

Tips on Being an Usher

It's your buddy's wedding and you've been chosen as and usher. Piece of cake, no? No, not really.

An usher at a formal wedding must maintain a certain decorum and tend to several important details if he wants to help guarantee a smooth wedding ceremony.

First, an usher should remember to get his clothes ready about a month in advance. Ask the groom where he's registered for the formalwear, and go to the store for a fitting.

Be aware that as an usher you will probably pick up the rental bill, and as a precaution try the outfit on the day you pick it up.

One bit of advice: if you're arriving from another city, get yourself measured at your local formalwear store and have them send your outfit to the city where the wedding is being held so it will be ready for your arrival day.

On the wedding day, arrive at the church an hour early in order to give yourself some time to relax and to think. Go over anything you may have had difficulty with at the rehearsal.

Attend to any last minute details, and start to usher in the guests as soon as a crowd

starts to congregate in front of the church.

When ushering in the guests, always offer your right arm to a woman. Her escort should trail behind you. A male guest arriving alone would walk on your right, and unless the gentleman has some sort of physical ailment, do not proffer your arm.

A few minutes before the processional, escort the groom's parents to the first right pew facing the altar.

Then, usher the bride's mother to the first left pew, second seat in. The aisle seat should be saved for the bride's father after he gives away his daughter.

If parents are divorced, the father should be seated in the third row, with the groom's father on the right aisle and the bride's on the left.

Ushers should seat both sides of the church evenly, with the bride's side at left and the groom's at right. However, if one side is bigger than the other it may be a good idea to integrate the two sides.

After the seating has been completed, lay the pew ribbons and aisle runner at the right moment. (Two ushers should have been chosen for this task at the rehearsal.)

If this is one of your duties, after the bride's mother is seated, walk to the front of the church with the other usher and run the aisle ribbons that are taped to the front pew over the top edges of all the pews.

Secure the ribbons but leave the last two rows open for any late arrivals. After that, both of you should unroll the white runner — go to the foot of the chancel steps, then pick up the roller handles or edges of the runner and walk to the rear, being sure to look straight ahead. If you look back, the runner will get twisted.

The ushers and other members of the processional should be lined up in two's for the march, shoulders almost touching. A distance of four pews should be kept, and lead off with your left foot.

After the recessional, ushers should help empty out the church. Two specially assigned escorts usher out the bride's mother, then the groom's, then the grandmothers.

At last, two ushers release the ribbons up front, two ushers at the back gather them up, and everyone else files out by themselves. If it has previously been agreed upon, two ushers go to the

front of the church and bow each pew out.

After the ceremony,

Victorian Elegance For Today's Bride

The trend toward romantic elegance once popular in the Victorian era is resurfacing today as a prevalent lifestyle motif. Popular with today's bride are ruffled blouses, an interest in collectibles, a grace in entertaining styles and traditional tableware designs.

"Today's bride revives the styles of earlier periods, particularly the Victorian era, to add an individuality and richness to her table settings," explained Charles Solt, design director for Lenox China, which has made the official White House china service for First Lady Nancy Reagan.

"The young hostess has taken the trend for self-expression of the '70s a step further. While in love with the glamour, tradition, and romance of older times, she is also very much the modern woman.

"She prepares her meals with a food processor or cooks in a microwave oven,

but entertains with a more formal and gracious style."

Fine china patterns that continue to be popular with today's brides range from elaborate floral sprays, etched gold bands and oriental motifs to delicate white-on-white and classic gold or platinum-banded designs.

Tablesetting Tips

Tips to the bride on creating table settings that reflect the romantic elegance of the Victorian era are offered by Mr. Solt:

1. Rediscover the old lace tablecloths that you have stored away or purchase a single set of luxurious table linens. This will add elegance to your table.
2. You may also want to consider layering more than one tablecloth over your table for a soft and romantic touch.
3. Group smaller possessions, such as miniature vases, candles or

Remember to return your tux the next day and, last, but most importantly, do have a good time.

figurines, to form a centerpiece or place before each individual setting.

Victorian homes were full of collectibles and memorabilia, nearly covering every surface in view.

3. Keep a wardrobe of tabletop accessories organized and easily accessible.

This collection may include several table linens, placemats, and napkins in a variety of shapes, designs, colors and fabrics; candles in many sizes; vases; baskets; and bowls.

4. Find new purposes for older articles in your homes. A basket filled with flowers or a handmade bed coverlet used as a tablecloth are just a few of the limitless possibilities to decorate your table.

5. Don't be afraid to make a statement with your tabletop design. Decoration of the table adds to the attractiveness and mood of your dinner party and shows your guests that you care.

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