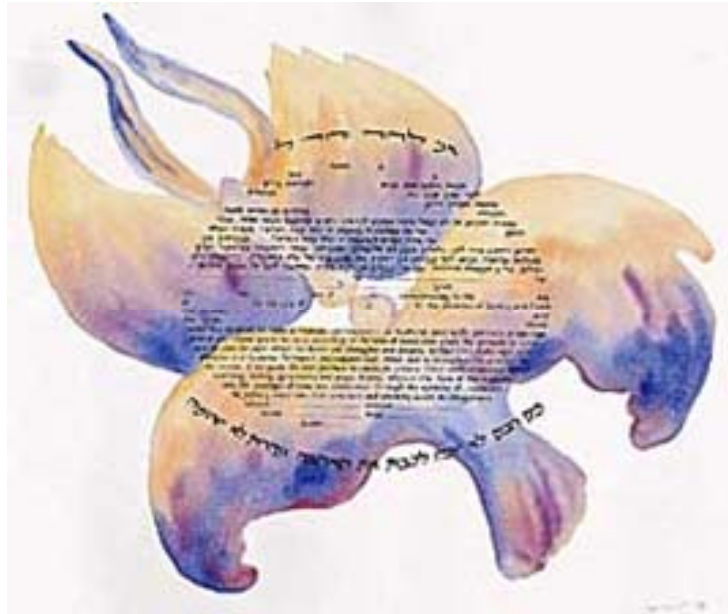


Creative Life Passages

Baby Naming Ceremony



I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine
Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the rivers drown it.



The Ketubah is one of the oldest examples of a pre-nuptial agreement in Western civilization dating back about 2,000 years. The earliest surviving Jewish marriage contract, a Ketubah precursor, dates from about 440 BCE. "Ketubah" literally means "that which is written."

Gail C. McCabe SSW BA MA

HUMANIST OFFICIANT

SERVING THE GREATER TORONTO AREA AND THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE
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Ceremony Template

*The template provides some of the elements that could be included in the Naming Ceremony.
These are optional and open to revision as to order and elements to be included.*

~ MUSIC ~

~ INTRODUCTION ~

Welcomes the gathering and explains the purpose of the Ceremony

⌘

~QUESTIONS TO THE GATHERING ~

~ QUESTIONS TO THE GRANDPARENTS ~

~ QUESTIONS TO THE SPONSORS (MENTORS) ~

~ QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS ~

The questions are put to the gathering, grandparents, sponsors and finally the parents charging them with their responsibilities in welcoming the newest member of the community.

⌘

~ NAMING CEREMONY ~

A ritual in honour of the naming of the child.

~ NAMING CERTIFICATE ~

Parents, Sponsors and Grandparents can sign a naming certificate to symbolize the naming of the child.

~ PLEDGES ~

The Parents set out their pledges to the child.

⌘

~ READINGS ~

A selection of readings is provided and parents can choose one or two. These can be read by the officiant or the people that the parents wish to honour and include in the ceremony.

~ EXCHANGE OF TOKENS ~

Gifts, souvenirs and tokens of the ceremony can be given to the child and also to the significant others as tokens of their commitment to the child. This ceremony would be accompanied by suitable words that explain the meaning of the gifts.

~ REFLECTION AND MEDITATION ~

A reflection and meditation in honour of the child.

~ READINGS ~

~ BENEDICTION AND CLOSING WORDS ~

A joyous blessing on the occasion of the celebration.

~MUSIC AND SINGING ~

Creative Life Passages

BABY NAMING INFORMATION SHEET

CONTACT INFORMATION

Referred by:

Mother

Father

Baby

Address

E-mail

Telephone

Baby's birth date

Baby's birth place

Godparents or Sponsors' Names

1.

2.

Grandparents:

Mother's Parents

Father's Parents

1.

1.

2.

3.

Great Grandparents (significant others)

1.

1

2.

2.

CEREMONY

Date

Time

Location

Address

City/Town

Municipality/County

Directions:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Creative Life Passages

233 CALUMET COLLEGE YORK UNIVERSITY 4700 KEELE ST. TORONTO M3J 1P3 • 416-736-2100 EXT. 22237 • 905-858-9063 •

1. This Letter will constitute a binding agreement between Gail McCabe, Humanist Officiant and _____ and _____ referred to as the parents in this letter of agreement.

2. The naming/welcoming ceremony will take place at _____, Ontario on _____, 200____. The ceremony will begin at approximately _____ o'clock and will last approximately _____.

3. *Initial Consultation:* Gail McCabe will meet with one or both parents to consult on text and process details of the ceremony.

4. Gail McCabe will provide guidance, ideas and resources consisting of electronic or hard copies of ceremonies for the parents to use in collaboration with Gail in developing the ceremony. Extensive additional writing and revision beyond a reasonable expectation for a personalized ceremony will require compensation commensurate with time spent. Any additional expenses of this nature will be discussed prior to Gail undertaking the work. No additional fees will be assessed after the fact.

4. Gail McCabe will conduct the ceremony using the text and staging agreed upon by her and the parents.

8. The fee for services performed by Gail McCabe will be \$ 200.00 within the GTA 416 and 905 west area, with additional fees for travel time and expense beyond these areas.

9. The parents will pay a non-refundable retainer fee of 50% of the fee for service in the amount of \$100.00 by cheque or money order to render this letter of agreement binding.

10. The remainder of the fee for service will be paid to Gail McCabe upon arrival for the ceremony.

PARENT

PARENT

OFFICIANT

DATE

A NAMING CEREMONY

Baby's Name

Date

Location

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Hello families and friends. My name is Gail McCabe. I am a secular humanist officiant licensed by the Province of Ontario and sponsored by the Humanist Association of Canada, to perform non-sectarian rites of passage. Humanism is a non-religious ethical philosophy that encourages each of us in our own way to work towards a more humane and responsible world. Humanism is a commitment to reason, compassion and individual responsibility.

In welcoming and naming a child, we celebrate one of life's continuing miracles, the birth of a human being and the continuation of human kind. We rejoice that the baby has been born into the concern and care not only of his parents, but also of this gathering and community.

The phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" has become so familiar it has lost much of its ability to inspire us. Nonetheless, it is true. While the task of nurturing children belongs mainly to their parents, it also belongs, in part, to all of you, family, friends and colleagues who are gathered here today. Mother and Father believe that every member of a community has a responsibility and duty to care for the other members of the community. You are representatives of the larger community in which the baby will grow up. It is through you that he will come to know his community and his world. By your support, example and encouragement you have a part to play in the development of this child to his fullest potential.

Today Father and Mother want to share in the celebration of their baby's birth and to ask you to share in this first step – his introduction to this gathering who will guide him along the way.

QUESTION TO THE GATHERING

Will you all give him a hearty welcome and will you accept the privilege and the responsibility of nurturing the freedom and spirit of this child?

OPTIONAL READING

See readings below for some options. More are available on request.

MENTORS

Father and Mother have chosen four very special individual whom they hope will help shape the baby's life. Children need role models who are not their parents. Mother and Father recognize that there will be times when they do not have the answers. Their hope is that their son will be able to turn to his mentors, (indicate their names).

QUESTIONS TO THE MENTORS

A mentor is a wise and trusted guide, an advisor who has nurtured a special relationship with a protégé that allows for the free exchange of ideas and advice. A mentoring relationship is meaningful and deeply rewarding to both child and mentor.

Names, will you look upon this child, your protege with affection and will you give to him your guidance, friendship and inspiration?

QUESTION TO THE GRANDPARENTS

Being a grandparent is a joyful, tender and solemn duty. Will you share your wisdom and will you respect, befriend and love your grandchild?

QUESTION TO THE PARENTS

By bringing your child to this service of dedication you are sharing with your families and friends some of the joy that is yours as parents. Will you endeavour, to the best of your ability, to provide for him a home of love and security and to be to him an example, which he may safely follow?

OR

In bringing your child to be named before family and friends, you acknowledge that he is more than your own creation and private concern, and you declare your wish and purpose to raise him according to your best efforts according to the values which you know deep in your hearts to be true. Many of these you pledged when you committed your lives to each other. Some of them you learned from your own parents. They are broader and deeper than mere rote or dogma, since they are moral and ethical standards toward which you have always strived.

To this end, will you teach your child, by example, to walk in the ways of truth, love and compassion?

OPTIONAL ADDITION

Father and Mother, What Hopes and Dreams do you have for your son?

Reply (to be read and/or written by the parents):

1. We want him to grow up knowing good from bad.
2. We want him to be able to use their own good judgment when making decisions.
3. We want him to never fear to ask questions.
4. We want him to ALWAYS QUESTION, and never have "blind faith" in anything.
5. We want him to know he can be whatever he wishes to be, and that we, his Mother and Father (Mum and Dad) will always support him.

THE PLEDGES

To this child, as to all children, we make these pledges:

We will recognize your worth as a person, and help you to strengthen your sense of belonging to the human family.

We will give you our love so that you may grow with trust in yourself and in other people.

We will respect your right to be yourself and, at the same time, help you

to understand the rights of others.

We will encourage you always to search for the truth.

We will give you the opportunity to develop your own understanding of life and a respect for all living beings.

THE NAMING

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. In giving him/her a name we declare that we will respect him/her as him/herself and give him the freedom to be himself. We have a public ceremony to declare that all of us are responsible for the care and development of all children. It is our task to give them our ideals and our hopes. It is our task to give them a world of peace and justice in which to grow. By presenting the child to this gathering the parents acknowledge that the child is more than a private possession, but is a new being in whom we all have a responsibility and whom we all welcome into this community.

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Inclusions of traditions specific to family and culture add to the meaning of the ceremony.

Example: A Latvian Tradition

In an ancient Latvian tradition “padishu Didishana” the name of the child was declared before family and friends. They would form a tight circle with no gaps to insure that the child’s teeth would grow straight and close together. The guests would eat something white. This was a symbol of good fortune. The name of the child would be declared and the child would be passed to each person in the circle. Each person in the circle would lift the child into the air and bestow upon him a blessing. At this time the mentors and family members will perform this ancient rite. Those of you who wish to participate please join our circle.

Gail: What is the name of this child?

Parents say the name together. Then the child is passed to each person in the circle who says a few words, for example,

I wish you a long life with health and happiness.

I wish you freedom from hunger and thirst and above all, freedom to think for yourself.

I wish that you will never be hungry or thirsty and that your thirst for knowledge is also satisfied. That you have education and travel and that you become a citizen of the world.

DEDICATION

We use a flower to remind us of the beauty and freshness of life. We dedicate ourselves to the task of nourishing the beauty and freshness of this child and of all children.

We dedicate you with our love into the fellowship of this community.

Giving a flower to the child the officiant says

May this budding flower be as the unfolding life before you - a life of beauty and peace.

OR :

We have come to welcome you, a new member of our human community.

Without a name you have come to us, but your name shall be _____.

By this name people will call you and to this name you will respond.

This is a new name to you regardless of the number of people who have worn it. May you wear this name with honour and may people look upon your name with kindness and respect.

Giving a flower to the child the officiant says

I give you this budding flower which is a symbol of beauty and fulfillment. It is a reminder of the life we wish for you.

May you have joy in listening and joy in speaking, joy in hearing and joy in seeing, joy in thinking and joy in learning.

May your hours be bright in play and work, in friendship and in love.

CLOSING WORDS

We give thanks for the gift of children. Although we cannot save our children from trial or danger, we can, by example and encouragement, help them to find love, courage and wisdom in our midst. We will learn from them as they experience life and we shall welcome the day when they take their place among us, challenging us and offering us a new companionship.

OR ... For the gift of childhood whose innocence and laughter keep the world young, we give thanks. May this new life which we have accepted into our midst receive the gifts of health, love and wisdom and in turn give back to the common heritage which has nurtured him.

OR a reading.

TOAST, ADJOURNMENT AND LUNCH

A Selection Of Readings

READING # 1

Let our children learn to be honest, both with themselves and with others. Honesty is the ability to distinguish between what is and what is not, and thus to deal effectively with reality.

Let our children learn to love truth. When truth is present, there is no prejudice. By fidelity to truth the mind is nourished.

Let our children discover their strengths and find courage.

Let our children cultivate kindness, tolerance and acceptance of other people. These abilities do not come without cultivation.

Let our children learn that they are like others, even people they do not like; and that there is good and bad in all of us.

adapted from E. Powell Davies

READING # 2

If a child lives with criticism, he/she learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he/she learns to fight.

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

If a child lives with shame, he/she learns to feel guilty.

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

If a child lives with encouragement, he/she learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he/she learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he/she learns justice.

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

If a child lives with approval, he/she learns to like him/herself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He/she learns to find love in the world.

Anonymous

READING #3

ZUNI INDIAN PRAYER

Now this is the day.

Our child,

Into the daylight

You will go standing.

Preparing for your day.

Our child, it is your day,

This day.

May your road be fulfilled.

In your thoughts may we live,

May we be the ones whom your thoughts will embrace,

May you help us all to finish our roads.

READING #4

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 their 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 tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent
forth.

from "The Prophet" by
Kahlil Gibran

READING #5

*I have no name:
I am but two days old.
What shall I call thee?
I happy am,
Joy is my name.
Sweet joy befall thee!*

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy but two days old,
Sweet Joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

Infant Joy – William Blake

READING #6

No one is born a new being. He bears in his psyche the imprint of past generations. He is a combination of ancestral units from which a new being must be fused, yet he also bears within him an essential germ, a potential of a unique individual value. The discovery of his unique essence and its development is the quest for consciousness.

What we are – Frances G Wickes

READING #7

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Dr. Seuss

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,
you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any
you'll want to go down.
In that case, of course,
you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there
in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen
and frequently do
to people as brainy
and footsy as you.

And when things start to happen,
don't worry. Don't stew.
Just go right along.
You'll start happening too.

OH!
THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

Words for including a TIME CAPSULE

We've come to that time in the ceremony when Father and Mother wish to share some thoughts on the purpose of the Time Capsule.

Words from the guests as they place their offering into the time capsule. These could relate to their good wishes for the baby's future or for the significance of their offering.

Words from parents on the meaning of the time capsule and their plans for storing it until Baby's 17th birthday when they will celebrate the event with the presentation and opening of the capsule.



SPECIAL WORDS

At this time in the ceremony, Parents have asked their families and friends to share some special words with the gathering and our special child. With these words, you celebrate and welcome her into our community and you signify your intentions to be a continuous source of wisdom, joy and love to her.

I now call upon the Family to share their special words with us. *Thank you ...*

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I now call upon the Family to share their special words with us. *Thank you ...*

Godparents have a very special place in the life of a child and so their words are especially meaningful.

So I call upon them to share their insights with us.