

Fireside White Bible Ceremony

Significance of Ceremony

Every bride-to-be will look forward to the beautiful ceremony for the presentation of a gift Bible. The white Bible, which she may use in her wedding, symbolizes her desire for a Christian home. It reminds the bride and groom of God's love for them and His teachings about the home. It kindles a desire for family worship in which love and understanding are nurtured. The service also points the young woman to the opportunity for continued missionary activities.

A bride's Bible has added significance when it is a gift from Christian friends who love her. Inscribe in the front of the Bible the best wishes of friends, the date, and place of presentation. You may prefer to use a gift card for this purpose.

Occasion of Ceremony

A prenuptial party would be an appropriate time to have this ceremony. Plans may range from an elaborate dinner to a simple gathering, preferably in a home or church room with fireplace. If there is no social hall in your church and no home with a fireplace, and the weather makes an outdoor fire impossible, candles can be used effectively as indicated in the alternate suggestions. Participants may dress in white and carry white tapers tied with green ribbons or clusters of ivy. The latter is most effective to represent growth, and the trailing branches are beautiful silhouetted against the white dresses. If a party is planned, the transition to the ceremony could be made by a song or group of songs.

The Ceremony

Speaker 1: Years ago the hearth was the symbol of the home. The lighting of a new hearth fire was significant. Live coals were brought from the parents' dwelling and placed in trust under the new roof. They were to be kept burning brightly and preserved even during hot summer days to light the fires for cold, winter nights.

(Bride), you are soon to establish with (groom) your own hearth fire. A new light will be burning in the world because of the home you and he are planning to build. We want to symbolize our interest in this

experience by placing on this blazing for branches of various woods. (*Each participant throws wood on fire while speaker continues.*) As the woods crackle and sing, may they speak of the joys you will know as you start your journey through life together.

[*Alternate wording for concluding sentences above: We, your friends, want to symbolize our interest in the experience you are facing by lighting these colored candles, typifying various moods. (Seven members light red, blue, yellow, violet, orange, green, brown candles from counselor's white candle and form semicircle.) As these candles shine and glow, may they speak of the joys you will know as you start your journey through life together.*]

Speaker 1: May your prayers rise as the ascending flames in constant supplication for God's guidance. May the warmth and cheerfulness of your hearth fire radiate to break a bit of the chill and unfriendliness people encounter in the world. May even passing strangers come to know that where you dwell there are peace and goodness and love. May your hearth fire be bright with happiness to share with all who come.

As you recognize the delicate scent of the cedar and pine in the flames, may the hidden fragrance of a kindly heart permeate every activity of your family as you burn your life's energy for their comfort and pleasure.

[*Alternate wording for paragraph above: As you see the light shining from the candles, may the radiance of a kindly heart permeate every activity of your family as you burn your life's energy for their comfort and pleasure.*]

Speaker 2: (Bride), God has not left us without a very present help in the establishment of a Christian home. We have His Word, the Holy Bible, to serve as a guidebook for us. Just as the hearth fire must be refueled to keep it burning brightly, even so must the heart of your home be rekindled with fresh inspiration and truth from its pages. May you drink daily of the living Water which flows from it to those who believe. May you partake of the Bread of life in your home as regularly as you partake of your daily bread. May your house be built upon the rock pictured in the Sermon on the Mount. May your family be witnesses unto the ends of the earth because the messages you read here are the light out your home. (*Participants form circle, each holding a lighted taper lit from the speaker's candle, while someone plays softly "Thy Word Is a Lamp to My Feet" [Baptist Hymnal, 1956*

edition]. *If alternate wording is used, other friends join seven holding candles.*

As God's Word has guided you in your formative years, may it be your strength as He guides you in days to come. May the Bible be your missionary inspiration as you take your place with other women laboring together with God.

In honor of this happy occasion we have used predominantly white and green. May the purity of your love, symbolized by white, continue in growth, symbolized by the green, as you give more and more of yourself in the advancement of the gospel.

Speaker 2: (Bride), the psalmist compared God's Word to a lamp, or a light. The candle has become a symbol of that light to many people. Two women have chosen to set it as the symbol on the shutters of their house so that it can show their children and friends their desire to have God's Word as their light. Tonight you friends form a circle around you, each holding a lighted taper, in an effort to express to you their eagerness that you have God's Word.

In years to come you will be standing in the midst of a family circle. May it never be broken by unbelief, doubt, and selfishness. Reading the Bible in daily family worship will be one strong bond to bind your family circle in everlasting ties of loyalty and love.

I am going to ask everyone present to quote Psalm 119:105 in unison, as a response, while I make a declaration of our hopes for you in the presentation of this gift Bible (*present Bible*).

In the beginning of your wedded life, may you and (groom) take time to read from this Book and say to God as husband and wife:

Response by members: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Speaker 3: In moving into your first house, be it one room or a spacious dwelling, may you resolve to establish immediately family worship, saying to God each day as your house becomes a home:

Response: (As given above)

Speaker 3: If God blesses your union with a child, when you gaze for the first time upon that little miracle of human flesh and realize your

own inadequacy to guide one so tender and precious, may you look to God anew and say:

Response: (As given above)

Speaker 3: As you travel life's road with (groom) and your children, and experiences deepen your love for each other, may your family worship be so firmly established that your children can join you, in joy and sorrow, and say to your Heavenly Father:

Response: (As given above)

Speaker 3: And (bride), as we foresee you and (groom) in later life, we pray that through your daily devotion to God you may be accompanied by goodness and mercy, looking into the face of Jesus and murmuring within the inner recesses of your hearts:

Response: (As given above)

Speaker: Let us pray (Benediction).