

Ethnic Traditions

African Jumping the Broom

Jumping the Broom

The broom is laid down before the Bride and Groom as they turn around after the Introduction.

Judge Armstrong – or An older relative reads:

Jumping the broom is an African tradition dating back to before the first Europeans visited West Africa. It should be practiced by all in honor and respect to our African and African American ancestors and heritage. This "leap" in to new life as husband and wife symbolizes the coming together of both families, and commitment to each other as husband and wife. It represents strength, love, togetherness, loyalty, and respect which is essential for a successful marriage.

The broom handle represents God or the creator. The straws represent the countless numbers of ancestors. The binding represents the newlyweds ties to family, church and community.

The concept behind the broom is also to build an heirloom that can be passed down from one generation to another.

The Bride and Groom jump the Broom.

Chinese Tea Ceremony

Chinese Tea Ceremony

Grm and Bde will take a tray holding a teapot and four tea cups from a stand next to their parents, and pour tea, and then offer it to the parents. First Bde will hold the tray while Grm pours tea into two tea cups and offers it to Bde's parents. Bde's parents will take a sip of tea from their cups and replace the cups on the tray, along with a red envelope. Then Grm will hold the tray and Bde will repeat the process, offering tea to Grm's parents. After Grm's parents take a sip of the tea, Grm will replace the tray on the stand.

Irish

Irish Exchange of Rings

Grm and Bde have chosen Celtic wedding rings. A Celtic motif wedding ring has universal, symbolic meaning. In the most general sense, the knots express two different paths woven together. Life itself can be viewed as a great web of interconnectedness which is expressed in the knot work. Even our own spiritual path, metaphorically, can be viewed as a tapestry of interconnected experiences. The Celtic wedding ring is a talisman which reminds us, in physical form, of our mystic connection with another person and the great web of life.

Consider the circle. We speak of a circle of friends and live in circular cycles, such as the day and the season. Native cultures throughout the world hold ceremonies in protective circles. A knot work pattern with circles or variations of circles certainly has some important keys to relationships and community. In the broadest sense, the ring itself is a circle, and putting it on has also always been symbolic of sealing a commitment.

Jewish Traditions

Breaking Glass

A glass or a light bulb can be used. The glass may be difficult to break, but a light bulb breaks easy and makes a noise.

Breaking of the Glass

The breaking of a glass at the end of a wedding ceremony serves to remind everyone of two very important aspects of a marriage. The Bride and Groom, and all of us, should consider these marriage vows as an irrevocable act just as permanent and final as the breaking of this glass is unchangeable. But the breaking of the glass is also a warning of the fragility of a marriage. Sometimes a single thoughtless act, breach of trust, or infidelity can damage a marriage in ways that are very difficult to undo just as it would be difficult to undo the breaking of this glass. The glass is shattered to protect this marriage with an implied wish: May your bond of love and respect be as difficult to break as it would be to put together the fragments of this glass.

The Best Man places the glass, wrapped in a white towel, on the floor in front of the Groom.

As the glass is broken, please respond with “Mazel Tov.”

The Groom then smashes the glass with his foot and kisses the Bride.

Another Version

Breaking of the Glass Under Foot

A glass wrapped in a cloth is placed at the Groom’s feet.

And now, Gm, you will break this glass underfoot as an expression of your sharing with family and friends in times of joy and in times of need. Please respond with “Mazel Tov”.

The Groom smashes glass with his foot.

Chuppa

Groom and Bride are standing under a chuppa, a marriage canopy which symbolizes shelter, protection, and a shared home. The open sides indicate a willingness to offer hospitality to family and friends. The open roof serves as a sign that this marriage will be blessed with as many children and grandchildren as stars in the heavens.

The Kiddush Cup

Two thoughts are suggested by this cup of wine. The first is that wine is a symbol of the sweetness we wish for your life. There will be times when you drink from other cups, from bitter ones; but life offers opportunity to savor the sweetness. The awareness of the possibility of a life filled with true meaning is what we toast: the good that is life. The second is that wine is a symbol of sharing. You have shared many years together, and out of this time has grown the love which brought you to this day. As you continue to share in each other's life, you will, as a symbol of this enduring cooperation, share this cup of wine.

The Bride and Groom drink from the wine cup.

Wine is associated with celebration and joy (simchal). Kiddush is a prayer of sanctification. The cup of wine is a cup of joy (simchal). It is to thank God for making us holy through the sanctification of marriage.

Mexican Traditions

Lariat

The Lariat Ceremony is performed right after the Vows and before the Exchange of Rings. A double Rosary was used in one ceremony and a soft decorative rope in others.

The Lariat Ceremony

Grm and Bde would like to honor their Padrinos of the Lasso, () and (), who will now place the two loops of the lasso around the Bride and Groom. This symbolizes that they have chosen as separate individuals to be bonded in marriage, representing a greater union of their souls as well as the union of their families.

(and) will step up while this is being said and place the Lasso around the Bride and Groom and then step down again.

Exchange of Rings

Like the circles of the lasso, a wedding ring has no definable beginning or end. A wedding ring, by its circle, celebrates the continuity of life. By this exchange of rings between you, we wish that at the end of your lives you will look at the two rings and be able to say these two things to each other: "Because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself and, because I have seen the good in you, I have received from you a faith in humanity."

The rings that you have are a symbol of the shared and continually growing love and respect that you have for each other today and in the future as you enter that future as husband and wife.

Another version

The Lasso - El lazo

As part of the ceremony to symbolize unity, a large loop of rosary beads or a lasso (cord) is placed in a figure eight shape around the necks of the couple after they have exchanged their

vows. It also is beautiful when made of entwined orange blossoms (which symbolize fertility and happiness). A double rosary lasso may also be used.

A special person/couple places the lasso around the shoulders of the bride and groom, groom's shoulder's first. The lasso may also be tied around their wrists. The couple wears the lasso throughout the remainder of the service. The loop is symbolic of their love which should bind the couple together everyday as they equally share the responsibility of marriage for the rest of their lives.

At the end of the ceremony, the lasso is removed by either the couple which placed the lasso on the couple, or the officiant. The lasso is given to the Bride as a momento of her becoming the mistress of the groom's heart and home.

The 13 coins - Arrhea

The Arrhea, derived from the Spanish term “earnest money,” symbolizes a pledge to care for one another. The Groom gives 13 coins to the Bride, symbolizing his ability to support and care for her. It is a complete and unrestricted offering of his dedication for her welfare and their welfare as husband and wife. In return, the Bride gives the coins back to the Groom, symbolizing her partnership in supporting and caring for him, as well.

As reader is reading, coin bearer stands up and walks to the center aisle with coins. Groom walks over to meet him/her and takes the coins. Groom then walks and gives coins to Bride, dropping them slowly in her hands

To Groom: Gm, please repeat after me.

Bde, I offer these coins / as a pledge of my dedication to you, / the care of our home / and the welfare of our family.

Bride pauses momentarily, and then places her hands on Groom's, letting the coins fall into his hands.

To Bride: Bde, please repeat after me.

Groom, I offer these coins / as a pledge of my dedication to you, / the care of our home / and the welfare of our family.

Groom then returns them to the Bride, who hands them to the Maid of Honor. Then Bride and Groom face the Officiant.

May you use your gifts wisely for your family's welfare in your married life.

By this act of joining hands, and the exchange of vows, rings and arrhea, you do now solemnly declare, in the presence of God and of these witnesses, that you take each other as husband and wife, and engage to love, and to honor, and to comfort, and to cherish each other, so long as you both shall live.

Another version

The Thirteen Gold Coins - Trece monedas de oro

The madrina de arras holds the 13 coins the BrideGroom presents to the Bride. The coins, or arrhea, was a Roman custom of breaking gold or silver, one half to be kept by the woman and the other half by the man, as a pledge of marriage.

The Groom gives the Bride thirteen gold coins as a symbol of his unquestionable trust and confidence. He pledges that he places all of his goods into her care and safekeeping. Acceptance by the Bride means taking that trust and confidence unconditionally with total dedication and prudence.

The custom of the coins originated in Spain. Thirteen gold coins (arras) are given to the Bride by the BrideGroom, signifying he will support her. Often presented in ornate boxes or gift trays, this represents the Brides dowry and holds good wishes for prosperity. These coins become a part of their family heirloom.

The number 12 represents Christ and his 12 apostles. The coins are presented by a friend or relative (usually the purchaser). Judge Armstrong then hands them to the Bride who places them in the Groom's cupped hands at the beginning of the ceremony. The coins are then placed on a tray and handed to an assistant to be held until later in the ceremony. Near the end of the

ceremony the box and coins are given to the officiant who places the coins in the box and hands them to the Groom.

The Groom will then pour the coins into the Bride's cupped hands and places the box on top. This represents his giving her control as his mistress of all his worldly goods. Sometimes their hands are tied with a ribbon for this portion of the ceremony.

Other Participants

The madrina de copas carries the wine glasses for the toast. Madrinas or padrinos carry a prayer book, a rosary, a guest book for signatures and an embroidered pillow to commemorate the day. There also is a madrina de velacion, who the Bride has chosen to turn to for guidance throughout her married life. Godparents of the Bride and Groom give the couple a prayer book, rosary, and kneeling pillow for the ceremony.

The last persons in the procession carry the recuerdos, which are remembrances given to the guests. In addition there can be several sets of wedding sponsors, similar to Godparents, who look after the couple promising them financial and spiritual aid.

Another version

The Thirteen Coins

The custom of presenting thirteen coins originated in Spain. The number Thirteen represents Christ and his twelve apostles. Thirteen coins are given to the Bride by the Groom, signifying he will support her. This represents the Bride's dowry and holds good wishes for prosperity. These coins shall become a part of their family heirloom.

The Groom gives the Bride thirteen coins as a symbol of his unquestionable trust and confidence. He pledges that he places all of his goods into her care and safekeeping. Acceptance by the Bride means taking that trust and confidence unconditionally with total dedication and prudence.

The Groom pours the coins into the Bride's cupped hands. This represents his giving her control as the mistress of all his worldly goods.

The Bride hands her flowers to the Maid of Honor.
Judge Armstrong assists to pour the coins from the box into the Groom's hands.
The Groom pours the coins into the Bride's hands.
The Bride then places the coins back into the box.

A Polish Tradition

Polish Ceremony

Allison and Brian have chosen to honor their heritage with a Polish tradition, which has been passed down through the centuries. It involves the symbolic sharing of bread, salt, wine, and a silver coin.

Bread

As you eat this piece of bread,

The Bride and Groom each take a piece of bread.

may you never go hungry or be in need.

Wine

As I give you this sip of wine,

The Bride and Groom each drink a sip from the same glass.

enjoy the sweetness of life with good health, good cheer, and the company of good friends.

Salt

As you place a speck of salt on each other's tongue,

The Bride and Groom place salt on each other's tongues.

may you overcome the bitterness of life.

Silver Coin

As I give you this silver coin to hold between your right hands together,

Judge Armstrong gives the Bride and Groom a silver coin.

may you be wealthy and abundant.