**Unity Ceremonies**

**Unity Sand Ceremony**

**The most beautiful example of this partnership is the marriage relationship. You have committed here today to share the rest of your lives with each other. This relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand. One, representing you, (Bride) and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, and the other representing you,(Groom), and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be.**

**As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so your marriage will be united as one for all of your days.**

**Unity Candle Ceremony**

**Part 1**

**As a sign of commitment from the families, let me invite the mothers to make their way over to the unity candle. The light of these candles represents the warmth and fragility of love. As you light these separate candles, let us reflect on the significance today. Prior to this moment, your families each walked a separate path. The families are well represented, and we celebrate their individual strengths. Their candle is one unit with two wicks; symbolizing that even in unity they can remain individuals. They will become one family, but each brings uniqueness to their union.**

**Part 2 Completion of Unity Candle Ceremony**

**(Bride and Groom light the candles)**

**With flames taken from the candles their mothers lit (Bride) & (Groom) light one candle together. (Bride and Groom slowly light the center candle) Their candle is one unit with two wicks; symbolizing that even in unity they can remain individuals. They will become one family, but each brings uniqueness to their union.**

**Wine Box**

**Wine Box Sample Text 1**

**(Bride) and (Groom) found (or made) a strong wooden box to hold a bottle of wine and each of them wrote a love-letter to the other; expressing their feelings, why and how they fell in love, and their hopes for the future. They kept these letters secret, and they will seal them in the box with the bottle of wine.**

**They are going to open the box every anniversary. They will drink the wine and read the letters, remembering all the wonderful things that happened today and during their first year as a married couple. They will then put in a new bottle of wine, place the letters back inside and reseal it. Every year in celebration of their love Bryan and Amanda have promised to open the box, drink the wine together and read the letter that they wrote to each other in preparation for today, as a reminder of their love.**

**Wine Box Sample Text 2**

**“Like good wine, a great love will deepen and mature with age. As a part of today’s ceremony, (Groom) and (Bride) have captured their thoughts leading up to this day in personal notes to each other. Also, they have asked their parents to compose notes, containing their thoughts and their most important piece of advice to the couple as they journey through life together. These notes will be sealed in this box to be opened and shared together with a bottle of wine on every anniversary celebration.**

**It is at this time I would ask the parents to come forward and place their note and a bottle of wine inside this box.**

**And I now ask that (Bride) and (Groom) place their letters to each other with a bottle of wine. On that joyous day next year, they will get to reflect on the events and emotions they shared on this wonderful day. Should you ever find your marriage in serious trouble, the wine and love letters would be there to help. (Groom) and (Bride) have promised to open the box, drink the wine together and read the letter that they wrote to each other in preparation for their nuptials, as a reminder of their love before making any rash choices or decisions to separate,. I will now seal the box.”**

**Wine Box Sample Text 3**

**In the living room of my next-door neighbor’s house is a wooden crate. It is nothing fancy, just pieces of plywood nailed together. (Bride) and (Groom) keep the box in a place of honor by the fireplace as a constant reminder of their commitment to each other. When (Bride) and (Groom) took their vows of marriage four years ago, they incorporated a new twist into their celebration: It is called the wine box, and I wanted to share this beautiful idea.**

**They found a strong wooden box to hold two bottles of wine and two wine glasses. Each of them wrote a love-letter to the other, expressing their feelings, why and how they fell in love, and their hopes for the future. They kept these letters secret and they sealed them in the box.**

**During their wedding ceremony, the officiant told the couple that they could open the box on their anniversary, in celebration of their love. If the pair should ever find their marriage in serious trouble, the wine and love letters would be there to help. In the wine box ceremony, they have promised to open the box, drink the wine together and read the letter that they wrote to each other, as a reminder of their love.**

**Hand Binding/ Fasting Ceremony**

**Sample Text (adapted from "The Blessing of the Hands," revised by Reverend Daniel L. Harris)**

**These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, 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 countless times wipe the tears form 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 to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch. With this cord, I bind (Groom) and (Bride) to the vows they make to each other. The knots of this binding are not formed by this cord, but by your vows. You hold in your hands and hearts the making or breaking of this union. May your marriage be blessed with patience and dedication, forgiveness and respect, love and understanding.**

**Tree Planting Sample Text**

**(Groom) and (Bride) will now take part in a Tree Planting Ceremony. In doing so, they symbolize the roots of their relationship and the continued growth of their love, as they become each other’s family today.**

**Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and to change.**

**Let your relationship and your love for each other be like this tree you plant today. Let it grow tall and strong. Let it stand tall during the harsh winds, rains and storms and still come through unscathed. Like a tree, your marriage must be resilient. It must weather the challenges of daily life and the passage of time. And just like the tree you are planting; marriage requires constant nurturing and nourishment.**

**After the ceremony, the couple plants the tree in at their home or a special location to symbolize the putting down of roots, longevity, and strength in their marriage.**