**Commitment Ceremony**

*Option to play music as your guests wait for your ceremony to begin (approx. 15 minutes). Music can be live (for example you could make arrangements for a small choir or soloist to sing, a string quartet to play or a harpist to perform) or recorded (in which case you may like to create a play list of contemporary love songs, classical music or the scores to your favourite films).*

Registrar announces start of ceremony.

*Would you like to enter the ceremony room together or have a more traditional entrance with one of you waiting for the other? Would you like anyone to accompany you, for example parent/s, those in a bridesmaids/ groomsmen type role? Would you like a particular piece of music to be played or would you prefer to enter the room more informally to a round of applause?*

Good morning/afternoon everyone. I’d like to extend a warm welcome to you here today at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am the Deputy Superintendent Registrar, of the City of Westminster.

It means a great deal to all of us to gather together today. Almost all cultures have ceremonies to mark the important stages of our lives. They enable us to acknowledge relationships, to voice our intents and to affirm the values and beliefs important to us. Such celebrations generate a bond between all those who participate.

*Option to include a Ring-warming Ceremony*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have chosen to exchange rings today as a sign of their love and commitment to their relationship. Before doing so, they would like to invite you to partake in a very old tradition – the warming of the rings. If you are unfamiliar with this custom, when the rings pass into your care please hold them for a moment, making a silent wish for the future this couple will share. When returned to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is believed that these rings will contain in their precious metals something that is all the more precious – your love and well wishes.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are extremely thankful that you are here today to celebrate this happy occasion with them. Whilst today we honour and acknowledge their relationship, we also recognise and pay tribute to the bond they have with the other important people in their lives, who have shaped them, both as individuals and as a couple.

Today is an opportunity for you, as family and friends of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to consider ways in which you can provide the support and guidance that will continue to strengthen their relationship. As such, I am going to ask each of you to declare your intent to be there for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on their journey together through life. Please firmly respond with the words “We do” when I ask:

Do you, as those treasured by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, vow to offer your support, guidance, encouragement and assistance throughout their relationship?

*Answer:* We do

*Suitable place for a reading (suggested length 3 minutes or less). This could be a favourite childhood poem, extract from a book, quote or song lyrics about love/marriage, or poem written especially for the day about the two of you.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s relationship has brought them happiness and fulfilment. They each feel extremely fortunate to have found a partner who so richly enhances every aspect of their life. It is with real pride that they stand here today to honour their relationship, and it is with a deep sense of gratitude that they reflect back on all they have already shared together.

*Suitable place to incorporate a summary of your relationship’s progression (suggested length 3 minutes or less). You may like to include: when and where you met, shared experiences, and significant occurrences, such as the birth of children/blending of families. For example: “As many of you know, A and B’s love story has been twenty years in the making! They met at university and though for A it was love at first sight, for B it wouldn’t be until they reconnected at their 10 year reunion that he realised he had found his Mr Right.“*

When \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ made the decision to spend the rest of their lives together, they did so recognising that strong relationships are built on many foundations - respect, friendship, empathy, compromise; but at its core they require trust, to know in your hearts that you truly want the best for each other.

By sharing your life with someone, a new perspective is created. Burdens are lighter because you divide them. Joys are more intense because you share them. Aspirations are heightened because you are working towards them together.

*Suitable place for a second reading (suggested length 3 minutes or less).*

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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_you have gathered your friends and family to be with you today to celebrate your commitment to one another. I ask you now in the presence of this company, to vow to spend the rest of your lives together.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, do you, sincerely and unreservedly vow to bind your life to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s as her/his lifelong partner? Do you promise to comfort her/him in life’s sorrow and pain, to rejoice with her/him through good times, and to remain true to her/him, now and always?

 *Answer:* I do *Repeat for Partner 2*

(Partner 1) Please repeat after me:

I call upon – these persons here present – to witness that I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – do willingly and freely – commit myself to thee, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I promise to care for you and respect you - to trust you and be honest with you - to stand by you and support you - for as long as I shall live.

*Repeat for Partner 2*

*Option to include personal vows (suggested length 3 minutes or less for each of you). These can be romantic and earnest or humorous but heartfelt. Please either:*

* *Have these written on a piece of card for you to read from if you would like to surprise one another on the day. For example, “I am so grateful you came into my life because…”*
* *Include them within this script if you would like your registrar to ask you to confirm your vows. For example, “Will you both continue to prioritise spending time as a family and save even faster for that trip to Disneyworld you have promised \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”*

*“We will!”*

* *Email them separately to the register office if you would like to surprise each other by writing one another’s vows. For example, “Do you A promise to take B a cup of tea in bed every morning?” - written by B.*

*“Do you B promise to let A watch football undisturbed without hoovering in the background?” - written by A.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we have now come to the giving of rings. These rings represent the vows you have made today. They reflect the commitment those words inspire and all your hopes and dreams for the future.

(Partner 1) Please repeat after me:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring – as a sign of our love – and as a symbol of all that we share. Ipromise tocherish you - and honour you – for the rest of our lives.

*Repeat for Partner 2*

*Option to include a Sand Ceremony*

*Please provide two or more glass vials each containing a different coloured sand (number dependant on how many people you would like involved in the ceremony, maximum of six) and an additional larger glass vial with stopper capable of holding all the sand. Symbolism of different coloured sands: Black = strength and protection. Blue = loyalty and harmony. Brown = devotion and the blending of families. Green = health and fertility. Grey = patience and understanding. Orange = passion and fidelity. Pink = affection and friendship. Purple = sharing and support. Red = passion and perseverance. White = co-operation and independence. Yellow = prosperity and longevity.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have chosen to affirm their commitment with a sand ceremony, which may be new to many of you. Their relationship is symbolised through the pouring of these individual vases of sand into one. By blending these sands together, we are recognising the importance of blending two families together. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the colour of the sand represents your hopes for your shared future. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(Partner 1)* you have chosen\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(colour)* for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(symbolism)*. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(Partner 2)* you have chosen\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(colour)* for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(symbolism)*.

I ask you both now to pour your sand into this third vase. As you do so the sands will mix together as a visual representation that the bond of love and respect that you share can never be divided.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you have bound your lives together as a couple, but it is also fitting to celebrate and acknowledge the importance of your friends/family/children to your relationship, so at this time I would like to invite your witnesses/parents/children to come forward to add their sand. They too have selected the colour of their sand…

*either:*

…to reflect their wishes for your future. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has chosen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(colour)* for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(symbolism)* etc.

*or (for children):*

…with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(colour)* being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ favourite colours.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, on this special day I now present your gift to one another commemorating your promise of eternal dedication. May it be a treasured reminder of the lifelong promises you have exchanged today.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is clear to see that each of you is treasured, and your relationship is supported, by so many. I know that today has brought much happiness to you both, as well as to everyone gathered here to rejoice in your union. Now, as the ceremony draws to a close, I wish you a wonderful continuation of today’s celebration, and a very long and happy life together.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, on behalf of the City of Westminster and everyone present, may I offer our congratulations on your special day!

*Registrar’s final words of well wishes. Option to play a final song as you exit the ceremony room, followed by your guests.*