

Unification Church Wedding Ceremony

The central practice of the Unification Church is the **Blessing Ceremony**, popularly known as “mass weddings.” The ceremony has five steps, three of which take place in the mass gatherings:

1. Chastening Ceremony: The husband and wife chasten each other three times from the position of God. This cleanses them of historical sin and lays the foundation for a "new life of pure love."

2. Holy Wine Ceremony: The officiator gives the Holy Wine to the woman, who bows to him and drinks half of it. She then gives the Holy Wine to her husband who bows to her and drinks the remainder. He bows and gives the empty cup to his wife who bows and returns it to the officiator. This restores the couple to the position of Adam and Eve before the fall.

3. Holy Blessing Ceremony: In this part of the ceremony, the couple become married (or re-dedicated, if already married). They are sprinkled with Holy Water, which represents the rebirth of the husband and wife as a blessed couple. Then the couples recite vows to consummate the ideal of the creation of God as an eternal husband and wife, to be monogamous, to rear their children to live up to the Will of God, and to love the people of the world as God does. Rings are exchanged. The officiator proclaims the participants husband and wife “standing within the realm of God's original and eternal Blessing.”

4. Separation Period: In marked contrast to the traditional honeymoon, the newlyweds observe 40 days of sexual abstinence “just as Jesus began his mission on the foundation of forty days of fasting.”

5. The Three-Day Ceremony: The Church website does not go into detail on this ceremony, but states that it is “the completion of sanctification, in which the couple is restored to the position of true husband and wife. Over a three-day period, the wife gives rebirth to her husband from the position of mother and then receives him in the position of wife. Then in the position of father, the husband gives rebirth to his wife and receives her in the position of husband. Through this process, God breathes into the couple a new conjugal life.”

The Blessing Ceremony was originally only for Unification members and for those who were getting married for the first time, usually in a pairing arranged by the Church. It is now open to people of any faith and those who are already married, but the majority of participants in the Blessing Ceremony are still members of the Unification Church and many of the **marriages are arranged** by the Church along with the couple's parents. This has been controversial in the West, but is much more common practice in the East. Reverend Moon encourages international marriages as a means of spreading true families, true love and world peace across the planet.

