

Robyn Ashley Weddings

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

The Unity Sand Ceremony.

The full ritual to read at the altar: the words for each pour, the supply and color choices that decide whether the layers read from the back row, the delivery cues, and the version for children and blended families.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

The ritual that *sits on the mantel.*

At Bethesda Fountain, a four-year-old poured her color in one enthusiastic dump instead of the slow stream we had rehearsed. The whole lawn laughed through tears. That vase is on a Brooklyn mantel now, her purple layer three times too thick, and it is perfect.

That is the sand ceremony in one story. It hands you something you can hold years later, and it is close to impossible to ruin. Two small choices still decide how it photographs: the colors you pick and how slowly you pour.

So this is the sand ceremony with the supply page sitting next to the script, the way I run it now. The words for each pour are set in large type, so whoever is reading can do it at arm's length. In the margins are the cues I have gathered over 300+ ceremonies.

Read it once out loud in your own voice. Cut anything that does not sound like you. The ritual is yours.

Robyn

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN ·



What you'll *actually need.*

One vase, sealable. A nine-inch vase with a narrow mouth and a cork or cap. The narrow mouth matters most outdoors, where it shields the falling sand from a side gust.

Sand, with one spare bag of each color. About a pound per person for a nine-inch vase, plus a half-pound for each child who pours. Nerves make people pour fast, so the extra bag is cheap insurance against running out mid-ceremony.

A tray, and a wide-spout container per child. Set everything on a tray or cloth, sand travels. Give each child a wide-spout container so a small hand can pour without spilling the whole thing.

ROBYN'S NOTE


Buy for *contrast you can see from the back row*. Two pastels next to each other read as one muddy band in every photo. When in doubt, go darker.

Pick colors that *read clean*.

THE ONE MISTAKE TO AVOID

Two light colors layered together look identical once they are in the vase. Pick high-contrast colors so each layer stands on its own from across the room.

Many couples choose colors for what they stand for. There is no rulebook, so your meaning wins. Pair a light color with a dark one and the stripes hold.


 **White** purity, devotion

 **Gold** abundance, wisdom

 **Red** passion, strength

 **Pink** romance, tenderness

 **Purple** dignity, dreams

 **Blue** trust, loyalty

 **Teal** renewal, creativity

 **Green** growth, generosity

Hand the words *to a reader.*

Where it goes. The pour lives after the ring exchange and before the pronouncement, near the emotional peak. It runs about three to five minutes with the explanation. The very start of the ceremony is too early, the room has not warmed up yet.

Who delivers it. The officiant, or a parent or close friend, reads the words. The two of you should be looking at each other and pouring, rather than narrating your own ritual.

— *[Reader, set the table near the officiant with the vase centered and each color on its own side. Step aside so guests see both pours.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

The pour is the visible moment guests came for. Give them a clean sightline, then get out of the frame. The couple and the vase are the picture.

Three *vessels*.

— *[Reader, address the guests. The couple steps to the table, a container each, not yet poured.]*

[PARTNER 1] and **[PARTNER 2]** have chosen to mark their union with a sand ceremony.

Before them are three vessels. Two hold sand in separate colors, each one an individual life, with its own history, its own family, the path that led here. The third is empty, ready to hold something new.

— *[Slow down. Let the empty vase be seen for a beat before anyone reaches for it.]*

The separate colors are everything that made you who you are: your histories, your friendships, the people who raised you, the choices that shaped you.

The first *layer*.

[PARTNER 1], please pour the first layer.

— *[Partner 1 pours a thin, slow stream. Reader, wait for the pour to finish before the next line.]*

This first layer is everything [PARTNER 1] brings on their own. Their strengths, their character, the color that is theirs alone.

ROBYN'S NOTE

Pour slowly. The sand falls faster than anyone expects, and a rushed pour turns crisp stripes into one muddy band. Sixty seconds of practice at home with table salt is worth it.

The *blending*.

[PARTNER 2], please add yours.

— *[Partner 2 pours on top of the first layer. Pause so guests watch the grains meet at the edges.]*

Watch how the grains meet. Some layers stay distinct, some blend completely. That is marriage. Parts of your life will be fully shared, and parts will stay your own. Both matter.

From this moment, these grains cannot be separated back into the colors they came in, the same way two lives joined today do not come apart again.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The line about the grains meeting is the one that catches the room. Read it plainly and let the image do the work, the vase is right there proving it.

The pour of *family*.

— *[Optional. If children pour, give each a clear cue so they know exactly when. "Slow like honey" for the little ones.]*

[CHILD'S NAME], your color is the joy you bring to this family. Please pour your sand now.

— *[Child pours. Then the couple pours together, one last time, letting the colors mingle.]*

[PARTNER 1] and **[PARTNER 2]**, pour together now. These grains, like the moments of your life together, can never be separated again.

— *[Couple seals the vase. A cork, then a drop of clear glue around the stopper makes it permanent. Do not rush the seal.]*

Love made *visible*.

From this day on, your lives are blended and your love made visible to everyone here.

This vase will sit in your home and hold this moment, exactly as it is right now, for as long as you keep it.

— *[Lift the sealed vase so the room sees the finished layers. Let the look happen before you move anyone on.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

Cap the vase right after the ritual, then hand it to someone you trust for the rest of the day. An uncapped vase tips in the car, and a year of layering is gone in a second.

Make it yours.

If you are blending a family. This is the ritual built for it. Give each child their own color and a wide-spout container, and a clear cue so they know when to pour. A teenager who feels awkward can read a short poem instead, which is sometimes the better call.

If you are on a beach. Lean into it. Collect sand from places that matter, where you got engaged, your hometown, rather than craft sand. Heavier grain holds up better in wind, and a level table keeps the vase from tipping.

If you want to keep your own selves in it. Leave a little sand in each of your containers, to stand for the parts of you that stay your own. Say so as you pour, and the gesture reads clearly.

ROBYN'S NOTE

If a child pours off-script, let it ride. The too-thick purple layer is the part the family points to years later. The perfect stripes are forgotten by the reception.

If it goes *sideways*.

If a layer goes in too fast and muddies. Keep going and name it warmly. Say, "Marriage is rarely tidy either," and let the room laugh. Nobody remembers the stripes, they remember the line.

If a child dumps the whole container. Smile and carry on. Say, "That is exactly the right amount of joy." The over-poured layer becomes the story they tell.

If the reader loses the line. Stop, find the place, and go on. The room reads a short pause as care, never as a stumble.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The difference between a first-timer and a pro is not that the pro never fumbles. It is that the pro has a warm line ready, says it, and keeps the ritual moving.

Three things *before you pour for real.*

This is one ritual, marked the way I would mark my own. Treat it as a working draft and it starts sounding like you.

i Buy for contrast, and buy one spare bag of each color.

Pair a light color with a dark one so the stripes read from the back row. A pound of sand per person for a nine-inch vase, a half-pound per child, plus the spare bag against a fast pour.

ii Practice the pour, sixty seconds, with table salt.

The whole game is pouring slowly. A thin stream gives crisp layers, a rushed one gives a muddy band. One run at the kitchen counter teaches the flow better than any instruction.

iii Read it aloud once, and fill every bracket a week out.

Whoever is reading runs it start to finish in their own voice. Fill each [BRACKET] in advance, brief any children on their cue, and pack the cork and a drop of glue to seal the vase.

"We were writing the ceremony ourselves and kept getting stuck on where the sand pour fit with everything else. The kit had the whole arc already. We dropped our words in and it sounded like us."

DANA & MARCUS · MARRIED IN THE HUDSON VALLEY, 2025

IF THIS RITUAL IS DOING ITS JOB

The whole ceremony, *not just one pour.*

The sand pour is one ritual. A ceremony is the architecture around it: the processional, the welcome, the vows, the unity moment, the pronouncement, all timed so the pour falls at the right beat instead of feeling bolted on. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is the full word-for-word framework I use, with scripts for the sand ceremony and every other unity ritual, written so you can drop your own words in.

\$79

Open the Couple's Ceremony Kit →

ONE-TIME PAYMENT · LIFETIME ACCESS · 48-HOUR MONEY-BACK

Where this *came from*.

PULLED FROM

The sand ceremonies I have folded into NYC weddings, indoors, on rooftops, and on real beaches, with the supply notes I now give every couple up front. The structure is field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

WHAT IS IN THE KIT

The full word-for-word ceremony framework, with scripts for the sand ceremony and every other unity ritual, written so you can drop your own words in. All of it in *the Couple's Ceremony Kit*.

USE THIS FREELY

Print it, mark it up, hand a copy to whoever is reading at the altar, run it at the rehearsal.

IF YOU DO ONE

Email me. I read every one.
hello@robynashleyweddings.com.

Marked from a working ritual, with the supply notes and cues I use at the front of the aisle.

*About this
ritual, and
where it has
been poured.*