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## A Rite Royal Wedding

### Aim:

- To explain the promises made by people marrying in a Christian church

### Introduction

#### The media view

After much hype in the media, and an engagement of six months, William Arthur Philip Louis married Catherine Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Media attention has been focussed on the guests, the security, the spectacle, the fact that the Middleton family is not of Royal descent and, of course, the clothes people would wear.

Perhaps the biggest media hype of all the preparations went into trying to discover who was making Catherine Middleton's wedding dress. The Daily Mail and The Sun between them published a number of stories saying who they thought the dress designer was. But it was nice to have the secret kept until the day, to have one surprise. It's good to know that some things are secret and can be kept that way. 24.5 million television viewers saw the bride's dress a few minutes before the groom saw it. It was about that time we learnt that the dress had been designed by Sarah Burton, from Manchester, who took over as the Alexander McQueen Creative Director in May 2010.

So at 11.00am, with 1,900 guests in attendance, one groom and best man, one bride, proud Dad, bridesmaids and

page boys, and one Archbishop, the proceedings started.

One hour and 15 minutes later the ceremony in the Abbey was all over.

Then the celebrations began in London and across the country. How did you celebrate William and Catherine's wedding?

### Looking Deeper

#### Beyond the hype

What did happen in the service in the Abbey? It contained all the pomp, splendour, music, hymns and words which together created a wonderful spectacle. Was it more than a glorious catwalk of beautifully designed dresses and extravagant hats? In the midst of all the grandeur, the marriage service also contained some important pledges and promises made between Catherine and William and before God.

William said,  
I, William Arthur Philip Louis, take thee, Catherine Elizabeth to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law; and thereto I give thee my troth. He promised to keep Catherine as his wife, no matter what happens in the future to either of them, they will keep God's law concerning marriage and stay together, and he will remain faithful to her.

Catherine made similar promises to William, to stay by him in the good and bad times, to love and cherish him and to remain faithful to him.

They both made their promises in front of their families and friends in the abbey, the millions



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of people watching the service on television, and, most importantly, before their Christian God.

The congregation then prayed for them, asking God for his blessing on them, for his help in enabling them to live together faithfully and in love and peace.

William and Catherine had decided they wanted to get married in church, that it was important for them to make their marriage vows before God, as well as before the millions of people who watched. In a prayer they wrote for the day, they asked God for his help and support in their marriage, for his strength in the years ahead, so inviting him to be present not just at the wedding ceremony, but throughout their married lives.

God our Father, we thank you for our families; for the love that we share and for the joy of our marriage. In the busyness of each day, keep our eyes fixed on what is real and important in life and help us to be generous with our time and love and energy. Strengthened by our union, help us to serve and comfort those who suffer. We ask this in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

For them this part of the day was more than just a ceremony to be got through before the partying could begin.

This is a life-long commitment made by both of them and is the same commitment made by all couples married in Christian churches. Though the language and the ceremony may seem old, the promise that they have made is completely up to date, made on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and to be kept for the rest of their lives.

## Reflection

**Love is ...** 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

## Prayer

Father God, we pray that William and Catherine may grow together, knowing, feeling and experiencing their love for each other and for you.

Amen

## Thought for the day:

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

## Key words:

Asunder, rite, wedding, royal, vows

