

# Christian and jewish marriage customs religion essay



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Christian weddings usually take place in a Church. Like weddings around the world, rituals and traditions of a Christian wedding can be divided into terms of pre-wedding, wedding, and post-wedding rituals. Friends and family members of the bride and bridegroom participate to add joy to the wedding celebrations. The basic set of rituals of a Christian wedding usually remains the same, regional variations can be observed as communities tend to be influenced by the tradition of land they are living in.

Traditionally, a Christian bride wears a white gown in western style and the groom wears a suit. The bride's head is covered with a white veil and a crown – a tiara or a bunch of white flowers, and she holds a flower bouquet in her hand.

#### Pre-Wedding and Wedding Rituals

Bridal Shower-Bridal Shower is one of the major pre-wedding customs of a Christian Wedding. This is a fun-filled and entertaining informal hen party, which is hosted by the bride's female friends. It is mainly a female get-together with songs, dance and joyful game sessions. Friends and relatives present gifts to the bride-to-be and give blessings for a happy married life. Following the tradition, the bride serves a pink cake to all present.

Uniqueness of the cake is that there is a thimble hidden inside this cake. It is believed that a girl who receives the piece of cake with a thimble will be the next to get married.

Bachelor's Party-Bachelor's Party is the opposite version of the Bridal Shower and is hosted by the groom for his friends. It is essentially a stag party organized on the eve of the wedding or a couple of days before the wedding

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where the groom is expected to enjoy his last evening as a bachelor. A Bachelor's Party typically begins by raising a toast before the drinking begins in earnest. It is mostly celebrated to have fun and enjoyment with close friends.

**Welcoming The Bride**-The ceremony of welcoming the bride is conducted on the day of the wedding. The groom sends a car to pick up the bride and waits for her outside the church. Following the tradition, when the bride arrives, the Best Man welcomes her with a kiss on either cheek and hands her a bouquet of flowers. Following this ritual, the couple walks down the aisle slowly and gracefully accompanied by the wedding procession. Inside the church, the couple walks up to the place where the priest stands for the wedding mass. The priest then welcomes them and offers his best wishes.

**The Wedding Mass**-When everyone is seated, the priest begins the wedding mass with hymns and selected reading from the bible. The priest then delivers the homily, with an emphasis on the sanctity of marriage. The next most important ritual is the blessings and the exchange of wedding rings and marriage vows by the couple. The wedding rings are first blessed by the priest in belief that it there will be everlasting love and an earnest faith. A Christian Wedding ceremony comes to an end with the final blessings of the priest. Then towards the end, the guests shower their blessings on the newlywed couple. Finally, the newlywed couple signs the register and walks down the aisle arm in arm.

**Post-Wedding Reception**-Reception is the most vibrant and sought after occasion organized after a Christian Wedding. As the newlywed couple

enters a grand reception ceremony they are welcomed by all with a shower of confetti. Following the tradition, the happy couple also cut a wedding cake and feed each other a bite of the first slice. The Toastmaster proposes a toast in honor of the couple. The reception is mostly celebrated with dance and dinner party. Some people also arrange for a live band performance where everybody dances to the tune of the band.

## **Jewish Marriage Customs**

In Jewish marriage customs, the betrothal is as binding as marriage. It can only be undone by divorce on proper grounds—such as the bride not being found a virgin. Next in the ceremonial order is the placement of the sealed cup of acceptance before the bride and groom as per the ancient Jewish Wedding custom during the betrothal ceremony.

You will be surprised to know that the groom actually proposes to the bride during this ceremony! The groom is expected to pour out the wine from the cup for his bride and wait for her to drink it as a token of her love for him and acceptance of his marriage proposal. This cup is looked at as a blood covenant. If the bride drinks the wine, the celebration begins with the groom giving his gifts to the bride. The groom then leaves the bride to prepare the Chuppah. The bride promises to wait for him.

In the interregnum between the betrothal and the wedding, the groom has certain jobs to complete. You may be surprised to know that the Chuppah or Huppah is to be prepared by the groom with his own hands. This is a canopy that is prepared by the groom at his home to receive his bride as per the dictates of the ancient Jewish marriage customs. It is also the honeymoon

room in the groom's house, where the wedding is consummated. You will also note that it is symbolized by the chuppah or canopy under which the wedding ceremony is conducted. Significantly the groom is not allowed to lack on the quality of work in preparing this room or canopy.

The preparations have to be approved by the groom's father before he can consider it ready for his bride. The groom, therefore, cannot declare with any certainty the date of his wedding. It is incumbent upon the approval of the Chuppah by his father. Consequently you will find that as per the Ancient Jewish marriage customs the groom must answer " Only my father knows" to any query regarding the date of his wedding. The bride spoken for or betrothed will spend the time between the betrothal and the wedding under a veil whenever she steps out of the house.

### **The Nissuin or the Marriage**

The Jewish wedding ceremony is called the Nissuin. As we said above, you will note that the date will be fixed whenever the groom's father considers the Chuppah ready to receive the bride. This can happen at any time so in ancient Jewish marriage custom, the term Nissuin also refers to the abduction of the bride from the home of her father. Consequently the bride must be ready for her groom at all times after the betrothal ceremony. She must keep her lamp, her veil and other things she needs beside her bed. Her bridesmaids must also be ready with oil in their lamps.

The groom needs to shout " Shofar" as he nears the house of the bride. The purpose is to warn the bride that the groom is coming to claim her and she must be ready to leave to her new home! As with wedding around the world,

you will note that the bride and the groom are richly attired and crowned. They pledge themselves to eternal happiness. All guests are then invited to participate in the marriage feast.

### **A Quaint Custom and Virginity of Bride**

The bride and the groom spend seven days continuously, in the honeymoon chamber prepared by the groom. The groom's best friend stands guard outside the chamber to receive the news that the marriage has been consummated and the proof of the first intercourse is to be testified to by the blood on the bed sheets.

You may note that the ancient Jewish marriage customs dictate that blood on the sheets is an indication that the bride is a virgin and the marriage is pure. It is also a blood covenant that the bride and groom have been joined in marriage. The guests will continue the celebrations for seven days till the bride and groom emerge from the chamber. A final wedding supper is then held on the seventh day.