

Deciding who to invite

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The only people who **have** to be at your ceremony are the two of you, the celebrant and your two witnesses. Everybody else is optional.

Virtually everything we associate with couple ceremonies is based on a perception of "tradition" which is nothing more nor less than a set of diffuse expectations. These expectations include the guest list. The hope is that your guest list would be made up purely of people who you feel will enhance your ceremony by their presence, who will share in your joy and be supportive of your commitment to each other. In reality this is neither guaranteed nor simple to achieve, but there are some guidelines that will help:

1. Do not make decisions for others

Decide whether to invite people based on whether you will be comfortable with them, on whether one or both of you really do want them to be there, not on your assumption that they will be uncomfortable attending.

2. Enclose a personal note with the invitation

If you suspect someone you'd like to invite might be confused, shocked, or ambivalent give them additional information. Say you would really like them to be there (that way they'll know you didn't send them an invitation as a matter of form and that they are important to you), tell them what they can expect at the ceremony - a celebrant, formal vows, readings, who is "giving you away" if that is going to be a feature of the ceremony.

3. Don't send invitations assuming that the recipients won't come - they just might.

If there are people you want to know about your commitment rather than sending an invitation, send an announcement afterwards. This announcement could incorporate one or more of a range of ways of conveying the spirit and importance of the ceremony to you both, such as a photo of the two of you, a copy of your vows, a brief description of the ceremony and its setting, and so on.

4. Realise that you are making a powerful statement about your relationship

By sending an invitation you demonstrating that you're not ashamed of your committed relationship. Even if they don't get it straight away, it might eventually sink in that yours is a stable relationship worthy of support and admiration.

5. Don't underestimate how much capacity people have for love

Often the very people you thought would have a problem, won't. Generations at one remove - such as grandparents - are frequently much more accepting and supportive than we give them credit for.

6. Some people will not come

Sometimes for good reason, sometimes because they are homophobic.



*Jennifer Cram is a secular humanist celebrant in Queensland Australia
Serving all of Brisbane, Redlands, Redcliffe, Pine Rivers, Logan & Ipswich
Ceremonies performed in private homes, parks, gardens, hotels, clubs, restaurants,
chapels, function centres, reception centres, wedding venues.
Day or evening ceremonies 365 days a year*

*Her Celebrant Services include:
Weddings, Commitment Ceremonies for gay, lesbian, and straight couples, including
Contemporary, Traditional, Spiritual, Inter-cultural, Scottish, Celtic, Chinese, Buddhist,
Mediaeval; anHandfasting; Renewal of Vows;
Naming Ceremonies; End-of-Relationship Ceremonies.*