

# Marriage Blanket Wedding Ceremony

## Pre-Wedding Preparations

Prepare large pile of firewood made with seven kinds of wood (this will be for the large fire). Make two smaller fire piles (with tinder and kindling) out of seven kinds of wood. One on the north, one on the south. (There will be two people designated to light the fires at the appropriate time.)

## Ceremony

Before sundown and before the couple approaches, the Medicine Person Elder performs a healing and blessing of the earth.

O Great Creator, may there be health and healing for this earth.

Sky Father, let the sun that shines each day give new life to all creations.

Earth Mother, nurturer of all living, let each plant grow and make a home for all thy creatures.

Oh Heart of Mine, seek the good in all creations, and let us be instruments in bettering all.

Ancestors, lend your knowledge that as the water cleanses the earth to make new life, we can be clean and heal all around us.

Spirits Among Us, breathe good life as the wind rushes through the trees.

Sees Far People, let the fire of purification cleanse the earth and bring rebirth.

Look within and bring acceptance of our role with our brothers the animals and our sisters the plants; that we may be one with the Universe without, and the Universe within us.

That we are part of the great Wheel of Life, and may be a blessing too.

May there be good health and healing for this Earth,

May there be Beauty above, May there be Beauty below,  
May there be Beauty in us, May there be Beauty all around.

I ask that this world be filled with Peace, Love, and Beauty.

After the Healing and Blessing by the Elder when the Bride and Groom are ready to approach, the two representatives light the bride's and groom's fires.

The groom approaches west end of the fire circle under a blue blanket supported above his head by four male friends carrying spears.

The bride, wearing red, approaches west end of fire circle under another blue blanket supported by female friends carrying torches and singing.

At the West end the bride and groom come together and are wrapped in the blue blankets under which they arrived. The bride pours water over the groom's hands and then he returns the favor. As this is happening the Elder tells them that this is a washing away of their old lives.

The Elder and puts sage, cedar and sweet grass in a bowl and says the below prayer as he smudges (puts the smoke on) the couple. As the prayer proceeds, the Elder smudges the appropriate area.

**May your hands be cleansed  
That they create beautiful things.**

**May your feet be cleansed  
That they take you to where you most need to be.**

**May your heart be cleansed  
That you might hear its messages clearly.**

**May your throat be cleansed  
That you might speak rightly when words are needed.**

**May your eyes be cleansed  
That you might see the signs and wonders of this world.**

**May these persons and space be washed clean  
By the smoke of these fragrant plants;  
And may that same smoke carry our prayers,  
Spiraling to the heavens.**

The groom then proceeds to the north of the circle and the bride to the south. The Elder moves around the outside of the circle to the East. At a sign from the Elder, the bride and groom simultaneously push their small fires to the great wood pile, joining their lives and creating more together than they could apart.

When the fires are joined and in the light of the great fire, the Ceremony of Seven Steps begins.

The groom takes one step clockwise and makes a vow. (Wording is approximate, couples may customize as desired. Grooms words in blue.)

**As the Sky Father, the Creator watches over us, so will I watch over and  
protect you.**

The bride then takes a step (always clockwise) and vows: (Brides words in red.)

As the Sky Father, the Creator watches over us, so will I watch over our home.

The ceremony proceeds, alternating between the groom who takes a step and vows, and the bride who takes a step and vows.

As the Earth Mother cares for, nurtures and provides for each of us, so will I care for you and nurture your spirit.

As the Earth Mother, nurtures and cares for our needs, so will I care for your needs and the needs of our children.

As the fire burns and warms us, so will I warm and comfort you through the storms of life.

The fire of love will burn in my heart to be a warmth and comfort to you as we live our lives together.

As the winds blow us through life, ever will I sail with you.

May the winds of life keep us safe together as in a mother's arms.

As water cleanses our thirsts, so will I make sure that you never thirst for love.

So will the water keep my heart clean and pure so love will always have root there.

In my heart, my love for you will always be strong and true. I will search within myself to always make it so.

My heart will give home to the love that I feel, and keep it always there for you.

The universe and all creations bear witness this day that we are one.

And all creation bless us with harmony and true happiness as we ever grow together.

After the vows, the couple goes to the Elder at the East of the fire. Their representatives will be there with the baskets that they have previously filled with gifts for their new mate, and a white blanket. As they exchange baskets, the Elder will say:

**God in heaven above please protect the ones we love. We honor all you created as this couple pledges their hearts and lives together. We honor Mother Earth and ask for this marriage to be abundant and grow stronger through the seasons. We honor fire and ask that**

**this union be warm and glowing with love from our hearts. We honor wind and ask that this couple sail through life safe and calm as in our Father's arms. We honor water to clean and soothe this relationship that it may never thirst for love. With all the forces of the universe you created, we pray for harmony as we grow forever young together. Aho!**

Then the Elder will take the Wedding Vase, and give them both to drink of water at the same time.

The representatives of the bride and groom will take the blue blankets from them. The Elder will remind them that the blue is the sadness and aloneness of life. They are shedding that to be together.

The Elder will then wrap the couple in a large white blanket and give the final blessing.

**Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years. May happiness be your companion and your days together be good and long upon the earth.**

**Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulties and fear assail your relationship, as they threaten all relationships at one time or another, remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives – remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. If each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight. Aho!**

Ceremony is followed by feasting to show the couple's ability to have plenty. It is entirely appropriate to make it a pot luck to show the community's support for this union. Corn pudding is the traditional dish for the married couple to share. After sunset, dancing in celebration around the fire will occur.