

Questions to Ask Site Managers & Officiants

- Is the site/officiant available on your preferred wedding date?
- Does the site/officiant charge a standard fee? Is it a donation to the house of worship, a fee to rent the space, a specific amount paid to the officiant?
- If you want to marry at a nonreligious site, is a religious officiant willing to marry you there?
- Is the sanctuary or other ceremony space large enough for the approximate number of guests you're planning to invite? Where will everyone (the wedding party, the officiant, you two, musicians) stand? Do you like the setup?
- What will the site supply (prayer books, aisle runner, huppah, wine goblets, candelabra, yarmulkes, and so on)?
- Are there any restrictions on how you can decorate the sanctuary or ceremony area? What about rules for photography or videography?
- Are there restrictions on music?
- Are there any restrictions on attire? (Some churches require shoulders to be covered; if your dress is sleeveless, you'll want a shawl or other cover-up.)
- Must you use the site's in-house musicians, or can you bring in your own? Is there an additional fee?
- If your ceremony will be outdoors in a public place, do you need a permit? When/where should you apply? Are there restrictions (number of people gathered, for example)?
- If you prefer a small ceremony, will the officiant marry you in his or her study or chambers, or is there a small chapel off the main sanctuary that you can use?
- Can you write original vows, or does the officiant use standard ceremony wording? If so, can it be modified to suit your ceremony?
- Do you choose the readings, or do you pick from a list of readings the house of worship/officiant has selected?
- Is prewedding counseling required? Is it one-on-one with your officiant, or in a group setting with other couples? How many sessions?
- Will the officiant be your primary contact at the wedding site, or is there an on-site wedding consultant, sexton, or someone else?
- Will the officiant be available for a ceremony rehearsal?
- Ask yourself: Does the officiant make you comfortable? Does he or she seem genuinely interested in you as a couple? Be sure you like and respect your officiant—and that the feelings are reciprocated.