

# Ring traditions

The use of engagement and wedding rings can be traced to the cavemen.

In those times, it was customary for the caveman to tie strands of grass around the finger of his betrothed to signify their engagement. The wedding ring was actually a cord of reeds that the man used to bind himself to the bride's waist to signify their spirit becoming one.

The more traditional use of gold rings in wedding ceremonies is believed to have begun in early Egyptian times. Inscriptions have been found in wedding rings dating as far back as 400 B.C. in the Greek and French cultures.

The ring ceremony performed in the past was very ritualistic. The clergyman placed the ring upon an open book, sprinkled it with holy water and then blessed it. The groom then picked up the ring between his right thumb and first two fingers and placed it on the bride's thumb saying, "In the name of the Father." He then moved it to her first finger stating, "And of the Son;" transferring it to the second finger saying, "And the Holy Ghost;"

and finally placing it on the third finger saying, "Amen."

This tradition has been replaced with the ritualistic vow that is said by the groom while placing the ring directly on the third finger of the bride's left hand (also repeated by the bride for the groom in a double-ring ceremony.)

While it is not necessary, an engagement ring remains a popular symbol of love. The custom of the man proposing with the engagement ring in hand has fallen into disuse.

The engagement ring may be worn any time after the formal engagement announcement has been made. Since it is improper to wear the wedding ring above the engagement ring, the engagement ring is usually worn by the bride on the right hand during the wedding ceremony and transferred back to the left hand after the wedding ceremony.

Engraving wedding bands is still popular. Usually the bride and groom's initials and the wedding date are engraved on the inside of the wedding band. If there is room, sometimes a sentiment is also included in the inscription.

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