

The Wedding Invitations & Announcements

Q. When should wedding invitations be ordered?

A. Invitations should be ordered when all of the details of the ceremony and reception have been confirmed. Information such as the date, time and place of your service and reception, as well as an accurate guest list count are needed when placing your invitation order. You should order invitations at least three months before the wedding.

Q. When should wedding invitations be mailed?

A. Invitations should be mailed approximately 6 to 8 weeks before the ceremony.

Q. Are any special arrangements made for out-of-town guests?

A. It is a good idea to send a "save-the-date card" to your out-of-town guests. This card is usually sent four to six months before the wedding. This is the first news your guests have of the wedding. It typically includes information about the wedding and any special accommodations which you have made for them.

Q. What are considered traditional invitations?

A. Traditional invitations are white, ivory or ecru with a panel or without a panel. Traditional invitations can be thermographed or engraved. Thermographed (raised) printed invitations are less expensive and imitate the look of engraving.

Q. What are considered contemporary invitations?

A. Contemporary invitations are those that offer a variety of different themes, designs, folds, trends, and beautiful colors.

Q. May guests be invited to a reception and not the wedding itself?

A. Yes, if the wedding service is attended only by relatives and close friends.

Q. Are wedding announcements ever sent to anyone who's been invited to the ceremony or reception?

A. No. Wedding announcements are only sent to those people who were not invited to the ceremony or reception.

Q. Are the wedding invitation envelopes addressed formally?

A. Yes. Abbreviations should not be used except for Mr., Mrs., Jr. or Dr.

Q. Is it correct to use "and family" when addressing the invitation envelopes?

A. No. Separate invitations should be sent to adult family members living under the same roof, whenever possible. For small children, address the outer envelope to their parents and write their first names on the inner envelope under their parents' name.

Q. What is the purpose of the tissue included with my invitation order?

A. In the past, tissues were used to guard against ink smears. Today's printing methods ensure ink is dry before invitations leave the printing plant, so the tissues are no longer necessary. However, many continue to use the tissue as part of their wedding ensemble for aesthetic reasons and for the sake of tradition.

Q. How should the invitation be inserted in the envelopes?

A. The invitation is folded and put in the inner envelope (the smaller envelope) with the folded edge down and the front of the invitation facing the back of the envelope. The inner envelope is then placed in the outer envelope with the front of the inner envelope facing the back of the outer envelope.

Q. When should announcements be mailed?

A. Announcements should be mailed a day or two after the wedding.

The Thank You Notes

Q. Is it necessary to send a thank you note to someone I have thanked in person?

A. It is considered socially correct to always send a written thank you note even if you have thanked someone in person.

Q. When should thank you notes be mailed?

A. A written thank you note should be sent as soon as possible after receiving the gift, normally within 2 to 3 weeks of receipt.

Q. Is there a tactful way to thank someone for a monetary gift?

A. When writing a thank you note for money, it is not necessary or advisable to mention the amount. Instead, refer to it as "your generous gift," or something similar; mention how you plan to use the money, whether to purchase an appliance or to use in some other way.

The Wedding

Q. How many ushers and bridesmaids are needed?

A. It depends on the size of the wedding.

Normally, there should be one usher for every 50 guests. The average wedding party for formal or semi-formal is four to six bridesmaids and ushers. A bride does not need as many bridesmaids as ushers.

Q. In a formal wedding, which side is usually reserved for the bride's family and friends?

A. The bride's parents are seated on the left side of the aisle and the groom's parents sit on the right side. (In some synagogues this is reversed.)

Q. What if a church has two center aisles?

A. Pick one aisle and run the whole wedding as though it were the only one, or use the right aisle for the processional and the left for the recessional.

Q. Does the groom always kiss the bride at the altar?

A. The person performing the ceremony will rule on it, according to the church practice.

Q. Is there a recessional at a home wedding?

A. It is not necessary. The married couple may turn around after the ceremony and receive best wishes from the guests.

Q. Who gives the officiant his or her fee?

A. The groom pays, but the best man hands it over in a plain white envelope before or after the ceremony.

Q. Where does the wedding party stand in the receiving line?

A. The receiving line is in the back of the church after the ceremony. The order may vary, but usually the bride's mother and father are first, followed by the bride, groom and bridesmaids. The groom's mother and father may be included. The ushers and the best man do not stand in the receiving line.

The Reception

Q. At the bride and groom's table, where does the bride sit?

A. The bride is seated on the groom's right.

Q. With divorced parents, who attends the reception?

A. Both may attend if agreeable by all, or separate receptions may be given.

Q. Who reads congratulatory messages aloud?

A. The best man reads any congratulatory messages that are received.

Q. Who proposes the first toast?

A. The best man proposes the first toast to the bride and groom.

Q. Who cuts the first piece of cake?

A. The bride, with the groom's right hand over hers, cuts the first piece of cake. They break the slice and eat it together. A friend or waiter then takes over the slicing of the cake.

Q. What happens at the reception if other couples start dancing before the bride and groom?

A. When the newlyweds appear, everyone should stop dancing. Then the bride and groom waltz once around the floor solo.

Q. Is the groom obligated to dance with someone besides his bride?

A. Yes, the groom is obligated to dance with his mother, mother-in-law, and the maid of honor.

Planning the Perfect Wedding

To help you prepare for one of the most memorable days in your life, we have compiled a list of some of the most commonly asked questions of Brides-to-Be. We have provided you with answers from leading experts in the Bridal Etiquette field.

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