mary) use my birth name (Mary Lynn Barfield) or my new married name (Mary Lynn Skinner)?
- The Minister is Kerry V. Magruder. His title is "Minister," church affiliation is "American Marriage Ministries," and religious denomination is "Non-denominational."⁶ The ceremony type is "Religious." His residence is in Oklahoma. Do you need any documentation from him?
- In Missouri, signatures of witnesses are not required, correct?
- For Kerry, separate call (if necessary): "I am a minister from Oklahoma and I will be performing a marriage August 31 at Klondike Park, Augusta, MO, in St. Charles County. The couple will be

⁶ I don't expect this, but in some states evidently "Non-denominational" is not accepted. If that happens, just use "American Marriage Ministries" again, for both church affiliation and denominational affiliation.

contacting you in early August to obtain their wedding license. Are there any steps you would like me to take with your office before I officiate the wedding? If so, please let me know what to do.” [I can email credentials if need be, or show them to you in person the day before the event.]

Contingency plan (seizure, other medical emergency, etc.)

- Michael attends to Rhonda... Who else assists them? - *Micajah*
 - If a medical emergency happens to someone else, who will assist them?
- Eric will keep playing music on the keyboard.
- Wedding party take seats, to visually indicate a pause in the ceremony, and then stand and return to the front to signal when it is ready to resume?
- Resume when Rhonda is able to join us, or do we go on without her? Who makes that decision?

Notes

Chad and Mary:

This is a base draft for our consideration. Just write your notes in – revise the text as you wish, or type questions, or enter comments, whatever works for you. Please make all the changes you want! It's not my purpose to take away your own writing of the ceremony, just to give you – us — a place to start. For instance, you'll want to replace the vows as given below with the vows you are writing. And much more. For example, you might want the tone to be more humorous, or less religious, etc. It's YOUR wedding, and I want the ceremony to be what YOU want it to be. Even a total revamping is fine!

- Places where you speak are highlighted for **Chad** or **Mary** or **both** of you.
- I've forgotten what you said about music. Eric will be playing? And there will be a harp? Shall we insert **music or songs** in the ceremony below, or just keep them in the prelude time, before Rhonda enters? - *I have added the music selections below!*
- Mary, will your Dad walk with you during the procession? - *Yes!*
Do you want him to speak before he sits down?
That is, do you want to add a "giving of the bride" or "parental blessing" after the initial procession?
Traditionally, this is KM "Who presents this woman in marriage? Answer (MB): "Her mother and I do." Then MB would sit down.
Take a look at the modified versions of this below, an "optional parental blessing," in short and long versions. We could use any of those three options there if you like, or just omit it altogether. Same goes for flowers presented to parents at this stage.
- Are there children processing as ring bearers? If so, we need to write that into the ceremony. - *Yes, I will add this into the ceremony.*
- I've included several readings from scripture (Ruth, Solomon, 1 Co 13). But are there any favorite readings (eg **poems or quotations**, whether read by me or by the wedding party) you would like to add below? Do you want others to have speaking parts? Note that I've included a place at the end for a prayer or blessing, perhaps by Michael? Or by a best man or maid of honor?
- Are there any rituals that you would want to add? Eg lighting a unity candle. I'm not familiar with many, but I know there are some that are popular or that might be meaningful to you. They would add length, however, to the ceremony.

Preparation

Chad and Mary will obtain the wedding license within 30 days of the wedding. They will show it to Kerry before the ceremony begins so that he can verify the information. Unless the license is present with us,

and accurately completed, the wedding won't be legal.⁷ See more about completing the license in the section below entitled "Afterward."

Calm: Breathing exercises? Whisky? Smelling salts? Hold hands?

⁷ Apparently, in Missouri, the wedding license is obtained from the County Recorder of Deeds. Is Klondike in St. Charles County? Cost: \$48 - \$62. Waiting period: None. Expiration: 30 Days. Return: 15 Days from the Wedding. Witnesses: None needed. (I have not verified any of this information.)