



R.E Ideas

Summer Term 2006

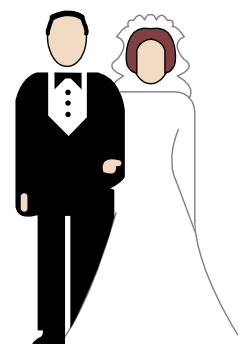
Price £1.00

Susan Murrell, Old Colwyn

Rites of Passage - Marriage



Christianity is the main focus of all R.E. teaching, but it is interesting to look at how all the religions celebrate marriage.



Christianity

Christians want to have their marriage blessed by God and the ceremony takes place in the Church.

Traditionally the bride wears a white dress and has a veil covering her face. She carries a bouquet of flowers. She is attended by bridesmaids who wear matching dresses and carry posies of flowers. The bride can also be attended by pageboys.

The groom wears a smart suit. He has a 'best man', who supports him and takes charge of the wedding rings.

The bride is taken into Church by her Father who 'gives her away'. The couple exchange rings and make public vows to each other. Everyone sings hymns; there are prayers and a short talk about marriage based on a Bible reading.

As the ceremony draws to a close the couple go to the Vestry to sign the marriage register and then process out of the church as man and wife.

Friends and family gather around and take photographs and throw confetti.

The families invite guests to witness the service, and then enjoy a meal with the couple called the 'Reception', or 'Wedding Breakfast'. They have a wedding cake [often 3 tiers], which they cut at the Reception.

Family and friends give gifts or money to the couple, to help them set up their new home. Friends who have not been invited to the Reception are often sent a piece of wedding cake.



[Sometimes the top tier of the cake is kept for the Christening of their first child].

Traditionally the couple go away on holiday together; this is called a 'Honeymoon'.



Buddhism

Marriage and family life are important to Buddhists but there is no religious ceremony to mark a marriage. The couple are usually married at a registry office and then go to a monastery where they offer food and ask the Sangha [religious community] for a blessing.

Hinduism

The ceremony usually takes place in the bride's home, or the mandir. The bride wears a red sari and has mendhi patterns painted on her hands and feet. The groom wears a flower garland and a veil of tassels. A Brahmin conducts the ceremony and recites verses from the Vedas.

The couple's hands are tied together by a cord. They take seven steps around the sacred fire - these steps represent food, strength, wealth, fortune, children, seasons and friendship.

Judaism

At a Jewish wedding a huppah [canopy] is held over the couple to represent their new home together. They make a statement of legal responsibility, and then the groom gives the bride a ring.



Prayers are said, the ketubah [marriage contract] is read and the Sheva Berachot [seven blessings] is sung. At the end of the ceremony the groom smashes a glass with his foot and everyone shouts 'Mazel Tov!' [Good luck].

Islam

In many Muslim countries people marry after an agreement between their families, rather than because they have fallen in love. Arranged marriages are still widely accepted. The marriage contract is between the bride's father and the groom. The groom promises to provide for and protect his wife.

A Muslim marriage usually takes place in the home or mosque. The couple give their consent to the marriage before two witnesses. During the ceremony there are readings from the Qur'an. The Aqd Nikah [contract of marriage] is spoken as well as written. The bride and groom sign three

copies of this. The groom gives mahr [a sum of money], some property, or another valuable gift to the bride and this remains her property for life.

Sikhism

In the Sikh religion both men and women are equal.

The men from both families meet at the Gurdwara and exchange presents before joining the service.

The groom sits on the floor before the Guru Granth Sahib and everyone sings hymns.

The bride's father puts garlands of flowers around the necks of the bride and groom and on the holy book.

The bride wears a traditional red and gold costume, with a scarf on her head.

A Sikh will officiate.

The bride and groom bow to the Guru Granth Sahib to show that they understand their duties.

The bride's father links the two by tying their scarves together. The couple then walk around the Guru Granth Sahib 4 times.

The bride's mother gives her new son-in-law some sweets.



RESOURCES from REMW (*Religious Education Movement Wales*)

Resources Catalogue, Publications and past copies of '*R.E. Ideas*' available

PUBLICATIONS:

Primary -

Adegau Arbennig
Y Nadolig – o flwyddyn i flwyddyn
Iesu - Ei bwysigrwydd i gredinwyr;
Mannau Arbennig – Eu harwyddocad i gredinwyr

Secondary – *What the Welsh Churches say on moral and social issues;*
Barn yr Eglwysi ar faterion moesol a chyndeithasol.

General: *More than Just RE (CEMW Annual Lectures)*

Discounts available to schools in contributing Authorities and all students

Contact: Sali Roberts, REMW, Patshyn, Rhiwgwreiddyn, Ceinws, MACHYNLLETH SY20 9EX
(Tel/Fax: 01654 - 761 697) e mail: Sali@patshyn.fsnet.co.uk