

Are you ready to help other women become

Completely His?

Are you looking for a unique idea for a women's retreat?

One that will provide an extraordinary experience for women of all ages?

One that will drive home the encouraging principles presented in the *Loving Jesus Without Limits* series about how we can fully embrace our role as the beloved bride of Christ?

Consider hosting a *Completely His* women's event so that the special ladies in your church, on your campus, or within your circle of friends will experience the joy of committing their "bridal love" to Jesus Christ, their heavenly Bridegroom.

Because a bride doesn't feel like a bride until she walks down the aisle wearing white, this event resembles a wedding ceremony in many ways... a wedding unlike any other you've ever attended... a wedding that will provide a sweet foretaste of the great wedding supper of the Lamb that is yet to come someday!

My ministry assistants and I have coordinated these events for the past several years, for groups as small as ten and as large as four hundred. We've been so overwhelmed by the participants' responses that we've put together this planning guide to help you host your own *Completely His* women's event. Just listen to how this event has affected women...

"I've frequently heard that I am the bride of Christ, but I never grasped the magnitude of what that meant. But when Shannon gave us an opportunity to attend this event and pledge our bridal love to Christ, it all became powerfully real to me. Now I host these events myself because I want other women to experience the love I've found in my Heavenly Bridegroom."

- Lyn, age 52

“Tears of joy flowed freely as I walked down the aisle to unite my candle with Christ’s. Even if I get married to a wonderful man someday, no wedding will ever compare to this experience -- at least not until I attend the wedding supper of the Lamb when Jesus actually returns for me.”

- Tracy, age 20

“You have to experience this event to believe how meaningful and life-transforming it really is! It’s worth every ounce of effort to see women truly feel as if they are *Completely His!*”

- Samantha, age 38

Just click on any of the following documents or downloadable forms to guide you in the process of planning your own *Completely His* event, all to be used in conjunction with the *Completely His* DVD series.

1. Event Overview
2. Sample Schedules
3. Ceremony Suggestions
4. Reception Suggestions
5. Special Event Products
6. Planning Team Recruitment
7. Marketing / Registration
8. Event Budget
9. Follow Up Ideas

1. EVENT OVERVIEW

Session 1 - Glimpses of God (40 min.)

Shannon shares the testimony of her first face-to-face encounter with the Lover of her soul, an incredible story that will shock and inspire you to see God's mercy and unconditional love through a whole new lens. Learn to catch your own glimpses of our loving God through nature, human nature, and through the "Love Letter" He wrote especially to you.

Session 2 - An Extraordinary Proposal (40 min.)

Jesus isn't just our Savior, Master, and Friend, but also our loving heavenly Bridegroom! Comprehend His extraordinary wedding proposal, and unwrap the unique and extravagant wedding gifts He's prepared especially for His beloved.

Session 3 – The Response He Longs to Receive (40 min.)

What kind of response does Jesus long to receive to His extraordinary proposal of limitless love? Learn what it means to forsake all others, die to ourselves, live as His pure and spotless bride, and enjoy unbroken fellowship with our Bridegroom.

"Mary & Martha" Time (1 hour)

Everyone divides into two groups, (1) a Mary/Martha group, and (2) a Martha/Mary group. During the 30-minute "Mary" time, participants will prepare themselves for the ceremony by writing vows of commitment to their heavenly Bridegroom. During the 30-minute "Martha" time, participants will help physically prepare the room for the unforgettable wedding ceremony and reception. The Wedding Coordinator and Planning Team will designate various responsibilities during this time to effectively execute the special evening.

Wedding Ceremony / Worship

In a once-in-a-lifetime wedding ceremony, women will experience a foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb. As each participant walks down the aisle wearing white and pledges her eternal love to Jesus, a new awareness of what it means to be the bride of Christ is awakened.

Feast of the Brides / Reception

The celebration continues with the "Feast of the Brides" dinner and a wedding reception, complete with all of the trimmings such as a wedding cake, punch, monogrammed napkins, photography, etc.

Session 4 - A Holy Impartation (40 min.)

When a bride and groom spend intimate moments together, a new life is often formed as they consummate their passionate love for one another. The same is true in the spiritual realm. Recognize what kind of dreams God may have implanted in you when He knit you together, and be inspired to diligently labor in order to bring those dreams to life.

2. SAMPLE SCHEDULES

Feel free to custom-tailor this event to fit your weekend schedule, whether that's a Friday night & Saturday, a Friday night through Sunday, or a Saturday-only retreat. For simplicity's sake, here's a sample Saturday-only schedule that includes time for Small Group sessions (small group discussion questions for each of the 4 sessions are included with your DVD purchase):

Standard Saturday Schedule

10:00 - 10:30	Welcome / Announcements / Worship
10:30 - 11:15	Completely His DVD - Session 1
11:15 - 12:00	Small Groups
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:45	Completely His DVD - Session 2
1:45 - 2:30	Small Groups
2:30 - 2:45	Break
2:45 - 3:30	Completely His DVD - Session 3
3:30 - 4:30	"Mary & Martha" Time
4:30 - 5:45	Wedding Ceremony / Worship
5:45 - 7:00	Feast of the Brides / Reception
7:00 - 7:45	Completely His DVD - Session 4
7:45 - 8:30	Small Groups
8:30 - 9:00	Closing Worship / Prayer / Dismissal

Condensed One-day Schedule (no Small Group times)

1:00 - 1:30	Welcome, announcements, worship
1:30 - 2:15	Completely His DVD - Session I
2:15 - 2:30	Break
2:30 - 3:15	Completely His DVD - Session II
3:15 - 3:30	Break
3:30 - 4:15	Completely His DVD - Session III
4:15 - 5:30	"Mary & Martha" Time
5:30 - 6:30	Wedding Ceremony / Worship
6:30 - 7:45	Feast of the Brides / Reception
7:45 - 8:30	Completely His DVD - Session 4
8:30 - 9:00	Closing Worship / Prayer / Dismissal

3. CEREMONY SUGGESTIONS

Although participants will glean much throughout each teaching session, the highlight of this event is the ceremony that takes place that evening where you'll get a foretaste of the great wedding supper of the Lamb that is to come someday when our heavenly Bridegroom returns for His bride, the church.

Although women may know in their heads that they are considered the "bride of Christ," a bride doesn't know *in her heart* that she is a bride until she's walked down the aisle wearing white and pledged her eternal commitment to her beloved. Therefore, this ceremony is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for women to move God's love from their heads down deep into their hearts where it will truly transform their lives and relationships (with God, self, and others).

Not only does it sweep women off their feet to experience this event, but I believe it delights Jesus' heart as well. As the Bridegroom, it's *His* wedding day as well. Sense His pleasure as He witnesses all of these elaborate expressions of our bridal love!

Here's a few suggestions for making this ceremony as meaningful as possible:

1. Invite Everyone to Wear White

In your confirmation information (whether done by mail or email), encourage participants to wear a white shirt and jeans on Saturday. However, some will forget, so consider having the white *Completely His* Event t-shirts in a variety of sizes for sale at the Merchandise Table (you can order these at www.shannonethridge.com). Or, if you'd like to build a t-shirt into to the registration cost, shirts can be made available to all participants, which makes for really cool pictures when everyone is somewhat uniformly dressed.

2. Make Bridal Veils

Of course, a bride must wear white not just on her body, but also on her head! Fun bridal veils can be made by each participant using three inexpensive items from Wal-Mart or your local craft store:

- (2) white pipe cleaners
- (7) clear plastic crystal beads
- (1) section of white tulle ribbon (3-6" wide x 36-48" long)

Begin by twisting the two pipe cleaners together to make one long strand. Thread the seven beads over the twisted place in the center of the strand. Form the strand into a circle and twist the other two ends together, intertwining the middle of the tulle ribbon as you twist. Tie the tulle ribbon into a bow and *viola!* You have a lovely bridal veil that creates even more wedding ambience and fun photo opportunities! There's no right or wrong here – just provide the supplies and let the ladies get creative!

3. *Personalized Programs / Vows*

One of the most treasured pieces of memorabilia that women hold onto long after this event is their Ceremony Program. You are welcome to create your own, or you can order the ones we use for only \$1 each. The program has a place inside for vows to be written, and the personalized cover (including the bride's name and the ceremony date) looks something like this:

*On this day,
October 13, 2007,

Tracy Parker
pledges her bridal love to

Jesus Christ*

*"...Blessed are those who are invited
to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"
- Revelation 19:7-8*

Personalizing your own ceremony programs is easy using the Mail Merge option in Microsoft Word. However, if this idea intimidates you, just email us your list of bride's first and last names and let us do it for you!

4. *Group Liturgy (Corporate Reading)*

The Event Hostess is free to say a few words of her choosing at the ceremony and include any scriptural readings she desires (for example, Hosea 2, Revelation 19, or Revelation 21). In addition, there will be a group liturgy and a time of personal commitment at the altar. Feel free to custom tailor the liturgy however the Planning Team would like, but here's a standard liturgy to go by, along with specific directions to give participants so that the ceremony goes smoothly and relatively quickly.

Marriage is a holy covenant not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but with reverence and awe of our Almighty God. It is because our heavenly Bridegroom has offered Himself completely to us that we now offer ourselves completely to Him. Of course, today's ceremony is merely a foretaste of what is to come at the great wedding supper of the Lamb when Jesus actually returns for His beloved bride, the church.

- Corporately, I'll ask you to recite the standard bridal vow.

- Afterward, you'll be ushered by rows to the back of the room to light your candle.

- Individually, you'll proceed up the aisle carrying your lit candle, make your pledge of commitment at the altar, then receive a token of your pledge.

- Afterward, you'll return to your seat where you'll continue in worship until our ceremony concludes and our reception begins.

Now, as a group, I invite you to repeat after me:

*I (state your name),
Take thee, Jesus,
To be my heavenly Bridegroom,
To have and hold in my heart
From this day forward,
For better or for worse,
For richer or for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
Knowing that not even death shall separate us.
I will love, worship, and adore you
For all eternity,
And I commit my life
To being your holy helpmate.*

I now pronounce you "the bride of Christ" and invite you to come forward with your candle aflame. As you step forward, I will simply ask you personally, "Do you take Jesus Christ as your heavenly Bridegroom?" Your response will hopefully be, "I do!" In response, I will declare, "And so does He!"

You will then unite your candle's flame with the Lord's candle here in front, then blow your individual candle out as a symbol that you now abide fully in Christ. After blowing out your own candle, you will receive a sterling silver wedding ring charm, and a sweet kiss (the chocolate kind!) as a token of the pledge you are making today.

5. Unity Candles

Place one large candle at the back of the center aisle, and one at the front of the aisle (beside where the Event Hostess will be standing during the ceremony). After the corporate vow is taken and as worship songs are sang, participants will be ushered to the back of the room by rows. At the back of the room (nearby where one large candle will be burning), have a table set up with enough smaller individual candles and drip discs (to catch hot wax) for each participant. They will light their candle by touching it to the larger candle's flame, proceed up the aisle, respond to the Event Hostess' question, then unite their flame with the Lord's candle and blow their own flame out.

6. *Wedding Ring Charms*

As a token of her pledge, the bride receives a sterling silver wedding ring charm in a dainty white box with a *Loving Jesus Without Limits* seal (available at www.shannonethridge.com for only \$6 each).

7. *Kisses*

Every bride expects a kiss on her wedding day, and since God gave us the precious gift of chocolate (thank you, God!), each bride can be given a Hershey's Kiss at the altar.

8. *Digital Photography*

Since this is such a special and sacred moment for every participant, having a digital photographer on hand to catch a shot of each individual at the altar will provide a wonderful and much-appreciated gift. The reception is also a great time to take fun photos.

Consider posting the pictures on a website such as Snapfish.com so that they can be easily viewed by everyone and individuals can order all the copies they want.

9. *Worship Music*

One of the most important elements of this ceremony is the worship songs that will be sang as participants proceed down the aisle. I encourage you to select your songs wisely, aiming for passionate and intimate "love songs" to the Lord such as:

- "Draw Me Close to You" by Kelly Carpenter
- "Your Love is Extravagant" by Darryl Evans
- "More Than Enough" by Chris Tomlin
- "I Could Sing of Your Love Forever" by Martin Smith
- "Amazing Love" by Chris Tomlin
- "Draw Me, Lord" by Selah
- "We Will Dance" by David Ruis

4. RECEPTION SUGGESTIONS

The reception should be a fun party with lots of hugs, wedding cake, punch, and great music (continued worship music is fine, but should be slightly more upbeat than the ceremony music). This is a fantastic time for group pictures to be taken!

Ask a local bakery to either discount or donate a wedding cake. Sometimes they'll do this in exchange for an announcement of their generosity and distribution of their business cards. If professional bakeries are too expensive, consider using a grocery store bakery. Their cakes are often just as nice and very tasty.

Another fun addition is beautiful white embossed napkins with silver lettering that says:

*“...Blessed are those who are invited
to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”
- Revelation 19:7-8*

(Napkins available at www.shannonethridge.com for \$10 per 25 ct.)

As participants leave the facility (following the last DVD session and closing time of worship and prayer), consider sending them off in traditional bridal style! If your facility will allow it, give them an unexpected shower of rice, birdseed, rose petals, or bubbles!

5. SPECIAL EVENT PRODUCTS

We'll custom-tailor a special "**COMPLETELY HIS EVENT KIT**" to make your retreat an unforgettable experience. Choose from the following products:

Items can be viewed at www.shannonethridge.com

All four of Shannon's Sessions on 2 DVDs with accompanying Small Group Discussion Questions	\$60.00
Wedding Ceremony Programs	1.00 each
<i>Completely His</i> Event T-shirts	14.00 each
Sterling Silver Wedding Ring Charms	6.00 each
Embossed Reception Napkins	10.00 per 25

6. PLANNING TEAM RECRUITMENT

As with any wedding ceremony, some like a more intimate setting and others want a larger gathering. I've done these events for groups as small as 10 and as large as 400! How large or small you make your event is entirely up to you, but I suggest you coordinate the efforts of several volunteers, especially if you are planning for a large group.

Here are some suggestions as to how tasks can be divided so that your *Completely His* event is smooth and successful:

Consider recruiting the following:

1. EVENT HOSTESS

- Serves as Planning Team Chairperson
- Finalizes Event schedule with Planning Team
- Serves as the Emcee for event & leads wedding ceremony

2. FACILITY COORDINATOR(S)

- Secures event location & makes necessary reservations
- Handles stage & seating arrangements
- Recruits clean-up committee and secures facility after the event

3. MARKETING COORDINATOR(S)

- Coordinates distribution of event posters in strategic locations
(Go to www.shannonethridge.com to download free 8x11 or 11x17 color posters. For professional printing, forward the file electronically to a local printer.)
- Places ads in local newspapers, church bulletins, church websites, etc.
- Contacts local radio stations for public announcement of event

4. REGISTRATION COORDINATOR(S)

- Coordinates (email or paper) distribution & reception of registration forms
(Go to www.shannonethridge.com to download Event Registration Form)
- Communicates anticipated attendance to Planning Team
- Sends (email or paper) confirmations with misc. vital info. to registrants
- Formats and sends email blasts including count-down information to keep everyone excited about the event
- Creates Personalized Ceremony Programs using registration database (if you decide to print your own rather than having us print them for you).
- Creates nametags using registration database

5. BUDGET COORDINATOR

- Deposits incoming registration fees
- Oversees outgoing expenses
- 3 to 4 weeks prior to your event, order necessary materials such as DVDs, event t-shirts, wedding ring charms, napkins, etc. from www.shannonethridge.com.

6. DECORATIONS COORDINATOR(S)

- Decides on decorations that will create “wedding ambience,” including veil materials for each bride, bridal candles, unity candle, etc.
- Facilitates the acquisition of room/table/stage decorations
- Facilitates the return or proper storage of all decorations after event

7. FOOD COORDINATOR(S)

- Establishes menu for each meal involved
- Selects wedding cake, punch, and other reception items
- Places all food & beverage orders to vendors/caterers and determines serving utensils needed

8. WORSHIP/A-V COORDINATOR

- Selects worship leader and/or praise band
- Provides guidance for song selection
- Secures Audio-Visual technician to facilitate sound, DVD and Powerpoint projection for worship song lyrics

9. PRAYER/FOLLOW-UP COORDINATOR

- Lifts Planning Team in Prayer
- Prays for Event Registrants
- Coordinates Ceremony Ushers and Altar team for prayer during worship sessions
- Gathers information from visitors for follow-up invitations to attend worship services, attend Bible study, or connect in a support group

10. MERCHANDISE TABLE COORDINATOR(S)

(In Coordination with Budget Coordinator)

- Contacts local bookstore to order copies of *Completely His* and the *Loving Jesus Without Limits* devotionals for book table sales and/or for each participant if books are built into registration cost
- Orders additional Event t-shirts from www.shannonethridge.com for sale at merchandise table
- Sets up merchandise table prior to event & breaks it down afterward
- Provides sales report to Budget Coordinator

7. MARKETING / REGISTRATION

Consider advertising your event in the following ways:

- Place event posters in strategic locations like local Christian bookstores, grocery store bulletin boards, other churches, etc.
(Go to www.shannonethridge.com to download free color posters)
- Place ads in local newspapers, church bulletins & websites, etc.
- Contact local radio stations for public announcement of event.
- For registration, choose from a paper form or on-line registration, or offer both!
(Go to www.shannonethridge.com to download free Event Registration Forms)
- Consider sending (email or paper) confirmations with miscellaneous vital information about the event (such as a reminder to wear white!) to all registrants.

8. EVENT BUDGETING GUIDE

In planning a budget for your event, consider the following:

	<u>Fixed Expenses</u>	<u>Variable Expenses</u>
Completely His DVD	\$60.00	
<i>Completely His</i> Event T-shirts		14.00 each
Sterling Silver Wedding Ring Charms		6.00 each
Personalized Ceremony Programs		1.00 each
Monogrammed Reception Napkins		10.00 per 25
<i>Completely His</i> (lead book)	consult local bookstore for bulk order pricing	
<i>Completely Loved</i> (devotional #1)		
<i>Completely Forgiven</i> (devotional #2)		
<i>Completely Blessed</i> (devotional #3)		
<i>Completely Irresistible</i> (devotional #4)		

Costs Established by Planning Team

Printing & Postage	*
Saturday Lunch	*
Bridal Veil Materials	*
Unity Candles & Drip Discs	*
Saturday Dinner (“Feast of the Brides”)	*
Wedding Cake (approx. \$2-3 per person)	*
Punch	*
Room Decorations	*
Miscellaneous (Hershey Kisses, Birdseed, etc.)	*
Honorariums	*
(Worship leader, A/V Technician, Digital Photographer, etc.)	

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* Determined by Planning Team based on registration numbers.

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The Planning Team determines the registration fee per person based on anticipated event expenses. Here are a few questions to consider in arriving at the registration fee:

- Do we want to underwrite a portion of this event in order to reduce registration costs?
- Do we want to build money into the budget to provide scholarships for women who need financial assistance to attend?
- Do we want this event to be a fund-raiser for our church or women’s ministry program?
- Do we want to build in the cost of an event t-shirt for each participant?
- Do we want to build in the cost of the *Completely His* lead book and/or one of the *Loving Jesus Without Limits* devotional(s) to give participants as a “wedding gift?”

9. FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

Many of the women who attend this event will leave very hungry and thirsty -- not for more physical food such as wedding cake and punch, but for more spiritual food such as Bible study and introspective prayer. That's why Shannon followed up the lead book, *Completely His*, with these four devotionals:

Completely Loved: Recognizing God's Passionate Pursuit of Us
Completely Forgiven: Responding to God's Transforming Grace
Completely Blessed: Discovering God's Extraordinary Gifts
Completely Irresistible: Drawing Others To God's Extravagant Love

Each of these 30-day devotionals consists of a daily Bible reading, a devotional reading, "Holding His Hand" reflection questions, and a prayer. Combine all four of these devotionals and you have four consecutive months (one full semester) of individual or group study material. *The best idea is for a women's group to make this the focus of their women's ministry program for the four-to-six month period following this event.*

You may even consider wrapping up a copy of the lead book, one of the four devotionals, or a set of all five books in the series for each event participant as a "wedding gift" from your women's ministry program! Another idea is to build these books into the cost of the event so that every woman walks away with a semester's worth of study about how she can cultivate her bridal love for Christ. Also consider creating a book marker with your church's worship service, Bible study, and support group information to be included with the book(s).

Contact your local bookstore to order copies of *Completely His* and and/or the *Loving Jesus Without Limits* devotionals, or if there's not one near you, autographed books can be ordered through www.shannonethridge.com (allow a minimum of 10-14 business days for delivery).