

# Personalising elements of a baby naming ceremony



## *How can I personalise the naming ceremony?*

In so very many ways! Some popular ways to personalise a naming ceremony include:

- add symbolic elements (such as tree planting, a sand ceremony or lighting candles)
- have members of your family and close friends reading parts of the service. This could expand into having a family member write a reading for the service or having a loved one sing a meaningful song as a part of the ceremony.
- planting a tree in your garden
- having your guests fill a box with snippets of advice or wishes for your child to open and read when they're older.

### *Signing a naming certificate*

Signing a naming certificate provides a short pause in the ceremony and a lovely photo opportunity during which the parents and supporting adults sign a certificate witnessed by all in attendance, marking the occasion and the adults' commitments to the child. The certificate can be kept by the family as a memento of the event.

### *Creating a time capsule or memory box*

Some families include the creation of a 'time capsule' or 'memory box'. You can ask your guests to bring something to add to it such as a newspaper article from the day your child was born, family photos, recorded messages, gifts to be opened when they reach a significant date in the future.

The container can be sealed during the ceremony with a view to being opened again on a significant birthday such as their 18th birthday.

### *Tree-planting*

Depending upon the time of year, planting a tree in commemoration of this special occasion is a lovely idea and a great way to involve other children, close friends, or family members in the ceremony. Tree-planting also provides the opportunity to include words about the importance of nurturing and caring for the growth of the child. (Please note: Bare-rooted tree stock is best planted in winter when the tree is dormant.)

### *Planting seeds or bulbs*

If you don't have room to plant a tree, or you have chosen an indoor venue, you could instead give seeds or bulbs to guests to plant in pots and take home for the growing season ahead.

### *Blowing Bubbles*

the Humanist society in the UK has developed the bubble blowing ceremony as an alternative to the realising of balloons which pose harm to the environment and are a risk to wildlife. Blowing bubbles is a fun and environmentally-friendly alternative to a balloon release. Children love to make, chase, and catch bubbles. Bubbles make quite a spectacle and provide a great photo opportunity.

## **Make eco-friendly bubbles**

1/2 cup of eco-friendly washing up liquid

5 cups of distilled water

2 tablespoons of vegetable glycerin

Mix this together in a storage container and leave overnight or for a minimum of 4 hours.

## *Lighting candles*

A flame can symbolise hope, warmth, and the brightening of lives as a result of the arrival of the child.

## *Candle Lighting Ceremony*

A simple ceremony where parents (grandparents, godparents and siblings optional) are given candles which are used to light the baby's candle. A blessing is spoken for each candle lit and the baby's candle is a keepsake to remember the support given at the welcoming of his or her life. This can be a ritual added to any other ceremony, blessing, dedication or naming.

## *Wish trees*

Invite your guests to write promises, words of advice, or good wishes on individual tags and then hang on a tree (real if outside or artificial if indoors) as a special collective moment in the ceremony. After the ceremony, you can then gather the messages and keep them for your child as a memento of the day.

## *A sand ceremony*

A sand ceremony can be used to symbolise the input, commitment, and contribution that people are prepared to make to the child, whose naming day ceremony it is. This symbolic ritual involves filling a large empty glass jar with layers of differently coloured sands. Guideparents – or parents, family, and friends – take coloured sand and slowly pour it into the larger central vase, one colour at a time.

Each person involved in the sand-blending, pours an individual layer of sand, resulting in layers of coloured sands in the vessel – each layer representing the individual commitment to the child.