

Guide to the Wedding Processional Order

The bride's walk down the aisle is always one of the highlights of a wedding ceremony, but a few other important people like the bridal party, mother of the bride, and officiant prep the runway before the girl in the white dress makes her grand entrance. The wedding-processional order can be confusing, so we're breaking down who should walk when to ensure your bridal march runs as smoothly as possible. Check out our ultimate guide below, beginning with Mom and ending with the bride:

The Bride's Mother: The mother of the bride's entrance marks the beginning of the ceremony and processional. Once she reaches the end of the aisle, she takes her seat to the left of the aisle in the first row. (In Jewish ceremonies, she and the bride's father escort their daughter down the aisle together.)

The Groomsmen: During the processional, the groomsmen can either walk down the aisle one by one (the best man should go last), or later arm-in-arm with the bridesmaids.

The Best Man: The best man walks down the aisle after the groomsmen and stands at the groom's side during the ceremony. He may also hold the bride's ring (or both rings).

The Groom: Traditionally, the groom will enter next, walking down the aisle solo. However, many couples these days choose to have the groom's parents escort him down the aisle (then, his parents would sit to the right of the aisle in the front row). Another alternative would be for the groom to enter the ceremony from the side of the venue, followed by his best man and groomsmen.

The Officiant: A very important part of the ceremony, the officiant is usually honored with a spot in the processional. Alternatively, he could enter from the side of the room, with the groom (see above).

The Bridesmaids: During the processional, the bridesmaids walk down the aisle before the maid or matron of honor.

The Maid or Matron of Honor: Before the ceremony, the maid or matron of honor assists the bride with her dress, veil, and train, making sure everything looks perfect before she walks down the aisle. She then stands by the bride's side at the altar and holds her bouquet and sometimes the groom's ring.

The Flower Girl(s) and Ring Bearer(s): The ring bearer and flower girl precede the bride down the aisle. Traditionally, the ring bearer carries the wedding rings (or decoys, if he's too little to be trusted with the real things), tied to a small pillow. The flower girl may carry a basket of petals, which she scatters as she walks, or a posy of flowers. After the procession is over and the rings are handed off to the best man, the children's work is done, and they can be seated with their parents. These days, couples are becoming more creative with the children's accessories, incorporating fabric signs and banners, ribbon wands, and other sweet ideas.

The Father of the Bride and the Bride: The bride's father traditionally escorts his daughter down the aisle, standing to her right. After he "gives her away" to the groom, he lifts her veil and kisses her, signifying his blessing, then takes his seat beside the bride's mother.