

## *The Handfast Ceremony*

**Explanation:** A symbolic ceremony where cords, or ribbons, are tied loosely around the couple's hands, symbolising each vow they make. The number of cords used can be anything from one to as many as the vows the couple makes.

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### *No. 1*

**Handfasting & Declaration of Intent**

**Celebrant:** (Bride) and (Groom), since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you make your vows which will make you husband and wife strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both the wedding ceremony and the institution of marriage.

In times past it was believed that the human soul shared characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigned virtues to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home The heat of the heart's passion The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake The swift excitement of the river The refreshing cleansing of the rain The all-encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North firm foundation on which to build fertility of the fields to enrich your lives and a stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

### *No. 2*

**Bride:** I give you my hand in marriage,

## HANDBAST CEREMONY

Groom: And I give you mine.  
Bride: Take my hand as a symbol of my love.  
Groom: Take my hand as a symbol of my love.  
Bride: With this hand, I promise to hold you, cherish you, and respect you always.  
Groom: With this hand, I promise to care for you, provide for you, and to be your friend.

(Bride: and Groom: join hands, right to right, left to left.)

Bride: As I hold your hands in mine, I feel your love.

Groom: And I feel your love; our love is not only for this moment, but for a lifetime.

Bride: Yes, for a lifetime.

(The Bride's and Groom's hands are then fastened)

Celebrant: Now you are bound one to another, with a tie not easy to break.

May your marriage be strong and your love lasting in this life and beyond.

By the powers that are Earth, Air, Fire and Water may your lives be forever joined in love.

### *No. 3*

Celebrant: The broom has a long history. It has represented luck, fortune, and fertility of family and wealth. As you jump it, it will symbolize your willingness to jump together over all obstacles, be they wild and unanticipated, or mundane and expected. Since the broom is also an ordinary household tool, it symbolizes your willingness to take on the ordinary tasks of a shared household.

### *No. 4*

Celebrant: (bride & groom join their right hands, then join their left hands over their right ones.)

The hands which you each offer to the other are an extension of yourselves; just as is the warmth and love which you express to each other.

Cherish the touch, for you are touching another life.