

Sample Wedding Timeline

When couples ask me for suggestions on their wedding ceremony and reception timeline, I offer the following advice:

1. **It's your day!** – You may decide on a timeline that sounds perfect, but on your wedding day, you may want to get the first dance out of the way before dinner, or you may want to allow extra time for cocktails. On your day, you call the shots; just let your DJ and caterer know!
2. **Don't worry if you get "off track"** – I have never seen a wedding that stuck to the planned timeline to the exact second. The events that have been the closest were sometimes "stuffy" or "forced". Don't get upset if your pictures after the ceremony take a few extra minutes, or your toasts run a little long-winded. Relax and enjoy your day! Your "wedding vendor team" are professionals that create lasting memories for a lifetime. We work together to make sure you have a great time. If you are getting too far off the timeline, either your DJ or caterer will usually tactfully ask if you want to continue on to the next event on the timeline, or if you need more time to spend on the current timeline event. On your big day, let your vendors do all of the worrying, your job is only to have fun!
3. **The bride & groom set the pace** – While it is your day, you should keep in mind that while it is important to mingle and speak with all of your guests, it is the bride and groom that sets the pace of the reception. If you are not doing a "receiving line" after your ceremony, and decide to go around to meet your guests during your meal (we call this "doing tables"), keep in mind that most times the next event after the meal will be either a parent's dance or the first dance. This means that the longer you take doing tables, the less time your guests will have to dance. Again, your DJ or caterer will give a gentle time reminder, as your day will fly by! And as always, we'll give you all the time you want to speak with your guests and mingle.

Sample 5-hour event with ceremony (same location)

- 6:45-7:00 Guests arrive to venue
7:00-7:30 Wedding Ceremony
7:30-8:30 Guests to cocktail hour, bridal party take photos
 bridal party joins guests after photos or goes to bridal party suite
8:30-8:45 Guests moved into “main room”
8:45-8:50 Bridal party introductions
8:50-8:55 B&G First Dance (could also be done just after your meal)
8:55-9:10 Toasts (could also be done after the meal or at cake cutting)
 Blessing/Prayer (done just before meal)
9:10 – 10:00 Meal
10:00 – 10:10 Parent Dances
10:10 – 10:30 Dance Set #1
10:30 – 10:50 Bouquet & Garter Toss
 Cake Cutting
 Generation Dance
10:45 – 11:50 Dance Set #2
11:50 – 12:00 Last Dance

You can make changes to the above timeline as needed to suit your event!

Events Options

Generation Dance (or Anniversary Dance) – All married couples dance a slow song, the DJ then asks anyone married less than 1 day, 1 year, 5 years, etc... to leave the dance floor. The longest married couple is asked to say a few words to the B&G, you can give to longest married woman the bride’s bouquet if you do not want to toss the bouquet.

Parent Dances – A slow dance (usually) between the father/daughter and mother/son. Usually separate songs are chosen, but F/D and M/S could dance simultaneously.

Bouquet/Garter Belt Toss – A tradition to symbolize who may be the next wedding guest to get married themselves. Can be substituted by the Generation Dance (see above)

Cake Cutting – The name says it all! A must-have event. Messy cake feeding optional.

Bridal Party Dance – After the first dance, or after the parent dances, you may wish to dedicate a song to your bridal party. They can dance with each other or with their guests.

Hora – A traditional Jewish circle dance, which should be done after the first dance or after the parent dances. The bride and groom and their parents are raised on chairs. Grandparents, siblings, or other family members can also be raised if you choose.

Mezinke tanz – Another traditional Jewish dance dedicated to the parents of the Bride, if she is the youngest daughter. A flower crown is also placed on the bride’s mother’s head.

Apron/Dollar Dance – Should be added before cake cutting. An European traditional dance that ensures the couple has a little extra money to begin their life together. Both the bride and groom can dance to polkas, slow songs, or a mix of both music styles.

Toasts – Usually done by the best man, can also be given my maid of honor.

Welcome – The host/hostess (usually parents) providing the event welcomes their guests.