

WEDDINGS BY WEAVER

The Unity Ceremony Guide

10 meaningful rituals, with the exact words
to hand your officiant

From a wedding planner who has stood through 100+ ceremonies
and knows which moments guests actually remember.

Why Do a Unity Ceremony?

After 100+ weddings, I can tell you what guests remember: the vows, the kiss, and the one moment that felt like you. A unity ceremony is that moment. It is a short ritual, usually two to three minutes, where you do something together that symbolizes two lives becoming one.

It gives your photographer a beautiful focal point. It gives restless guests something to watch besides the back of someone's head. And it gives you a keepsake you will actually keep, not a box of programs gathering dust.

Here is my honest take: you do not need one. Plenty of gorgeous ceremonies skip it and lose nothing. But if you want one, pick the ritual that feels like your story, not the one the internet told you to pick. The ten that follow are the ones I have seen work, with the real costs, the real logistics, and sample wording you can hand straight to your officiant.

Xoxo, Kara

How to Use This Guide

Each of the ten ideas follows the same format: what it is, what you need to buy or prepare, what it really costs, a sample script, and my planner notes from real weddings. Print the script page for your officiant or email it to them. Do not assume they already know the wording you want.

Where it fits in the ceremony

The unity moment almost always goes right after the ring exchange and before the pronouncement. It is the bridge between the promises and the kiss. Tell your officiant exactly where it sits, and rehearse the physical movements once at the rehearsal. Every awkward unity ceremony I have ever seen was awkward because nobody practiced walking to the table.

The ten rituals at a glance

- 1. Unity Candle, the timeless classic
- 2. Sand Ceremony, a favorite for blended families
- 3. Wine Box, letters and wine sealed for the future
- 4. Handfasting, the original tying the knot
- 5. Tree Planting, for the couple who loves the outdoors
- 6. Unity Painting, your first artwork as a married couple
- 7. Blending Paint, two colors becoming something new
- 8. The Love Cup, a shared toast from one cup
- 9. Jumping the Broom, joyful and full of history
- 10. The Oathing Stone, simple, ancient, and free

1. The Unity Candle

What it is

The classic. Two taper candles, often lit by your mothers as the ceremony begins, are used by the two of you to light one larger pillar candle together. Two flames become one, and the single flame burns for the rest of the ceremony.

What you need

A unity candle set (two tapers plus one pillar), a small sturdy table placed near the altar or arch, a lighter or long matches, and a glass hurricane shade if you are outdoors.

Approximate cost

\$15 to \$40 for a boxed set.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"Desirae and Dillon will now light the unity candle. These two separate flames represent your lives before today, distinct and complete on their own. As you bring them together, you create something new: one flame, one home, one family. May its light remind you, on ordinary Tuesdays and on hard days, of the promise you made here."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Outdoors? Wind is the enemy. Use a hurricane glass or pick a different ritual entirely.
- Have your mothers light the tapers during the prelude so nobody is fumbling with lighters mid-ceremony.
- Dripleless candles only. Wax on a rented linen is a cleaning fee you will never forget.

2. The Sand Ceremony

What it is

You each pour a different colored sand from small vases into one glass vessel, creating layers that can never be separated. It is visual, quick, and photographs beautifully.

What you need

Two small pouring vases, one larger keepsake vessel with a lid or cork, sand in two contrasting colors, and a small table.

Approximate cost

\$20 to \$50 for a kit.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"This sand represents your individual lives, your families, and everything that shaped you. As you pour, these grains mingle in a way that can never be undone. Just as these sands cannot be separated again, neither can your lives from this day forward."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- The top pick for blended families: give each child their own color to pour.
- Choose sand colors that contrast. Two shades of beige photograph as one beige blob.
- Cap or cork the vessel right after. One bumped table turns your keepsake into abstract art.

3. The Wine Box

What it is

Also called the love letter box. Before the wedding, you each write a love letter. During the ceremony you seal the letters in a wooden box with a bottle of wine, to open on a future anniversary or during a hard season.

What you need

A wooden box with a latch (or a hammer and nails for drama), two sealed love letters, a bottle of wine, and a small table.

Approximate cost

\$30 to \$80.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"Before today, each of them wrote a letter capturing exactly how they feel in this moment. They have sealed those letters in this box with a bottle of wine. On their fifth anniversary, or anytime they need to remember why they started, they will open it together."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Write the letters the week before, not the night before. You will thank me.
- Nailing the box shut gets a huge guest reaction and a great photo.
- If neither of you drinks, seal in a favorite whiskey, a fancy olive oil, whatever fits you.

4. Handfasting

What it is

An ancient Celtic tradition and the origin of the phrase tying the knot. Your hands are bound together with cords or ribbons as the officiant speaks words of blessing over you.

What you need

Handfasting cords or ribbons, usually three to six, and someone to hold them or drape them on the altar table within reach.

Approximate cost

\$10 to \$40.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"As this cord binds your hands, may it remind you that your lives are now woven together. These are the hands that will hold your children, comfort each other in sorrow, and celebrate every joy. May they never be empty of love."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Practice the wrapping once at the rehearsal so nobody fumbles in front of 150 people.
- Assign meaning to each cord: family, friendship, faith, adventure, and say so out loud.
- Tell your photographer in advance. Bound hands make a stunning close-up shot.

5. Tree Planting

What it is

You plant a sapling together in a pot of soil during the ceremony, then take it home to grow alongside your marriage. Perfect for outdoor and garden venues.

What you need

A small tree or hardy plant, a decorative pot, two small trowels, a bag of soil, a small watering can, and a tarp or cloth under the table.

Approximate cost

\$25 to \$60.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"Like this tree, a marriage needs tending. It needs sunlight and water, patience through the slow seasons, and strong roots. They will plant this tree today and care for it in their first home, watching it grow as they do."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Soil on a white dress is forever. Put a tarp down, no exceptions.
- Pick a plant that survives your climate. A dead unity tree is a terrible metaphor.
- Water it lightly, not dramatically. You are planting a tree, not flooding a basement.

6. Unity Painting

What it is

You each paint on one shared canvas during the ceremony, creating the first piece of art for your married home. Abstract, joyful, and completely yours.

What you need

A canvas (16x20 is a good size), acrylic paints in your wedding colors, brushes or palette knives, two aprons or smocks, and a full table covering.

Approximate cost

\$20 to \$45.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"A marriage is a blank canvas. Today they begin their first painting together, each bringing their own colors. It will not be perfect, and that is the point. It will be theirs, and it will hang in their home as a reminder of this day."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Acrylic on formalwear does not come out. Aprons are non-negotiable.
- Keep it to two or three minutes or guests start checking their phones.
- Abstract is your friend. Nobody expects a masterpiece in three minutes.

7. Blending Paint

What it is

A close cousin of unity painting with more drama: you each pour a color of paint into one vessel or over one canvas, watching two colors blend into something neither could make alone.

What you need

Two or more colors of pourable acrylic paint, a glass vase or small canvas, aprons, and a full table covering.

Approximate cost

\$15 to \$35.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"Watch what happens when two colors meet. Each keeps its own character, but together they make something entirely new. That is the honest picture of marriage: you do not disappear into each other, you blend into something richer."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- Do a test pour at home first so you know how your colors actually mix.
- A dark color plus a light color photographs best.
- This one is fast, under two minutes, which keeps the ceremony moving.

8. The Love Cup

What it is

A Scottish tradition. You share a drink from a two-handled cup called a quaich, each holding one handle. It cannot be lifted alone, which is exactly the point. For a faith-based version, many couples share communion at this moment instead.

What you need

A quaich or any meaningful two-handled cup, and your drink of choice: whiskey, wine, cider, or sweet tea.

Approximate cost

\$20 to \$60 for a quaich. A family cup is free.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"This cup has two handles, one for each of them, and it cannot be lifted alone. As they drink together, they promise to share everything from this day on: the sweet and the bitter, the celebrations and the ordinary days."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- One sip each is plenty. Nobody needs ceremony shots.
- If kids are part of the ceremony, cider keeps everyone included.
- For church weddings, ask your pastor about sharing communion here instead. Many couples find it deeply meaningful.

9. Jumping the Broom

What it is

A tradition with deep roots in African American history, honoring ancestors who married when they could not legally wed. You jump over a decorated broom together to seal the marriage and sweep away the old life.

What you need

A broom decorated with ribbon, flowers, or fabric in your wedding colors, laid flat on the ground.

Approximate cost

\$15 to \$40 decorated, or DIY for less.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"This broom honors those who came before, couples who leapt into marriage with nothing but each other and a jump over a broom. As they jump together, they honor that legacy, sweep away the old, and step into their new life as one."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- This usually closes the ceremony, right before or as part of the recessional. It makes a joyful exit.
- Lay the broom flat and jump holding hands. Practice the jump once so the dress cooperates.
- Tell your DJ. Guests will cheer, and the dance floor energy starts right there.

10. The Oathing Stone

What it is

A Celtic tradition: you hold a smooth stone while saying your vows, believing the stone holds your promises. Then you keep it somewhere you will see it every day.

What you need

A smooth stone: a river rock, or one from a place that matters to you. Engraving is optional.

Approximate cost

\$0 to \$20.

SAMPLE SCRIPT, HAND THIS TO YOUR OFFICIANT

"In Celtic tradition, couples spoke their vows holding an oathing stone, believing the stone would hold their promises long after the words faded. As you hold this stone and speak your vows, your words are set not just in memory, but in something you can hold."

KARA'S PLANNER NOTES

- The simplest option on this list, and guests love the story behind it.
- Pick it up on a trip together for extra meaning.
- Display it at home where you will see it daily, not in a drawer.

Which One Is Right for Us?

Answer these five questions honestly and your choice gets obvious fast.

Getting married outdoors?

Skip open flames. The unity candle hates wind. Sand, tree planting, broom jumping, and painting all love the outdoors.

Want a keepsake on the mantel?

Sand vessel, wine box, unity painting, the tree, or the oathing stone. The candle burns down and the broom hangs on a wall, so know what you are signing up for.

Blending families or including kids?

The sand ceremony wins. Give each child their own color to pour and watch their faces.

Short on ceremony time?

The oathing stone or the love cup take under 90 seconds and lose nothing in meaning.

Want a big guest reaction?

Jumping the broom or nailing the wine box shut. Both get cheers every single time.

My honest take: pick the one you would still love if no one photographed it. Trends fade. The ritual that feels like your story is the one you will be glad you chose.

Your Ceremony Order Template

Fill this in with your officiant and planner. This is the same structure I used across 100+ weddings: processional, ceremony elements in order, recessional.

Wedding of: _____ Date: _____

Processional

Role	Name	Song / Notes

Ceremony elements (in order)

- Welcome & opening remarks
- Readings
- Vows
- Ring exchange
- Unity ceremony: _____
- Pronouncement
- The kiss

Recessional

Role	Name	Song / Notes

This order is subject to change

One Last Thing

Y'all, whatever ritual you choose, the magic is not in the props. It is in the two of you, standing in front of everyone you love, choosing each other on purpose. The candle, the sand, the paint, those are just the excuse to pause and let the moment land.

Print your officiant's script page. Rehearse the walk to the table. Then forget the logistics and be present. You have planned enough. This part is for enjoying.

Xoxo, Kara

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Practical wedding planning tools from a planner who has seen it all.