



LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

BY LARRY RICHMAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIRST THINGS FIRST	3	WEDDING BREAKFAST OR LUNCHEON	7
COUNSEL AS A COUPLE	3	MEAL	7
SET A BUDGET	3	RECEPTION OR OPEN HOUSE	7
MEET WITH YOUR BISHOP	3	VENUE	7
PREPARE SPIRITUALLY	3	FOOD	7
EARLY DECISIONS	4	DECOR, THEME, AND FLOWERS	8
CHOOSE A TEMPLE OR CIVIL WEDDING	4	PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE	8
SCHEDULE DATES AND VENUES	4	MUSIC	8
CONFIRM WHO WILL OFFICIATE AT THE WEDDING CEREMONY	4	CAKE OR DESSERT TABLE	8
ARRANGE FOR TIME OFF WORK OR SCHOOL	4	GUEST BOOK	8
DETERMINE WHERE YOU WILL LIVE AFTER THE WEDDING	4	FAVORS	8
NEXT STEPS	5	SEATING CHART	8
CHOOSE A PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER	5	TRANSPORTATION	8
CREATE A GUEST LIST	5	HELPERS	9
DESIGN AND SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS	5	POST-WEDDING	9
CREATE A GIFT REGISTRY	5	HONEYMOON	9
SELECT A GROOM'S RING	5	THANK YOU NOTES	9
PREPARE SCHEDULES	5	LEGAL DOCUMENTS	9
SCHEDULE DOCTOR'S EXAMS	5	INSURANCE POLICIES	9
OBTAIN A MARRIAGE LICENSE	6	CHURCH RECORDS	9
PLAN FOR HAIRSTYLING, MANICURE, PEDICURE	6	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	9
WEDDING ATTIRE	6		
WEDDING DRESS	6		
GROOM'S ATTIRE	6		
BRIDESMAIDS AND GROOMSMEN CLOTHING	6		
GUESTS' CLOTHING	6		
ENDOWMENT	6		
DETERMINE WHEN TO RECEIVE YOUR ENDOWMENT	6		
CHOOSE AN ESCORT	7		
TEMPLE SEALING	7		
RING EXCHANGE	7		
HOST OR HOSTESS FOR GUESTS	7		
MENTAL NOTES	7		

Latter-day Saint Wedding Planner by Larry Richman

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Planning a wedding is a joyful and sacred experience, especially for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Whether you are preparing for a temple sealing or a civil ceremony, this guide offers tips and resources to help couples, parents, and Church leaders make it a meaningful and memorable celebration.

The purpose of this guide is to help you make decisions and plan details of your wedding so that your special day can be memorable and you can focus on your spouse and the guests who attend.

Plan with simplicity in mind. Couples who make their wedding and reception too elaborate often find that it adds to the stress and detracts from the importance of this special day.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

COUNSEL AS A COUPLE

Before diving into wedding planning, take time as a couple to discuss your shared vision for marriage.

Talk openly about expectations around roles, communication, finances, and spiritual goals.

Consider creating a budget together—not just for the wedding, but for your future life. Discuss topics like debt, savings, tithing, and financial priorities.

The Church's manual [*Personal Finances for Self-Reliance*](#) can help guide these conversations. Setting goals now will strengthen your foundation and help you navigate challenges with unity.

SET A BUDGET

Determine the budget for the wedding and discuss how expenses will be shared. Don't let other people's

expectations make you go into debt. If your families are paying for some expenses, encourage them to communicate regularly about it. You will likely need to prioritize your budget. What do you value the most? Photos? Wedding dress? Venue? Food? This will help you make decisions when you need to economize on some aspects of the wedding. Create a spreadsheet to track the budget and actual expense of each item, along with the date paid.

MEET WITH YOUR BISHOP

Your bishop plays a key role in helping you prepare spiritually for marriage. Schedule a meeting early in your engagement to discuss temple worthiness, expectations for a temple sealing, and any questions you may have. He may recommend temple preparation classes or provide counsel on strengthening your relationship.

Ask him how often he wants to meet with you. It may take several meetings to cover everything necessary. An early meeting can confirm that you qualify for a temple sealing. (See *General Handbook* "[Sealing Policies](#)" 38.4.1.) You can also discuss the timing of receiving your endowment, if you have not already. A final meeting several weeks before the ceremony will be needed with your bishop and stake president to receive a living ordinance temple recommend for the sealing.

PREPARE SPIRITUALLY

Before jumping into planning for the wedding and reception, take time to prepare yourself for a spiritual experience in the temple. The Church provides online resources to help you prepare to enter the House of the Lord and make your experience more personal and meaningful.

- [About the Temple Endowment](#)
- [About Temple Sealings](#)

LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

- [Prepare for the House of the Lord](#)
- [The Family: A Proclamation to the World](#)
- “[Temples](#)” special edition of the *Ensign* magazine, October 2010
- [See What Happens in Temples](#) video
- [Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple](#)

If you feel you need more preparation, your bishop can organize temple preparation classes, or you can attend a temple preparation institute class. You may also wish to read your patriarchal blessing again.

EARLY DECISIONS

CHOOSE A TEMPLE OR CIVIL WEDDING

Decide whether you'll be sealed in the temple or have a civil ceremony. Temple sealings require that both you and your fiancé hold current temple recommends. You may choose a civil ceremony if one of you is not a member of the Church, has not been a member for at least a year, or is not yet ready to enter the temple. Even if you and your fiancé are prepared and worthy, you may choose a civil marriage first, with a temple sealing afterward. In some countries, the law requires a couple to be married legally before being sealed in the temple. Before announcing a temple wedding, meet with the bishop to be sure both you and your fiancé qualify for a temple sealing. (See *General Handbook* “[Sealing Policies](#)” 38.4.1.)

SCHEDULE DATES AND VENUES

If you choose a temple sealing, you can be sealed in any of the Church's temples. Use the [Church's Temples website](#) to find temple locations and availability. Contact the temple early to reserve a date and time. Find out how many people the

sealing room can accommodate so you will know how many guests you can invite to the ceremony.

Civil ceremonies may be held in a church building, home, or other venue. Schedule a time for the venue and confirm the availability of the person who will officiate at the ceremony.

Also book locations for a wedding breakfast or luncheon and a reception or open house.

CONFIRM WHO WILL OFFICIATE AT THE WEDDING CEREMONY

For temple sealings, the temple will assign a sealer. If you have a preferred sealer, you may request him, but availability isn't guaranteed.

Acting bishops and stake presidents are authorized by the Church to perform civil ceremonies, but you need to confirm that the local government recognizes their authority.

ARRANGE FOR TIME OFF WORK OR SCHOOL

Make sure your coworkers, manager, and teachers know how long you will be away for your wedding and honeymoon.

DETERMINE WHERE YOU WILL LIVE AFTER THE WEDDING

Counsel with your fiancé to determine a comfortable place to live after you are married, considering your budget, including furniture and appliances needed. File a change of address with the post office and transfer the utilities into your name.

NEXT STEPS

CHOOSE A PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER

Capture memories with someone who understands your values. Consider your budget and your need for engagement photos, bridal photos, temple photos, and reception photos. Discuss with the photographer the kinds of shots you would like at various venues. Consider a possible second person to take candid photos on the temple grounds and at the reception.

Since timelines may be hectic between the ceremony and the reception, create a list ahead of time of what photos you want with whom. Plan a timeline with the photographer and give it to a family member or friend who can organize people into groups so that the photos can happen efficiently.

CREATE A GUEST LIST

Determine who you want to invite to the wedding ceremony, wedding breakfast (or lunch), and reception. Consider how many people each venue can accommodate and how many people your budget can cover.

When collecting addresses, send an email or an invitation on social media with a link to a Google form. That way, people can type their own addresses, and it will save you time and stress. You can use the form to log for each guest when you send the announcement and when the guests RSVP.

DESIGN AND SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS

Many websites and printing companies offer design ideas. Include reception details, RSVP info, and dress

code, if needed. Send invitations 6–8 weeks before the wedding so people have time to arrange to attend.

Consider an enclosure for guests you invite to the sealing ceremony with information specific to the sealing. If you plan to send physical thank-you notes, order them as well.

Also consider if you want to place your wedding announcement in the local newspaper. Some couples create a wedding webpage with information about how you met, event details, registry links, and travel information.

CREATE A GIFT REGISTRY

Choose stores that offer online registries. Select practical items you will need to start your home together. Consider options for experiences or charitable donations. Be sure to include the gift registry information in the wedding announcement.

SELECT A GROOM'S RING

Determine whether he would like to pick it out himself or have it come as a surprise.

PREPARE SCHEDULES

Create a calendar to keep track of important events, such as showers, luncheons, and other wedding-related appointments. Create a timeline of events for the wedding day to be sure you have time to do everything you plan.

SCHEDULE DOCTOR'S EXAMS

It is advisable that both you and your fiancé have physical exams to make sure you are healthy. This is also a good time to learn about contraception options and ask any questions you may have.

LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

OBTAIN A MARRIAGE LICENSE

Before being sealed in the temple or married civilly, you will need a marriage license from the county where you will be married. This license makes your marriage legal. Check the county clerk's office for requirements. Both you and your fiancé may need to appear in person, pay a fee, and provide paperwork, such as birth certificates, social security cards, and driver's licenses. The marriage license may only be valid for 3–60 days, so plan to get it several days before the wedding to avoid last-minute stress. Some counties also have a waiting period after getting the license before you can be married. After your wedding, this license is signed and returned to the county, and they send you a marriage certificate, the official document that shows you are legally married.

PLAN FOR HAIRSTYLING, MANICURE, PEDICURE

The bride may want to schedule time before the wedding day to relax and prepare for the big day with a manicure and pedicure. She may want to spend time with the bridesmaids and prepare for the wedding at the same time. The groom may also want to get a haircut to look sharp.

WEDDING ATTIRE

WEDDING DRESS

For a temple sealing, a bride's dress must be white (not off-white, ivory, or cream), modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. It should cover the temple garment, and sheer fabric should be lined. The dress should have long sleeves or three-quarter sleeves, and dresses should not

have a train unless it can be pinned up or removed for the sealing ceremony. The temple can provide a dress if desired. (See *General Handbook*, "[Appropriate Clothing for a Temple Sealing](#)" 27.3.2.6.)

GROOM'S ATTIRE

The groom wears normal temple clothing during the sealing ceremony. He may wear formal clothing outside the temple for photographs after the ceremony. (See *General Handbook*, "[Appropriate Clothing for a Temple Sealing](#)" 27.3.2.6.) The groom may choose a suit or tuxedo that fits the formality of the reception. Coordinate colors with the wedding theme and bridal party.

BRIDESMAIDS AND GROOMSMEN CLOTHING

Select modest, coordinated outfits that reflect your style. Consider letting attendants and groomsmen choose their own attire within a color palette. These outfits should not be worn inside the temple.

GUESTS' CLOTHING

Those who attend a sealing ceremony should wear clothing like they would wear to a sacrament meeting. They should avoid wearing clothing that is casual or that does not cover the temple garment. They should also avoid wearing clothing that is overly formal, like tuxedos. Share this information with guests well before the sealing.

ENDOWMENT

DETERMINE WHEN TO RECEIVE YOUR ENDOWMENT

If you have not already received your endowment, discuss with your bishop and family when you would like to receive it. Some people do it before their

LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

wedding day to relieve some of the pressure of the wedding day.

CHOOSE AN ESCORT

Ask someone to be your escort. It can be a parent, close friend, or other family member of the same sex who will be at your side throughout the experience.

TEMPLE SEALING

RING EXCHANGE

Exchanging rings is not part of the temple sealing ceremony. However, you may exchange rings after the ceremony in the sealing room. If you have family members who are unable to attend a temple sealing, you may decide to exchange rings later (but not on the temple grounds) so they may experience it with you. The ring exchange should be consistent with the dignity of a temple sealing and should not replicate any part of the sealing ceremony. You should not exchange vows after being sealed in the temple. If you are married civilly before your temple sealing, you may choose to exchange rings at your civil ceremony, at your temple sealing, or at both ceremonies. (See *General Handbook*, "[Exchanging Rings after a Temple Sealing](#)", 27.3.2.7.)

HOST OR HOSTESS FOR GUESTS

Arrange for someone to be with those waiting outside the temple, including children.

MENTAL NOTES

Since you will be thinking of so many things in the moment, after your temple sealing you may not remember much of the advice the temple sealer gave you. Therefore, you may want to ask a friend or two who will attend the ceremony to take mental

notes of what they hear. They cannot take written notes in the temple, but afterwards, they could write down what they remember and share it with you.

WEDDING BREAKFAST OR LUNCHEON

MEAL

Determine if you will have an organized meal before or after the ceremony. If so, determine the location and guest list.

RECEPTION OR OPEN HOUSE

An open house can be less formal and less expensive than a formal reception. Think about your budget and the number of people you want to invite. If you and your fiancé are from different cities, consider whether you will have a reception or open house in one or both locations.

VENUE

Consider the church cultural hall, backyard, restaurant, or rented venue. Church buildings are free but must be reserved through your ward or stake. Backyard weddings offer intimacy, while rented venues provide professional amenities. If you plan an outdoor reception, have a back-up plan in case of bad weather. Consider your guest count and budget.

FOOD

Catering simplifies logistics, but do-it-yourself options can save money. Choose foods that are easy

LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

to serve and accommodate dietary needs. Ask family members or friends to help. You will need to give a caterer an approximate number of guests, then confirm that number after guests RSVP.

DECOR, THEME, AND FLOWERS

Pick a theme and colors that reflect your personality and values. Keep decor simple and budget-friendly, especially in church buildings.

Flowers add beauty and symbolism to your wedding day. Choose blooms that reflect your personality, wedding colors, or spiritual meaning—like lilies for purity or roses for love. Consider working with a local florist or explore do-it-yourself options using silk or seasonal flowers to save money. Remember that not all flowers are available in all seasons. Consider the bride's bouquet, boutonnières for the groom and groomsmen, and corsages for bridesmaids, mothers, and grandmothers. You cannot wear flowers during a sealing ceremony, but you may for photographs on the temple grounds after the ceremony. Be sure your guests are advised before the wedding day.

PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

Plan what you will do, including speeches, dancing, and cake cutting. Share the schedule with vendors and helpers. Keep things flexible to allow for spiritual moments and family interaction.

MUSIC

Choose uplifting, clean music that fits your style. Live performers add elegance, while DJs offer variety. The most budget-friendly option is to ask a family member to create a playlist.

CAKE OR DESSERT TABLE

Whether you opt for a traditional tiered cake or a dessert buffet, make sure it fits your budget and guest count. Many couples choose a small

ceremonial cake for cutting and serve sheet cake or cupcakes to guests. Include allergy-friendly options like gluten-free or nut-free treats.

GUEST BOOK

A guest book is a keepsake that captures the love and support of your family and friends. Alternatives like photo books, message boards, or video recordings can add a creative touch. Consider prompts like "Share your best marriage advice" or "Write a blessing for the couple." Place it near the entrance with clear signage so guests don't miss it.

FAVORS

Wedding favors are a small, optional way to thank guests for celebrating with you. Popular LDS-friendly ideas include scripture bookmarks, mini treats, or personalized items like magnets or keychains. Keep them simple and meaningful and consider including a note of gratitude. Do-it-yourself favors can be a fun way to involve family or friends to prepare them.

SEATING CHART

If your reception includes a sit-down meal, a seating chart, place cards, and table numbers will help guests find their place and ensure smooth service. Group guests by family, age, or shared interests to encourage conversation. Tools like the free AllSeated app can help you design your layout.

TRANSPORTATION

If your ceremony and reception are in different locations, plan transportation for the bridal party and key guests. Renting a car or shuttle can simplify logistics and add a touch of elegance. Make sure drivers know the schedule and routes and consider providing maps or directions on your invitations or wedding website.

LATTER-DAY SAINT WEDDING PLANNER

HELPERS

Ask family, friends, or ward members to help. Create a checklist and assign roles. Express gratitude with thank-you notes or small gifts. You may want to assign at least two people to each task so they can take turns and enjoy the event.

POST-WEDDING

HONEYMOON

Choose a honeymoon destination that fits your budget and your shared interests and values. Whether it is a temple tour, nature retreat, or cultural getaway, plan early to get the best deals. Many couples stay locally the night after the ceremony and then travel to a honeymoon destination the next day. Keep the focus on rest, connection, and celebration. If you plan to travel internationally, arrange for passports early.

THANK-YOU NOTES

Send handwritten or digital thank-you notes within a few weeks of the wedding. Mention specific gifts or acts of service, and express heartfelt gratitude. Consider using a spreadsheet to track gifts and addresses.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Update your name on social media, Social Security card, driver's license, insurance policies, and bank and investment accounts. Keep copies of your marriage license handy for verification. Name your new spouse as the beneficiary on each of these accounts. If you don't yet have a will, now is a good time to write one and name a guardian for your future children.

INSURANCE POLICIES

Obtain appropriate insurance policies in the name of both spouses. Consider health, life, homeowners or renters, and auto insurance.

CHURCH RECORDS

After the wedding, contact your ward clerk to update your name, marital status, and household information. This ensures accurate records for callings, communication, and temple work. You can also update your profile on the Member Tools app and on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. If you have moved, request the clerk to transfer your records to your new ward.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [A Wedding Planning Guide](#). Includes checklists, budget tools, timeline guides, and planning books. All for a minimum donation of \$7.
- [The Complete Wedding Planner for Latter-day Brides](#).
- [Your LDS Wedding Planner: A Guide to a Stunning Wedding](#).