

## **Nathan Everett, The Alt Officiant - Sample Ceremony**

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### **The Wedding of Jodi and Dylan**

#### **Welcome Statement**

Welcome, and thank you all for joining us for this joyous occasion.

Together, we are gathered here to witness a truly special ceremony: the union of Jodi and Dylan.

First, I will ask everyone to refrain from using their phones to take pictures of the ceremony, go ahead and put your devices on silent if they aren't already, sit back, and enjoy the ceremony.

Dylan and Jodi, today we celebrate the power of your love and the strength of your bond.

Before we begin, take a moment to look around at the many friendly faces before you.

Know that all are here to offer love, support, and encouragement as you embark on this incredible journey together.

#### **Wedding Sermon**

Marriage is an integral part of the human tradition.

Let us remember, as we stand here before the Universe, that the vows taken today hold great importance, just as they did to our ancestors.

As individuals, we make the choice to enter the union of marriage in order to share all aspects of ourselves with our partner.

Today, this is true for Jodi and Dylan.

There are few greater joys in life than finding someone with whom we truly "click". In that spirit, I will now share a reading on marriage by Edmund O'Neil.

"Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other.

It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal.

It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships.

A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic.

And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life.

Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid.

It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life.

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words.

Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.”

## **Love Story**

Now, I'd like to take some time to share Jodi and Dylan's story with you all, it's important to understand why we're all here, and better yet, why they are here standing across from each other on this beautiful day.

If we go back to the beginning, it all started with Dylan. Nearly 10 years ago, before Jodi and Dylan were even “Jylan”, “Dodi”? No, no, nevermind those don't work so well.

But anyway, Dylan saw Jodi on the campus of Westfield State College and proclaimed out loud, “I'm going to marry that girl”.

This was a bold move and Dylan really meant it, it's not often that college kids are thinking about marriage, but he was inspired.

Onto step one of his master plan, Dylan had to start a conversation with his future wife and he figured what better question to ask someone returning to school than “how was your summer?”.

Asking once became asking twice, which became asking the same question every time Dylan saw Jodi as a running joke, or in this case an eager flirtation.

Jodi remembers this question being asked well over 20 times and admittedly found Dylan annoying, then interesting and kind of funny, then endearing and irresistible.

So if you're taking notes out there, persistence pays off!

Through the years Jodi and Dylan have exemplified what it means to have a partnership, one where they support and push each other to be the best individuals they can be.

Dylan was incredibly proud of Jodi when she graduated with her Master's Degree and achieved her dream of becoming a teacher.

Jodi is proudest of Dylan when he puts others first, he sees a need and jumps right in to help in whatever way he can.

Whether helping someone or not, Jodi also loves that Dylan puts everyone around him at ease and makes them feel comfortable, he's always trying to make people laugh and smile.

For Dylan, Jodi is a person who knows that he has an undeniably strong preference for chocolate over Skittles.

She is caring and nurturing and has always been someone who puts the happiness of others above her own.

He also admires Jodi's humor and wit, she could work a room and leave everyone hysterical if it wasn't for her aversion to being the center of attention.

For each other, these characteristics mean they put the other first, they make each other laugh, they take care of each other, and they seek the best outcome for the other person.

Their relationship is balanced, reciprocal, and filled with mutual admiration and respect.

Dylan and Jodi's relationship has also resulted in a few spin-offs. It's rumored that there are a few bromances happening here, some intermingling of long-time friendships, and complete acceptance and love from family members. Having a support system and a community strengthens us as human beings. All of you have given Dylan and Jodi strength. I'd like to take a minute to express their gratitude in Dylan's own words.

"I want to thank everyone who is here today. I appreciate you taking the time to be here to celebrate with us. Most of you know how hard this year has been for us and I especially want to thank those people who helped us get through the tough times we've faced. I want to tell you all that we love each and every one one of you. I know my mother, who we lost last summer, is watching over us elated that I am marrying Jodi. She adored Jodi. I remember telling her that I was going to propose to her. I brought her into my basement, where I hid the ring, to show her. My mother said "I can't wait to watch you be happy with Jodi. I can't wait for her to be my daughter. You are making the best choice of your life. I love you" I know my father is also watching over us. He never met Jodi but I know he would love her just as much as I do. I could imagine my father joking with Jodi and watching her laugh. I didn't know Jodi's grandmother but from what I hear she was an amazing woman. I know she is watching over her beautiful granddaughter. I did have the opportunity to get to know Jodi's grandfather. I wish he could be here today because I know how happy that would have made her. But, I know he is watching us, smiling with his mustache, and probably watching the Red Sox."

Dylan and Jodi and their families know that life can be challenging. We honor the ones we've lost by becoming our best selves and seeking happiness and contentment so we are able to enjoy the best moments of our lives - we live fully. As part of this process I asked Jodi and Dylan where they picture themselves in 10 years and where they picture themselves in 30 years. Unanimously, they foresee being married to each other (this is a good sign), being filled with joy and happiness, and starting and nurturing a family. They also want to travel, seek new experiences, be challenged, and above all else enjoy each others company day in and day out. As long as they are together and happy, nothing else matters.

### **Consecration**

Moving on with our ceremony, let's all take a moment to acknowledge the seriousness of the commitment being entered into today.

With great joy, we also recognize the special bond shared by Dylan and Jodi and we offer them our support today and for many years to come.

Love is the soil from which life itself grows.

As Carl Sagan famously wrote: "The world is so exquisite with so much love and moral depth. We should remain grateful every day for the brief but magnificent opportunity that life provides. The sum of all our evolution, our thinking and our accomplishments is love."

I will now invite the Bride and Groom to exchange their vows.

### **Vows**

Jodi and Dylan, you have prepared vows of commitment to share with one another.

Jodi, please go first.

***Jodi:*** *Dylan, today I take you to be my husband. As we join our lives together, I vow to be supportive, caring, and honest with you always. I promise to hold you close, to respect you fully, and to love you deeply. As your companion, your partner, and your best friend, I promise to stay by your side through thick and thin. I love you with all my heart, and I plan to remind you of that every day, from this day forward.*

Officiant: Dylan, whenever you're ready.

***Dylan:*** *Jodi, today I take you to be my wife. As we join our lives together, I vow to be supportive, caring, and honest with you always. I promise to cherish you daily, to respect you fully, and to love you deeply. As your companion, your partner, and your best friend, I promise to stay by your side through thick and thin. I love you with all my heart, and I plan to remind you of that every day, from this day forward.*

Let us proceed.

### **Declaration of Intent**

Dylan and Jodi, it's time to join hands.

Dylan, before your family and friends, do you take Jodi as your beloved wife, to have and to hold, through laughter and in sadness, through challenges and successes, through all seasons of life so long as you both shall live?

***Dylan:*** *I do.*

Jodi, before your family and friends, do you take Dylan as your beloved husband, to have and to hold, through laughter and in sadness, through challenges and successes, through all the seasons of life so long as you both shall live?

**Jodi:** *I do.*

### **Ring Exchange**

Wedding rings are a traditional symbol of the strength of the bond between two individuals who join together in marriage.

This bond is never broken, and continues in a perpetual circle, glowing with the warmth and eternal light of two souls in a perfect union.

By wearing these rings, you will be always reminded of the connection you share and the vows you have made today.

Dylan, please place the ring on the end of Jodi's finger and repeat after me:

**Jodi, I give you this ring as a sign of my love**

*Jodi, I give you this ring as a sign of my love*

**I give myself to you; to be your husband**

*I give myself to you; to be your husband*

**from this day forward; you will never walk alone**

*from this day forward; you will never walk alone*

**I feel so honored to have you, as my wife**

*I feel so honored to have you, as my wife*

**All that I am and with all of my heart**

*All that I am and with all of my heart*

**I seal it with this ring.**

*I seal it with this ring.*

Jodi, please place the ring on the end of Dylan's finger and repeat after me:

**Dylan, I give you this ring as a sign of my love**

*Dylan, I give you this ring as a sign of my love*

**I give myself to you; to be your wife**

*I give myself to you; to be your wife*

**from this day forward; you will never walk alone**

*from this day forward; you will never walk alone*

**I feel so honored to have you, as my husband**

*I feel so honored to have you, as my husband*

**All that I am and with all of my heart**

*All that I am and with all of my heart*

**I seal it with this ring.**

*I seal it with this ring.*

**Pronouncement**

Dylan and Jodi, by the power vested in me by the Universal Life Church and by the state of Massachusetts, I happily pronounce you husband and wife!

**Kiss**

Jodi and Dylan, you may now share your first kiss as a married couple!

**Presentation**

Dylan and Jodi, may you enjoy a lifetime of sunrises and sunsets together. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to present, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Dylan and Jodi Smith!