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CEREMONIES WITHIN YOUR CEREMONY

Handfasting Ceremony – Tying the Knot

The Handfasting Ceremony dates back to the time of the ancient Celts. It was used to acknowledge the beginning of a trial period of one year and a day during which time a couple were literally bound together to demonstrate their compatibility. Whether Irish, Scottish, English, North-West European, or other – there is great joy in “tying the knot”.

Although there are countless variations of the Handfasting Ceremony, the symbolic act typically involves fastening a couple’s hands together with four to six feet of any color of cording, ribbon, twine or silk sash while prayers are recited and vows are exchanged. Couples can use a single string or braid strands together to represent the intertwining of their individual lives (with possibly a third strand signifying God’s participation) into one. Numerous online wedding vendors sell ready-made and custom versions.

Handfasting Ceremonies continue to thrive in cultures throughout the world and among modern couples who want to incorporate a visual symbol of their lifelong bond. A sample ceremony has the officiant saying:

Please face each other and take each other’s hands, so that you may see the gift that they are to you. These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief temporarily comes to you. These are the hands that will countless times wipe tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children, the hands that will join your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it, support and encouragement to pursue your dreams, and comfort through difficult times.

And as you are united for life, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours, still giving you inexpressible joy with just a touch.



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With this cord, I bind (*Saying Groom's name*) and (*Saying Bride's name*) to the vows they make to each other:

(*Saying Groom's name*) and (*Saying Bride's name*), will you honor and respect one another? [*We will*] ... the cord is then draped over the couples' hands.]

Will you support and assist each other at all times: times of joy and pain, of triumph and testing? And through such times, will you make every effort to continually strengthen your marriage? [*We will*] ... the cord is then knotted, tying the couples' hands.]

Will you share one another's laughter and joy, and look for brightness and fun in life, and the positive in each other, so that your marriage always retains the celebration of this day? [*We will*] ... the cord may then or soon be removed from the couples' hands.]

Marriage is not held together by perfection, for we are imperfect people, but it is knotted by the courage and commitment to remember these promises. Always be willing to take a step towards one another with an open heart.