



Handfasting or hand tying wedding ceremony

A handfasting ceremony, also known as a hand ceremony or a hand-tying ceremony, is a tradition that is polytheistic but still popular in modern ceremonies.

Here's 10 reasons you might want to involve handfasting in your wedding ceremony.

- **Simplicity:** Before the 18th century most marriages were not officiated in churches, but in the local village or forest, in a simple ceremony where the two people came together, and the symbolic gesture of this two-become-one ceremony were their hands being tied together. The simple act of tying two hands together communicates more than words sometimes can.
- **Intimacy:** With your hands tied to your fiancée's your celebrant, or perhaps a friend, family member or faith filled acquaintance can lay a blessing on that symbolic union.
- **A physical symbolic gesture:** you can use vines, colourful cords, a scarf, string/s or rope.
- **Something borrowed:** a special piece of fabric could be the handfasting material, or perhaps a thread from a special cloth or a rope that holds family tradition.
- **Rebellion:** between 1753 and 1939 in Scotland handfasting ceremonies were banned because only the church could officiate weddings. Does the rebellious streak appeal to you?
- **For faith:** a handfasting ceremony represents everything that a Christian marriage is based on. The rope itself can even serve as a reference to Ecclesiastes 4:12 and your marriage to your fiancé also being a marriage involving God the father "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."



- **Involving more people:** your celebrant does not have to be the one who ties the cords or ribbons, another person that you would like involved in the ceremony could tie your hands together. A quick practise run pre-ceremony might be a good idea, so that you find that even balance between not-tied and bondage.
- **Multiple aspects to your relationship:** each cord or string can represent a different aspect of your relationship. If you have children, or a sport or a professional theme that also ties your marriage together, each aspect could be represented as a cord or a ribbon.
- **Recycling:** After the wedding ceremony you will need to release your hands to sign the marriage certificate and go ahead with your day. Perhaps the ribbon or cord could then be tied around your marriage certificate, as a further symbolic gesture.

HANDBASTING CEREMONY (sample 1)

Officiant: (couple to join hands)

Jessie, will you honour Blake as an equal in this marriage? (I will.)

Blake, will you honour Jessie as an equal in this marriage? (I will.)

And so the binding is made.

Blake and Jessie, as your hands are bound together now, so your lives and spirits are joined in a union of love and trust. The bond of marriage is not formed by these cords, but rather by the vows you have made. For always you hold in your own hands the fate of this union. Above you are stars and below you is earth. Like stars your love should be a constant source of light, and like the earth, a firm foundation from which to grow.

May these hands be blessed this day. May they always hold each other. May they have the strength to hang on during the storms of stress and the dark of disillusionment. May they remain tender and gentle as they nurture each other in their wondrous love. May they build a relationship founded in love, and rich in caring.



May these hands be healer, protector, shelter, and guide for each other.
(The Hands of the Couple, Traditional Handfasting Prayer, unknown)

HANDBASTING CEREMONY (sample 2)

NAME and NAME have chosen a traditional hand fasting ceremony to symbolise their entering into the bonds of marriage. In the history of some European traditions, weddings were celebrated by a simple ceremony in which two partners would join hands and their wrists would be tied with a cord, symbolizing the binding together of their individual lives. It is from this practice that we get the expression “tying the knot”.

(Couple joins hands.)

NAME and NAME, this cord is a symbol of the connection between your two lives. As your hands are bound together by this cord, so too, will your lives be bound together in marriage.

(The Couple’s wrists are wrapped and tied loosely with ribbon or cord. This can be done by the celebrant or by the couple’s best man/maid of honour, parents, or other chosen person.)

These are the hands that will love you.

These are the hands that will hold and comfort you through the years.

These are the hands that will give you support and encouragement.

These are the hands you will each work with, create with, and use to build a life together.

The knots of this binding are not formed by these cords but instead by your vows, the promises you make in your hearts and uphold each day through your actions.



Remember, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.

Just as your hands are now bound together, so too, are your lives. Because you cannot always be physically joined together, you will each give to the other a wedding ring to symbolize that connection. It will be worn on your hand as a constant reminder of the bond shared between you as a married couple.

(The Hand Fasting cord is removed, without untying it.)

Alternate Blessing of the Hands

NAME & NAME, please join your hands.

Today you are holding the hands of your best friend,
young and strong and full of love for you,
as you promise to love each other forever on your wedding day.
These are the hands that will work alongside yours as together you build
your future.
These are the hands that will passionately love and cherish you through
the years
and will comfort you like no other.
These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind.
These are the hands that will wipe tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow
and tears of joy.
These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children.
These are the hands that will help you hold your family together as one.
These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.
And these are the hands that – even when wrinkled and aged – will still
be reaching for yours
and expressing the same tenderness they do today with just a touch.