



Contemporary Trends

Today's ceremonies are often personalized with wedding ceremonies performed in friendly, less formal tones; more directly to the bride and groom. There is more interaction with families. Brides (and grooms) are often escorted down the aisle by both parents.

The wedding party may face the guests, or sit on specially placed benches rather than standing in a line with their backs to the guests. Most formal and semi-formal ceremonies are still held in religious institutions, but a surprising number (both religious and civil) are held in picturesque indoor or outdoor locations.

Be innovative about the receiving line, but don't forego it entirely unless you have an alternative plan for the couple and parents to personally greet each guest. For instance, couples may whisk back up the aisle after the ceremony to receive each guest as they exit their pews; parents may greet them in an outer room. Or, receive guest outdoors in pleasant weather.

Brides and grooms might decide to visit every guest table at the reception, if there hasn't been a formal "line". Parents should do likewise.

A reception no longer means "eat dinner, have a piece of cake, three dances, and leave early." It's a real celebration. Hold your reception somewhere unique and interesting so guests can tour the facilities or gardens in an after-dinner stroll. Provide additional entertainment before, during and after dinner, and throughout the evening.

Dinner music, strolling musicians, video or slide presentations of the couples' lives, or a humorous magician to entertain children and adults will keep the enjoyment level high. DJs and band leaders become masters of ceremonies to lead group dances. Have dance musicians vary the pace with fast, slow and group dances. The key to keeping your guests from thinking it's time to leave is to keep them entertained and enjoying themselves.