

Photography

The photography at your wedding, like the dress and music, should reflect Christian values and taste. Because poses that are worldly, sensual, and unbecoming for a believer are common at worldly weddings, your photographer may suggest such poses for you as well. As the number of poses increases, and the photographer seeks variety, the likelihood of unbecoming poses also increases. You will need to express your wishes to your photographer.

Neither the nature of unbecoming poses, nor the atmosphere of these sessions properly prepares you for your wedding. Please plan on having the photography session completed no less than twenty minutes before the wedding starts

You may wish to consider having your wedding photo taken at the photographer's studio before the wedding. A friend or photographer could then be assigned to take pictures during the wedding. This may be a more economical option.

You can reduce distractions at your wedding by asking your wedding guests not to take pictures during the service.

Your Wedding Party

Who will your attendants be? Members of the wedding party are usually members of your family or very close friends. Usually, only two witnesses, one male and one female, are necessary according to civil law.

You may wish to consider having no attendants at all. This would mean that only you, the bride and groom, would stand at the altar. You could walk in together, or the father of the bride could walk her in half-way, to be met by the groom. The attendants are needed only to witness and sign. This would eliminate the expense of dresses and suits, or tuxedo rental.

Experience has shown that the use of children in a wedding party is not always wise. Consider the ability of the little flower girl or ringbearer to participate in your wedding service. If you choose to have either, or both, they may be seated with their parents after the processional.

Rehearsal

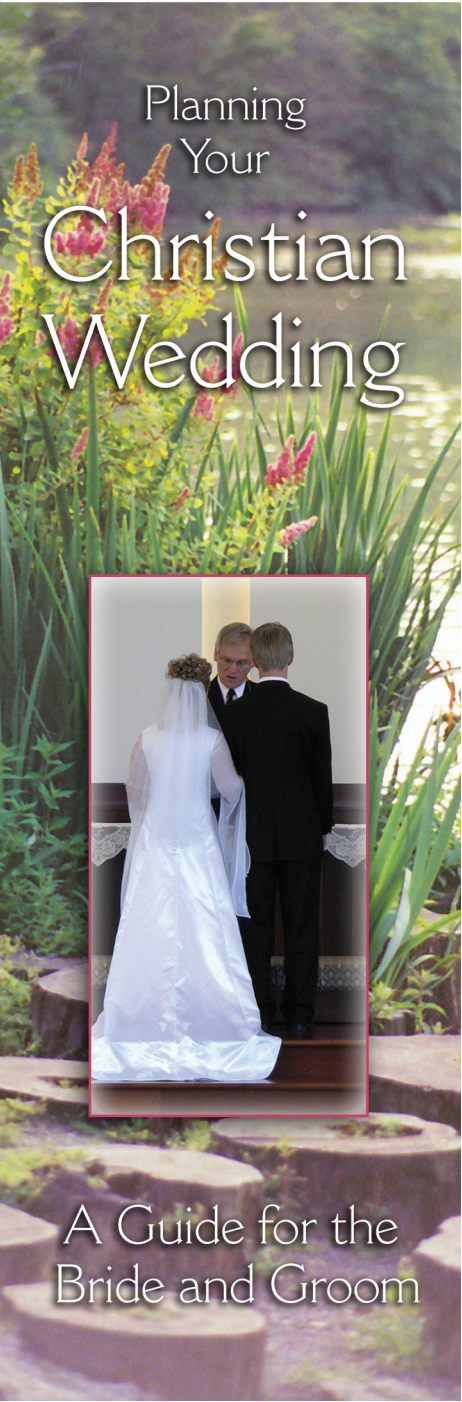
It is important for all who are involved in the wedding to be present for the rehearsal. The rehearsal for your wedding should be held at a time, often the evening before, when all members of the wedding party can be present. Your pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal. The rehearsal is a time of careful preparation for the wedding service. The arrangement of the wedding party will be determined first so that each knows her or his position during the service. Then the entire service is rehearsed in proper order. Remind all members of the wedding party to be on time, both for the rehearsal and the wedding.

Reception

It is a beautiful and wholesome custom to make the Word of God a part of the reception. It provides a firm foundation upon which to begin married life. Consider including a short devotion, or even several, in your reception. You may also wish to include the following in your program: the singing of songs, a group of friends singing to the wedding couple, recollections of the bride and groom by a friend or parent, recital of poems, and instrumental music. If you have a program at your reception you may wish to have the father of the bride, or perhaps one of your friends, serve as the master of ceremonies.

Weddings in American Christianity have commonly been by open invitation. But you are free to consider a wedding by invitation only. In most cases this would probably mean a smaller wedding, which allows more options for your wedding reception. If you have a smaller wedding you would be able to join your guests at the start of the reception. They could be seated at tables and refreshments set at a serving table. After the master of ceremonies welcomes your guests on your behalf, you could begin the luncheon. The guests could follow you to the refreshment table by turn. Such an arrangement preserves order and lets you share this joyous, but also solemn moment with your friends.

*Our scheduled meeting with the pastor is on*





*Probably no sacred act takes more time in planning and preparation than a wedding. The Bible does not give specific instructions for conducting a wedding, nor does it decree the customs and rituals that are to be observed in connection with weddings. Thus we understand that there is latitude to accommodate the differences of country and culture, not however at the expense of Christian values and good conscience.*

## The First Step

Your pastor is ready to help you in every way he can. His wish is to help you celebrate this special moment in a manner which is both acceptable and pleasing to Almighty God and your Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

To accomplish this, your pastor will want to meet with you and your betrothed to review what God has to say to husbands and wives, to help you begin your wedding plans, and to answer your questions.

Your wedding date will be confirmed at this meeting also. Once the date and time have been confirmed you will be able to have your invitations printed.

## What Is a Christian Wedding?

A Christian wedding is not simply the legal marriage of two people. It is a solemn worship service. A Christian wedding is held so that the couple can sanctify their marriage with God's Word and with prayer. In the Christian wedding, the couple beseeches God for His blessing and help in their marriage. The entire congregation joins in their humble petition. In the vows they acknowledge and confirm that their marriage is joined by God. By these words and actions the couple confesses their Christian faith and they stand before their

friends as a picture of the mutual love between Christ and His congregation. The preaching of God's Word also returns the teachings of the Scripture concerning marriage to the minds of all present.

### **Luther explained the solemn purpose of the Christian wedding:**

*Those who at the first instituted the practice that one should lead the bride and bridegroom to the church, truly did not regard it as a joke but as a very earnest matter; for there is no doubt but that they were seeking the blessing of God thereby and the common prayers, and were not making a ridiculous burlesque out of it or a bit of heathenish monkey business.*

*Thus, too, the act in itself reveals its earnestness. For whoever desires prayer and blessing from the pastor or bishop shows thereby indeed even if he does not express it how greatly he stands in need of the Divine blessing and common prayer for the estate which he is undertaking. And this serious situation can be seen daily in the misfortunes caused by the devil in the marriage estate with adultery, unfaithfulness, discord, and all manner of ill."*

(Luther's: A Marriage Booklet for Simple Pastors)



## Dress

The bride traditionally wears a veil and a white dress. The veil symbolizes modesty and virtue, the white dress joy and moral purity. Modesty, virtue, and moral purity have been largely forsaken by the world and the styles of our time reflect it—they are sensuous and revealing. Bridal gowns often have low necklines, or bare shoulders or backs. Such styles are in contrast to Christian values. In today's world it is difficult to find a ready-made dress that is becoming, but alterations can be made. Christian brides and bridesmaids should not use unbecoming worldly styles. Christian values and taste do not forbid or prevent beauty, even elegance, but they do encourage modesty.

Suits are generally recommended for the groom and groomsmen. Tuxedos can also be rented. If you rent tuxedos, remember to consider a style that is appropriately modest and in Christian taste.

## Music

You will need to consult your church organist when you plan the music for your wedding. He/she knows the church organ and the service order and will help you to select suitable music for your wedding. If you wish to have someone other than the church organist play at your wedding, please consult your pastor first.

Congregational singing is recommended, since your friends have come to worship with you and since the hymns express the thoughts of Christian hearts in worship. There are, however, other options that can be used at appropriate times in the service, for example, the processional and the recessional. If you wish to use a classical piece for the bridal march or the recessional, the organist will be able to tell you the suitable pieces in his/her repertoire. Another option is a solo between the Scripture reading and the prayer. Both the organist and the pastor can guide you in the selection of vocal music, if you so need. If you choose to have a soloist, be sure to ask him or her early enough and consult the pastor or organist about the music he/she will sing. There could also be instrumental accompaniment.

All music for the wedding and reception should be in Christian taste and in harmony with our faith. Wedding songs that are not in our hymnal may be used if they are carefully selected and in good taste. The use of so-called popular music does not belong to Christian weddings. Even in the rare instances when such music and its lyrics are not offensive, they are so foreign and strange to God's congregation and the spirit of the Christian wedding that they cause unrest and offense.

If you choose to have pre-service music, it also should consist of sacred organ music, selected by yourself or the organist. You may wish to consider doing without pre-service music. The wedding service would then begin with the processional.