

# Guidelines for a Christian Marriage



Grace Lutheran Ministries  
W196 N9525 Cross View Way  
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051  
(262) 251-0670



*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Mark 10:7-9*

### **Congratulations!**

God is vitally interested in your marriage! He wants to be at the center of your life together.

At Grace, we believe that marriage is a holy and sacred gift from God that reflects the relationship of Christ and His bride, the church. In truth, some of God’s greatest promises are to those who unite a household under His will and purpose. We desire that couples approach marriage in a Biblical way that is pleasing to God and blessed by Him. God’s Word reminds us that “unless the Lord builds the house its builders labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

At Grace we recognize:

- the purpose of marriage: “That two may become one”
- the power of marriage: “For two are stronger than one”
- the primacy of marriage: “What God has joined together . . . let no man separate.”

There is always much preparation done for your wedding day, but we also believe in the necessity of planning for your lifelong marriage. We strive to prepare you with God’s promises for marriage and the tools necessary to grow as a couple during the ups and downs of life.

Consider the following truth: This year 2.3 million couples will be married within the United States. Of these, only half will come to know God’s full and lifelong blessing for their union. The other half will conclude prematurely in divorce. It is our desire to assist you, not only in the planning of a marriage ceremony, but in the purposeful work of preparing for a marriage that can last a lifetime.

To this end, we offer this manual, our time, and our prayers. May God bless you richly in your journey!

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pastor Joel Howard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senior Pastor Joel Howard

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[www.grace-connect.org](http://www.grace-connect.org)

**Church Office Hours**

Monday through Thursday	8 am – 4 pm
Friday	8 am – 2 pm

**Church Wedding Staff**

Pastors at Grace:	Pastor Joel Howard Pastor Zach Klatt	pastor.howard@grace-connect.org pastor.klatt@grace-connect.org
Minister of Music:	Bill Cahill	bcahill@grace-connect.org
Wedding Coordinator:		info@grace-connect.org
Church Secretary:	Sue Drewes Amy Maillet	sdrewes@grace-connect.org amaillet@grace-connect.org

## **GETTING STARTED**

*To help you get the best possible start in planning your marriage ceremony, the following steps should be taken:*

### **Step 1 - Set the Date and Time:**

Contact the church office as soon as you have a wedding date in mind to check whether that date is available (at least six months prior to your anticipated wedding date). When you call, the church will be tentatively reserved in your name. (**Note:** dates are reserved on a first-come/first-serve basis.) The facility fee will “lock in” your wedding date. A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned at least six months prior to your wedding. If you wish to discuss plans or details with a coordinator prior to that assignment, call the church office and a coordinator will meet with you. No weddings available the first weekend of August or May.

### **Step 2 – Wedding Registration Forms:**

Once you have reserved your wedding date with the church, you will be sent registration forms to be returned regarding your wedding. As soon as possible after receiving the forms, fill them out and return them to the church office. If you are unsure about how to answer some of the questions please call the church office who will help you through this process. Some of the information you might not have right away, so please fill in what you are able to and the rest can be done at your final meeting with your officiating pastor.

### **Step 3 – Arrange for Wedding Preparation Class:**

As soon as possible, you should begin the process of preparing for the marriage class.

1. Sign up with the church office for the marriage preparation class.
2. Both individuals should separately take the zoescore analysis at [www.zoescore.com](http://www.zoescore.com) prior to the pre-marital class. Enter your officiating pastor as your advisor. His e-mail can be found on p. 4.
3. Read the book When Sinners Say “I Do” and use the study guide for the book answering the questions “For Me” and “For Us.” Finish this prior to the pre-marital class.
4. Meeting with the Pastor - make an appointment after the pre-marital class to meet with your officiating pastor to go through final details of the wedding and anything else that would need to be discussed.

### **Step 4 - Meet with the Minister of Music:**

One of the most important aspects of a wedding ceremony is the music to be selected and used. 6-8 weeks prior to the wedding, a meeting should be scheduled with Grace’s Minister of Music, Bill Cahill. At Grace, the Minister of Music is responsible for the approval of all music and musicians to be used in the wedding ceremony. Additionally, the Minister of Music can assist in recommending appropriate music and in lining up accompanist, soloists, and instrumentalists as needed.

### **Step 5 – Bring to the Rehearsal:**

- Marriage license, if not delivered to the church previously (see page 14)
- We prefer that you pay for remainder of the wedding fee prior to the wedding rehearsal, but if that is not done please bring this check to the rehearsal. The “Wedding Fees” can be found at the end of this document.
- Unity candle and tapers

*Optional:*

- Candelabras and candles
  - Guest book and gift table items
  - Wedding attire (tuxes, gowns)
  - Pew bows
  - Bubbles, bells, etc.
- Secure storage is available.*

**Step 6 - Payment of Wedding Fees**

- 1) Facility Fee down payment for reserving the church facility
- 2) Remainder due to the church office 14 days prior to the day of the wedding.

**\*\*As the Lord calls for purity in all relationships, so sexuality has been designed and intended for marriage only. We ask that you abstain from any sexual relations until after the wedding. If you are co-habiting before the wedding, this is sinful in God's picture of marriage, so we require that you abstain from further sexual intimacy. We invite you to speak with a pastor with any concerns you may have.**

**\*\*Statement regarding the Biblical nature of marriage:** The policy of Grace Lutheran Church, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is and always has been consistent with the synod's beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman, and that at creation God instituted marriage for the well-being of humanity (Gen. 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). We believe that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:32). God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. For this reason, we believe that marriage is exclusively the union of one genetic male and one genetic female (Gen. 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine and Biblical truth for pastors of Grace Lutheran Church in Menomonee Falls, Wis., to conduct the marriage or the blessing of a union between a same-sex couple. In light of our beliefs, pastors of the Grace Lutheran Church shall not perform marriages or unions of same-sex couples. The facilities and property of Grace in accordance with this Biblical truth shall host weddings only between one man and one woman. These positions and beliefs also can be found on the LCMS website.

# PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

## ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional (Lighting of candles, seating of grandparents and parents, entry of wedding party)

Potential Order:

1. Acolytes – candles lit
2. Grandparents seated
3. Parents seated
4. Mothers light side tapers of unity candle
5. Bridesmaids, Bridal Processional

Invocation & Parental Giving

Opening Sentences

Special Music (Optional)

Scriptures

Wedding Message

The Wedding Ceremony

Wedding Vows

Pledge of Faithfulness

Exchange of Rings

Declaration of Marriage

Unity Candle (Optional)

Roses for Mothers (Optional)

Special Music (Optional)

Blessing & Wedding Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Special Music (Optional)

Benediction

Presentation of Couple

Recessional

## **PROCESSIONAL OPTIONS**

*One of the most frequently “asked-about” portions of the ceremony is the wedding procession. Following is a list of the most commonly used approaches to the wedding procession (please consider each option and be prepared to indicate a preference):*

### **Option 1: Processional**

Groom and groomsmen enter from back of the church along the right side aisle and take their place at the front of the church facing the bride and her party. Music begins and the bridal party processes one at a time, to the front, turning to face the bride. The congregation rises and the bride processes toward the altar. The bride is escorted into place by her groom, and the wedding party turns to face the front altar.

### **Option 2: Processional Variation**

This option provides for the same instruction as Option 1 with one variation. In this variation, the groomsmen move from the front area to “meet with” the bridesmaids at the halfway point in the main aisle. The couple then processes to the front where they take their place and turn to face the bride.

### **Option 3: Processional As Couples**

In this option, the wedding party processes in as “couples.” The groom alone, with the pastor, awaits the wedding party as the processional music begins. The congregation rises when the bride processes to the front. The bride is escorted into place by her groom, and the wedding party turns to face the front altar.

## **DISMISSAL OPTIONS**

*Along with the wedding processional, the dismissal practices at wedding ceremonies vary greatly. Following is a list of the most commonly used approaches to the wedding dismissal (please consider each option and be prepared to indicate a preference):*

### **Option 1: General Dismissal**

This option is designed to provide the most time-effective release of wedding guests. The approach assumes that a receiving line or time of some sort will be provided for at the wedding reception. The pastor indicates to wedding guests that they will be released without an usher following the service conclusion and that the receiving line will take place at the reception.

### **Option 2: Receiving Line Dismissal**

This option provides for a receiving line to be formed by the wedding couple and their parents immediately following the recessional. Ushers are instructed to provide for an orderly dismissal of guests.

### **Option 3: Couple Dismissal**

This option provides for guests to remain seated following the wedding recessional. The wedding couple then re-enters the sanctuary and dismisses the wedding guests.

## WEDDING SCRIPTURES

*As God's Word is foundational to the wedding ceremony, the following are provided as options to choose from for the readings. You may choose one from each section but we ask that one is always chosen from the Gospel readings.*

### Old Testament Readings:

1. Genesis 1:26-28, 31a                      Male and female He created them.
2. Genesis 2:18-24                          And they will be one flesh.
3. Psalm Options - 100; 117; 121; 127; 128; 133: 1-4, 18-22; 150
4. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12                      Two are better than one; a cord of three strands is not easily broken
5. Song of Solomon 2:10-13                The beloved speaks to his bride

### New Testament Readings:

1. Romans 8:31-39                          Who will separate us from the love of Christ?
2. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8                    What is love? Love is patient, kind, it does not boast, it is not proud.
3. Ephesians 5:18-33                      This mystery has many implications, Paul applies it to Christ and the Church.
4. Philippians 4:4-7                        Rejoice in the Lord always
5. Colossians 3:12-17                      Above all have love, which is the bond of perfection.
6. 1 Peter 3:1-9                            You should agree with one another, be sympathetic and love the brothers.
7. 1 John 4:7-12                            God is love.

### Gospel Readings:

1. Matthew 7:24-29                        Building your house on the rock will sustain it in the storms of life
2. Matthew 22:35-40                      Love is what summarizing the commandments
3. Luke 6:46-49                            The foundation of faith and life is hearing and obeying Jesus' words.
4. Luke 10:38-42                          Life entails work, but the greatest priority is to sit and listen to the Lord.
5. John 13:1-15                            The example Jesus puts in place – love one another and serve each other.
6. John 15:9-12                            Remain in my love; my command to you is to love one another.

## **POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

*To assure that wedding ceremonies at Grace remain Christ-centered and are of the highest possible caliber, a variety of policies and procedures have been established. It is our hope that the following policies and procedures will provide answers to questions that are commonly asked about weddings at Grace.*

### **Selection of Officiant:**

All of our pastors at Grace consider participation in the wedding ceremony to be a privilege. Our pastors are available to perform weddings throughout the year, with the exception of their personal vacation schedules. Couples may indicate a preference for one of our pastors for their ceremony or, where there is no preference, leave such choice up to the pastors. Preference for a specific pastor should be indicated on the Registration Form.

On occasion, we are asked about the participation of other clergy in weddings held at Grace Lutheran Church. It is our policy that other Lutheran Church Missouri Synod pastors may participate in the service. This should be cleared through one of Grace's pastors at the time your wedding is scheduled.

Participation in the wedding ceremony on the part of non-Missouri Synod pastors is not an option at Grace. Resolutions of our national church body (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) clearly prohibit the invitation of clergy from other church bodies to participate in our worship services.

\*Note additionally, that such resolutions do not apply to the arena of the wedding reception where participation on the part of other clergy is acceptable.

### **Off-Site Weddings:**

If you are planning a wedding at a venue other than the church sanctuary, please contact a pastor first to go over these details. Couples holding off-site weddings will still be asked to participate in the pre-marital class. Additionally, a Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to assist you with wedding preparations. If the pastor must drive to the wedding please note that mileage will be added to the fee for the wedding.

### **Music Selection:**

Music plays an important part in your marriage ceremony. Because you have chosen a Christian wedding, the music to be selected should reflect a biblical view of marriage. It should point to God as the author and sustainer of the marriage relationship. Selection of all music for the wedding ceremony must be cleared through Grace's Minister of Music and the officiating pastor. Please note in advance that songs that are purely secular in nature or do not reflect a biblical view of marriage will not be approved.

### **Vocalists and Instrumentalists:**

The Minister of Music at Grace stands ready to assist our wedding couples with lining up capable soloists and instrumentalists. In cases where the instrumentalists and vocalist requested are from outside of Grace, approval must be cleared through the Minister of Music. In addition, the Minister of Music will help you if you have your own musicians, but wish to use the instruments (piano, organ, keyboard) at Grace.

### **Wedding Times:**

On occasion Grace will receive more than one request for a wedding ceremony on a particular date. It is our policy at Grace to limit weddings to one per day. Please note that, with pastoral permission, weddings can start at any time. On Saturdays we require that all wedding activity (photography, dressing, receiving guests, etc.) be completed by 4:00PM in light of our evening worship service. No weddings available the first weekend of May and August.

#### Multi-Media:

During the planning of your marriage ceremony you will be given the option of using the multi-media equipment available in our sanctuary. Multi-media can be used for the purpose of welcoming guests, sharing important information, or projecting hymns for congregational singing. Couples may choose to include appropriate graphics and photographs.

Because of the sensitive nature of the multi-media equipment at Grace, it is a requirement that one of Grace's multi-media operators be involved in the production and operation of your multi-media presentation. Additionally, all multi-media productions must reflect the Christ-centered and biblical orientation of the wedding ceremony. Thus, all multi-media presentations must be approved by the multi-media coordinator **no later than 10 days prior to** the wedding ceremony.

#### Video:

A video camera is mounted in the sanctuary and can be used to capture live video of your wedding ceremony. Because of the sensitive nature of the video equipment at Grace, it is a requirement that one of Grace's camera operators be involved in the production of your video. This video will be a recording of your ceremony from the vantage point at the right of the sanctuary. The quality of the recording will not be that of a professionally produced keepsake. We do permit the use of a videographer during the service.

#### Sound Operators:

In most instances a sound operator will be required for the proper conduct of a wedding ceremony. The general rule under which we operate stipulates that any worship service involving the use of any musical instrument, vocalist(s), or necessitating the use of CD/DVD equipment will require the use of a qualified Grace sound operator. The Minister of Music will assist in lining up a qualified sound operator.

#### Wedding Coordinator:

The Wedding Coordinator is there to help you remember all of the details involved in the wedding service so that your wedding will be as hassle-free as possible. This person will also help conduct the wedding rehearsal and review specific details about the ceremony. On the wedding day, this person will set up the dressing rooms and line up the wedding party when the wedding is about to begin. They will be able to answer most questions that you have or find someone who can answer them.

### Flowers:

Flowers are a wonderful way to beautify the wedding service. Consultation with a florist will give you ideas of how to use flowers in the service. Although artificial flowers are allowed in the service, real flowers are to be on the altar as this is a reminder of our living Lord Jesus Christ. All floral arrangements on the altar should have protection under the vases to protect the altar from damage. If you wish to leave the flowers for the following Sunday services, please indicate this on your wedding registration forms.

### Aisle Decorations:

Bows can be used for the wedding with proper protection to the pews. **Scotch tape, adhesive tape, tacks and nails are not allowed** because of potential damage to the pews. Please discuss the use of any aisle candles with your Wedding Coordinator. We wish to protect your wedding guests and the sanctuary from damage.

### Unity Candle: (Optional)

The unity candle is a way to symbolize the joining of two separate individuals from two separate families now becoming one. It symbolizes the flame of love and the light of life. The single flame is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual commitment. The unity candle is actually three candles. Grace has a unity candle holder. Arrangement for using the unity candle holder should be made with your Wedding Coordinator.

### Photographers:

**Flash photography is not to be used during the worship service** as this is a worship service, but video photography during the wedding service may occur. One location for a video camera is towards the back of the church near the Baptismal font. Additionally, an un-manned camera may be set up in the front of the church off to the side of the altar area. Please check with your Wedding Coordinator with further questions. You may wish to add the statement: "Flash photography during the service is not allowed." to your bulletin/service folders.

Pre-wedding photographs should occur well in advance of the wedding ceremony to assure that the sanctuary is clear of photography equipment **at least 45 minutes prior to** the beginning of the service. The official photographer is allowed to photograph from the front until the end of the processional. They must then stay behind the back set of pews for all further pictures until the service is concluded.

### Rice, Bird Seed, Confetti, Bubbles:

The throwing of rice, birdseed, small candies, rose petals, or other such items is *not permitted*. These items tend to make walking surfaces slick, uneven and, as a result, create a potential danger to the guests.

Bubbles (outside), ringing of small bells, and notes of appreciation are all appropriate items to give guests to help celebrate the completion of the wedding.

### Service Folders/Bulletins:

Service folders are a nice way to let your wedding guests know who the members of your wedding party are and their relationship to you. It is also a way to help your guests follow the order of the service. We encourage you to e-mail a sample of your service folder to the Pastor performing your ceremony and your Wedding Coordinator **four weeks prior to** your wedding so a second set of eyes can review it prior to printing.

### Ushers:

You will want to give consideration to the number of ushers you select. It is best to have *one usher for every 75 guests*, with a minimum of two ushers. The traditional seating is to seat friends of the bride on the left and friends of the groom on the right, however, this is optional. The guests are to be ushered down the side aisles leaving the main aisle for the ushering of the parents of the groom and the mother of the bride.

It is common courtesy for the usher to escort a lady on his arm, the gentleman will follow. The wedding program is handed to the man as he takes his seat. If there are two ladies, it is customary for the usher to offer an arm to the eldest lady.

The grandparents of the bridal couple are to be ushered in prior to the beginning of the service or after candles have been lit. They are to be seated in a reserved area in front of the church. The parents of the groom are ushered down the main aisle prior to the beginning of the ceremony. The mother of the bride is the last to be ushered in and is ushered down the main aisle prior to the beginning of the ceremony. The parents of the groom are often ushered by the groom, and the mother of the bride is often ushered either by the groom or an usher.

Please note if there are other special seating needs on the Marriage Registration Form.

### Flower Girls – Ring Bearers:

Very young flower girls and ring bearers who are too young to stand quietly during the service should be seated with adults in the pews. This will prevent them from being a distraction during your wedding service. It is desirable that the children be four years or older. It is important that you use artificial flower petals if the flower girl is to drop petals. **Real flower petals are not allowed because they are slippery and stain the carpet.**

### Animals in the Wedding Service

Grace does not allow animals to be a part of the wedding service that are not service animals. Animals are not allowed to be present at the service that are not necessary due to physical or medical reasons.

### Candlelighters:

Candlelighters should be tall enough so to reach the tops of the candles. Candlelighters will practice lighting the candles during and after the wedding rehearsal if desired.

### Dressing Rooms:

The conference room will be used for bridal attendants and the Commons will be used for the groomsmen. Personal belongings should be kept together in a bag for each individual. The bride's room will be locked during the ceremony. It is important that you provide the name of the person who will be responsible for the removal of all belongings at the end of the wedding service. Your Wedding Coordinator will unlock the bride's room at the end of the service.

### Eating:

The wedding party will probably be meeting at the church two to three hours prior to the beginning of the service. It is a busy day and often the wedding party has not had time to eat prior to the reception. Thus, it is desirable to provide light snacks for the wedding party. The snacks should be something that will not spoil easily, stain clothing or require many utensils. Sandwiches, vegetables, fruits and chips are appropriate. In

addition, you may want to provide some drinks as well. Any supplies needed to serve the snack should be provided by the wedding party.

Witnesses:

State law requires validating signature of two individuals who witness the wedding. Ordinarily, the best man and the maid (matron) of honor are chosen for this purpose. The full names of both witnesses will be required for Grace's church records.

Alcoholic Beverages:

No alcoholic beverages of any kind are allowed on the church premise (including driveway and parking lot) in connection with the wedding or rehearsal. **The church reserves the right to ask anyone who has been drinking to leave the premises.** Please assist us in this observance.

Smoking:

Grace's facility is a smoke-free environment. Please assist us in communicating this to the wedding party and your participants.

Marriage License:

You should apply for a marriage license at least six days and no more than 36 days before the wedding in the county in which you reside. At the time of applying for a license, you will need to supply the following:

- Proof of Identification: a valid Wisconsin Driver's License, passport, or other form of photo identification is required to certify date of birth.
- Proof of Residency: At least one party must be a resident of the County where you're applying for at least 30 days. This can be proven by a valid Wisconsin driver's license with current address.
- Social Security Numbers- Both parties are required to show proof of their social security numbers in order to obtain a marriage license.
- Birth Certificates: All applicants must bring in a certified copy of their birth certificate from the Register of Deed's office in the county where they were born (which will have a raised or colored seal on it.) Photocopies or hospital certificates will not be accepted.
- Divorce Papers/or Certified Death Certificates (if applicable) - If one of the applicants has been married before, they must bring a file stamped copy of the Divorce Judgment, Annulment papers or certified death certificate from their last marriage. If the marriage ended in divorce, the divorce must be final for at least 6 months.
- Date of Ceremony: Wedding date must be set with your officiant, Judge or Court Commissioner before applying for your license.
- Officiating Pastor's Information: Name, address, phone number
- Fee for Marriage License is \$110 (cash only)

**Both the bride and groom must be present to apply for and sign the application.**

A marriage license in Waukesha County in the State of Wisconsin can be obtained at the County Clerk's office:

Waukesha County Administration Center  
515 W. Moreland Blvd., Room 120  
Waukesha, WI 53188  
Phone: 262-548-7010 / Email: [countyclerk@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:countyclerk@waukeshacounty.gov)

**FACILITY INFORMATION**

Facility Capacity:

Grace Lutheran has the capacity to comfortably seat up to 740 guests.

Facility Map:

See below



## WEDDING CHECKLIST

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Forms Turned in to the Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
(6 Months Prior to Wedding)

Pre-marital Class \_\_\_\_\_

ZoeScore Completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(4 Weeks Prior to *Pre-marital Class*)

Read: When Sinners Say "I Do" \_\_\_\_\_  
(Complete Prior to *Pre-marital Class*)

Contact Music Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
(6-8 Weeks Prior to Wedding)

Schedule Meeting with Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(4-6 Weeks Prior to Wedding)

Wedding Program Covers due to Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
(2 Weeks Prior to Wedding)

Wedding Program Due to Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
(2 Weeks Prior to Wedding)

Resource: [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com) to purchase bulletin covers

All Fees due to Church Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
(21 days Prior to Wedding)

Wedding License Due to Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
(At Wedding Rehearsal)

Relax and Enjoy Your Wedding Day

## Wedding Fees

<b>Facility Fee*:</b> (Fee Due to Hold Date)	\$300	\$50 (Off-site)
<b>Pastor:</b> (If offsite - Add mileage to fee)	\$250	
<b>Music Coordinator:</b> (If offsite - Add mileage to fee + \$25 if moving equipment is necessary)	\$200	
<b>Multi-media Coordinator:</b> (Only if necessary)	\$50	
<b>Wedding Coordinator:</b> (Time limit 2 hours for rehearsal and 4 hours day of wedding)	\$150	
<b>Secondary Wedding Coordinator:</b> (Time limit 2 hours for rehearsal and 4 hours day of wedding)	\$100	
<b>Soloist:</b>	\$75	
<b>Bulletin Fee:</b> (Only if printed at the church)	\$25	

*Please note: Hair and makeup must be done off-site. Wedding attire can be brought to the church the night of the rehearsal.*

*Facility charge covers usage for the time of the wedding and premarital class. It also includes all utilities, sound system, video system, and the cleaning of the facility before and after the service. It also includes the fee for the premarital class.*

*\*All fees are due to the church office 3 weeks before the wedding day.*