

Wedding Master of Ceremony Duties

You've been asked to oversee the Master of Ceremony position at an upcoming wedding. What are your duties? Where do you need to be and what do you need to do at each stage of the wedding?

As the wedding MC, you are the designated person to make sure all events are conducted in an orderly fashion after the wedding ceremony. Here are some guidelines to help you become more comfortable with your role in the wedding party.

- Make sure all audio equipment (if used for speeches/toasts, etc.) is in working order.
- Direct the wedding attendants to their proper spots in the receiving line. If it is a very large wedding party, then the bridesmaids and groomsmen should not stand in the receiving line in order to have it move faster. The receiving line should be located near the entrance to the reception area and the bridal party should be lined up as follows, from left to right:
 - the bride's mother (as hostess)
 - the bride's father
 - the groom's mother
 - the groom's father
 - the bride
 - the groom
 - the maid of honor
 - the best man
 - the bridesmaids
 - the groomsmen (although not necessary)

Child attendants do not participate in greeting the guests. If anyone's parents are divorced, you may want to leave the fathers out of the line, which is acceptable, as they can circulate and greet guests in this manner. If you wish to include step-parents along with biological parents, then they should stand to the groom's left (before the bridesmaids). If the reception is being hosted by someone other than the bride's parents, then they should have the honor of standing at the front of the receiving line. Remember to discuss all this with the bride and groom so everyone is clear on who's standing where in the receiving line.

- Direct special guests to any reserved seating areas. Groomsmen/ushers can help with seating of general guests if they are not in the receiving line.
- Once guests are seated, announce the entrance of the bride and groom. Have the DJ or band play any music that was selected for their entrance.
- Introduce yourself as the Master of Ceremonies, welcome the guests to this happy occasion and introduce everyone at the head table, including the flower girl and ring bearer, even if they are seated elsewhere.
- Announce the serving of dinner and introduce the person who will be saying grace, if this is to be included in the reception.

- Once the main course has been completed, but before desert, it will be time to begin the speeches. Make sure you give the head table 10 minutes warning, so that they can run to the washroom, etc. before the speeches begin. Also make sure that there is wine or champagne at each table for toasting.
- As the wedding MC, you will call upon the first person to begin the speeches, which is usually a good family friend/relative who knows the couple well. They will present a speech and toast to the bride and groom.
- The MC then announces that a reply will be made by the groom (or the bride and groom both, as is often done today). The groom/bride accepts the toast to them, and in turn thanks everyone for their help in the wedding preparations and thanks the guest for attending. They finish with a toast the maid of honor and bridesmaids.
- The MC will then stands and call on the Best Man to respond to the toast. The best man accepts the toast on behalf of the bridesmaids, and then usually tells a short, humorous story about the groom, followed by a toast to both sets of parents.
- The MC then calls upon the parents of the bride to speak first, followed by the parents of the groom.
- Once these formal speeches and toasts are completed, the MC then has the best man or groomsmen read any faxes, telegrams or letters that were received from guests that couldn't attend the wedding.
- As the Master of Ceremony, you will propose a toast to all friends and relatives who couldn't attend the festivities.
- The MC then announces the cutting of the cake by the bride and groom. Following this, desert is served and the bride and groom walk from table to table speaking with guests and handing out the groom's cake.
- After desert is finished, the Master of Ceremony announces the first waltz by the new couple.
- During the reception, the MC also announces when it's time to throw the bouquet and the garter at a time prearranged by the bride and groom. You will also announce any special dances or other activities that have been planned for the evening. For example, many couples now have a "bride's last dance" (with all the single men in a circle) and the groom has a "groom's last dance" with all the single women in a circle.
- At the end of the evening, when the bride and groom are ready to leave, the Master of Ceremony announces this to the guests so they can make their good-byes and give their good wishes to the bridal couple.

Keep in mind that these are just generally followed guidelines and that they can be changed to suit the wedding couple. The main thing to remember is to relax and have fun. A wedding is a celebration of joy and love between two special people, not a rigid, military procedure. Don't get so caught up in your "duties" that you forget to have fun. Go with the flow and enjoy the party!