

Standard Child Naming Ceremony...

Minister's Welcome

Friends, We meet here to take part together in a simple ceremony. We do so for a number of reasons. Firstly, [DAD] and [MOM] wish to express their joy to you on the birth of [CHILD]. They are pleased that [CHILD] has arrived safely in this world. They want to welcome him/her into their family unit, to the wider family of their relatives, and to the community of their friends and the world.

They wish you all to share this joy. It is certain that the more love this child receives the more he will benefit in his life and the more love in turn he will be able to give to others. The more people to whom this child relates the more balanced and rich his growth will be.

So your presence at this celebration today is appreciated, as will be your interest and involvement in the years ahead.

First Reading

The first reading I would like to share involves us all. As a community of friends and family we all take part in the responsibility to provide the atmosphere in which young [CHILD] will develop as a person. It is called:

A CHILD LEARNS WHAT HE LIVES

If a child lives with criticism
he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility
he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule
he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame
he learns to feel guilt.

BUT,

If a child lives with tolerance
he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement
he learns confidence.

If a child lives with fairness
he learns justice.

If a child lives with security
he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval
he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
he learns to find love in the world.

Second Reading

This celebration also is an occasion when [DAD] and [MOM] want to make themselves aware of their proper role as parents. This, they feel, is expressed well in the words of the prophet, Kahlil Gibran.

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters
of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you
yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love
but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts,

You may house their bodies
but not their souls

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit

not even in your dreams

You may strive to be like them,

but seek not to make them like you

For life goes not backward

nor carries with yesterday

You are simply the bows from which your children
as living arrows

are sent forth.

The Parents' Vows

Mom and **Dad**, the journey of parenthood is one of amazing beauty, this is clear just to look at you both. The love that radiates from and around you and your daughter/son today shall change over the years. We gather here because it is our wish that Child's Name grow to be a man/woman who truly loves his/her life.

You most of all will be his/her guide on this journey. It is important to provide not only food and clothing to a child but also time and love and respect. So it is only right that this ceremony should include your promise to nurture your son/daughter in all ways as he/she grows. Therefore as a promise to him/her and a reminder to yourselves as the years pass, I now ask you:

Do you promise to keep the bonds between you strong, thereby providing Child's Name with a stable and loving home, giving him/her a firm foundation, and a good example of what it means to be committed to one another in love and joy, through difficult and wonderful times as husband and wife, parents, partners, teachers and friends?"

Parents Respond: “Yes.”

“That you will value his/her hopes and dreams and let him/her know that he/ she will always be welcomed, accepted and loved for who he/she is and for who he/she is not.”

Parents Respond: “Yes.”

“To expose him/her to a variety of experiences, showing him/her the beginnings of many a wondrous journey, instilling in him/her a sense of wonder and passion, and the knowledge that he/she alone has the power to complete herself?”

Parents Respond: “Yes.”

“Do you promise to hold him/her close in your hearts always, yet still encourage him/her to stand on his/her own when the time comes so that he/she may discover his/her own true self?”

Parents Respond: “Yes.”

“Do you promise to instill in your son/daughter a connection to the divinity that lives both in the world around and within himself/herself, that he/she will know his/her true and inherent value as a human being and a child of the Universe?”

Parents Respond: “Yes.”

Recognition of Grandparents

Grandparents (optional - edit as required)

It is not always possible for grandparents to involve themselves in the development of their grandchildren - but when they do it is a great bonus and blessing. The important role played by grandparents is the passing on of cultural values to children.

They assist children find their identity and their inner security - and to integrate themselves into society. The special relationship of trust and mutual enjoyment which develops between child and grandparent is something very special. Through this relationship children learn their lineage, their history - and many values and skills.

This cultural inheritance lays the foundation for the young person to construct their personality during childhood and adolescence and adds great meaning to their existence. For this reason [DAD] and [MOM] wish to recognize and express their gratification that [GRANDFATHER1] and [GRANDMOTHER1], as well as [GRANDFATHER2] and [GRANDMOTHER2] are here today.

Godparents (If parents elect to have godparents)

It is often mistakenly thought that the Godparents are the ones who shall raise a child in the event that the parents cannot. But this is not so. Godparents are those who promise they will be there to help the child grow spiritually. The promise is one of a physical presence in his/her

life as someone who he/she knows will always be standing quietly behind him/her, encouraging him/her to make good choices, and sharing with him/her the lessons they themselves have learned along the way.

As Child's Name parents Mom and Dad, have the responsibility to safeguard his/her future. Have you chosen those who will aid you in giving love and council to your child as he/she grows?"

Parents Respond: "We Have."

"We have chosen _____ and _____."

Godparents come forward

Minister:

While you are not Child's Name parents the place that you have both taken in his/her life is an important one. Mom and Dad trust your motivations and your judgment completely and they take comfort in knowing that he/she will always be able to come to you for guidance and support. By accepting the role of Godparent you say to Child's Name: I promise, I will be there for you. With this in mind I now ask you...

Do you, vow and promise to take Child's Name as your spiritual child, to nurture and protect him/her, give him/her your love, strength and support, to keep him/her from harms way, and help to guide in goodness this new soul on the earth?"

Godparents Respond: "We will."

"May you always know how special you are to Mom and Dad that they would ask you to tend to the most precious thing that they have in this world."

The Naming

Importance of the Name

We give the child a name in this ceremony, and by doing so we declare that the child is an individual, a unique and a separate person with a dignity and a life of his/her own. A name once given will be associated forever with a face, a voice, a walk, a laugh and all the other idiosyncrasies our families and friends recognize that reflect this child's individuality. This child's name will be spoken, whispered, shouted, cried, sung and written – thousands of times, impersonally and meaningfully – by family, friends, neighbors, teachers, doctors, colleagues, loves, strangers, and maybe by children and grandchildren. It will define her/his identity.

Mom & Dad what name have you chosen for your child?

Parents Respond: We have chosen the name _____

Names are a powerful part of our identity, the name _____ you have chosen means _____.

Water Ceremony

Child's Name you are named with water as a symbol of the common life which is in you and in the world about you. We welcome you to the community of life on earth and dedicate you to everything which is beautiful and truthful and good. Our blessing for you is that the love that surrounds you today will wash over you like rain every day of your life, just as this water rains on you now...

We send into you the blessing of Spirit,

minister sprinkles water over the child's head

We send into you, the love of your parents,

minister sprinkles water over the child's head

And the love of all your family, friends, and loved ones, whether near or far,

minister sprinkles water over the child's head

You are now formally named _____,
From this day forward, may you know Love to be your constant companion.”

Final Declaration

This ceremony will in no way inhibit [CHILD] from seeking the truth during his/her life and any future religious or non religious commitments of belief. In fact, it is our duty to present him/her in the coming years with a broad and balanced view of life, and encourage him/her in the virtues we all agree as good - integrity, honesty, concern, fairness and love toward his fellow human beings.

Blessing

Will you now each in your own way join with me in spirit as I ask for blessings upon this child....

May you be blessed with love.
May your life be full of those whose hearts are pure
May you love well, and be well loved.

May you be blessed with wisdom.
May you continually learn from the world around you. Seeing with eyes of kindness may they guide you always.

May you be blessed with community.
May you always be blessed with the awareness
that you are an essential part of a circle of family and friends.
May there always be within this group a sense of mutual love, trust, support and respect.

May you be blessed with art and beauty.
May your creative aspirations and experiences find expression
and bring you joy and fulfillment.

May you be blessed with health.
May life bestow upon you wholeness of mind, body, and spirit.
May you live long and know many joys.

Welcome

On behalf of all who shall know [him/her], with the hope that [he/she] finds among us all
the nourishment [he/she] needs, I now welcome [state full name of child] to our
community.

Presentation of the Naming Certificate

I now ask Mom & Dad (and the Godparents) to join me at the table to sign the Certificate of
Naming.

[Mom] and [Dad] would like to extend their heartfelt appreciation for your presence here today
in welcoming [child] into the family and community. Please enjoy the rest of the day [or give
specific directions to your guests following the ceremony].