On a high shelf in my linen closet is a large box labeled “wedding dress.” I opened it one day and was disappointed to see how extensively my beautiful bridal dress had yellowed. When I made the dress 53 years ago, the lovely brocaded satin was a dazzling white, and it qualified in every way for temple use. But when I saw what time had done to the color, out went my sentimental dream of having a granddaughter wear my beautiful dress. As a temple matron, I had become aware of guidelines for bridal attire, and I knew my yellowed gown would no longer be acceptable for temple use.

Realizing that other members might benefit from this knowledge, I mention the following guidelines (adapted from “Brides’ Dresses for Temple Marriages,” Bulletin, 1992, no. 1, p. 2).

• Each dress should be white. Many things in the temple are symbolic, and white brings to mind purity, virtue, and cleanliness of body, mind, and heart. Some fabrics may look white until you put them next to a sheet of typing paper. If you are in doubt about a fabric for your dress, try the paper test or take a swatch of the fabric you plan to use to the temple for appraisal before buying or making your dress.

• Brides should wear dresses that are modest, with a high neckline and long skirt. Temple workers will ask a bride to wear a dickey, or fabric insert, if her dress shows the shoulder or collarbone.

• Long sleeves are required. Because some current styles of gowns have short sleeves, special sleeve extensions are available at temples throughout the world. However, you may wish to add your own extension from fabric that would look good with your dress.

• Sheer fabrics must be lined. Camisoles and sleeve liners may be worn under a dress that has sheer areas or see-through lace panels. Brides who wish to use their dresses later for temple sessions, however, must have a permanent lining put in.

• A train must be removable or designed in such a way that it can be fastened into a bustle during the temple ceremonies.

• New styles of wedding dresses with long, slim skirts have recently been brought to the temple. These often have a long slit up the side or back of the skirt, extending above the knee. Because such a style is not appropriate for temple use, workers will provide the bride with a long slip or back apron to fill the gap. A bride may wish to furnish her own modest filler instead.
• Dresses should be free of elaborate ornamentation and kept in harmony with the simple and sacred nature of the temple ceremony. Also, each temple has a selection of lovely wedding dresses that a bride may use for the temple portion of the day’s events.

*Margaret Richards, “Temple Bridal Dress Guidelines,” Ensign, June 1997, 72*