

Creative Life Passages

Welcome to Life Ceremonies
Baby Naming



"You have your own specific vocation or mission in life . . . therein you cannot be replaced, nor can your life be repeated. Thus, your task is as unique as your specific opportunity to implement it." Viktor Frankl ~ Man's Search for Meaning



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SERVING HAMILTON, THE GTA 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 MENTORS, SPONSORS OR SPIRITUAL GUARDIANS ~

~ QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS ~

The questions are put to the gathering, grandparents, guardians 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*

☞ Dr. Gail McCabe • 120 Beddoe Drive Hamilton ON L8P 4Z4 • 905-220-9072 • 289-396-0060 ☞

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 \$ 300.00 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 Welcome to Life 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 secular philosophy of life affirming that humans by our very nature have the capacity and the responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives based on reason and compassion.

Humanism is a commitment to reason, compassion and social responsibility. It is in that spirit that we gather today.

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 heart-warming 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 individuals 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 FORMAL 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 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, school chums, teachers, doctors, colleagues, loves, strangers, and maybe by children and grandchildren. It will define her identity.

In giving this child her name we declare that we will respect her as herself and give her the freedom to be herself. In naming and welcoming this child through a public ceremony, we 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.

In this ceremony, we give the child a flower because it reminds us of the beauty and freshness of life, and the meaning of this dedication. Whether a flower grows into full bloom or not, whether it grows tall and strong, whether its purpose is fulfilled, depends on the nurture it receives. No flower grows alone, apart from sunshine and the rain, apart from the soil from which it grows. So, too, no child grows up alone, and all of you are here for this child, in all the seasons and the times of her days. We dedicate ourselves to the task of nourishing the beauty and freshness of this child and of all children.

Giving a flower to the child Gail says:

The name your parents have chosen for you is Meara Naomi Surname. Meara -- the Latin meaning of Meara is "miracle" and you are a miracle to your parents and family; the Irish meaning for Meara is "of the sea." The sea has been ever present in Mother's life hailing as she does from Nova Scotia. 'Naomi' is in honour of her mentor, Naomi Surname.

So Meara Naomi Surname, we welcome you with our love into the fellowship of this community. May this budding flower and fine name be as the unfolding life before you – a life of beauty, justice and peace.

GIVING OF A TOKEN

[Parents will give Meara a silver 'heart' necklace as a symbol of their enduring and unconditional love for her.]

SIGNING OF THE NAMING CERTIFICATE

At this time, we will formalize the naming of Meara and the appointment of mentors with the signing of a certificate. (Gail will bring the certificate.)

~ READINGS ~

GRANDFATHER'S POEM

Reading by Maternal Grandmother

I'd like to ask Name to read a poem written by her father, Meara's great-grandfather NAME, about the circle of life.

With every breath that I exhale, atoms of my being are wafted along by currents of air.

Every time I sweat, atoms of my being are wafted along on the wind.

Every time I bathe, I shed many atoms of my being to the waters of the world.

In time I become part of every living creature on earth,
including the trees, the grass, the earth and all flora and fauna
that owes its existence from the earth and the rain that falls to the earth.

I and you become one with all living things.

We are immortal. We will endure until the end of time.

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

SYMBOLIC RITUALS -- INCLUDING THE GATHERING

TREE PLANTING RITUAL

"A person's life is sustained by trees. Just as others planted for you, plant for the sake of your children."

WELCOMING AND PURPOSE

Welcome to our tree planting! We plant a tree in our child's honor and watch the child and the tree grow together. In this way we are able to celebrate life with life, to involve our children as well as ourselves, to cherish a living reminder of this new birth, and to mark its importance in our lives.

PLANTING THE TREE

Tree can be placed in already prepared hole. Family and friends participate in covering the roots, firming the soil, etc. This can be as hands on and active as you wish.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR OUR CHILD AND HER/HIS TREE

In planting this tree, we participate together in nurturing new growth— this young tree and our new baby. Both are unique and original, unlike anything that ever was before or will be. Each began with a single seed, concealing a complex potential that miraculously unfolds with each passing day.

We will do all in our power to support the roots of this tree so they take hold and spread deep, drawing nourishment from the fertile earth. So may our child draw nourishment from her/his own roots and values we cherish as a family: insert the values that are important to you here.

Examples: patience, gentleness, passion, trust, imagination, laughter, compassion, freedom, individuality, human responsibility, peace and justice.

We hope that the trunk will grow healthy and strong, withstanding the harsh forces of nature and able to support its canopy of branches and leaves. So may our daughter/son possess a healthy body and a strong moral spirit, holding steadfast to his/her own integrity and withstanding the tempests and temptations that could weaken or deter her/him. We watch these branches bud and blossom, giving shade and beauty for all to enjoy. So, too, may we watch our child bud and blossom to be a blessing and support to family, friends and community, and to make his/her unique contribution to the world. We will draw on our networks of support, family, friends and community to help us nourish and nurture this tree and our child so that they may both mature and prosper, fulfilling to the greatest extent possible the potential that resides in all human beings.

MEMORY BOX or 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 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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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.

THE CHILDREN'S ARTWORK

Parents ask guests who are children to create a drawing or piece of artwork to be framed and hung in the child's bedroom. This can be accompanied by words from artists and an exchange of tokens with them for very special memories of the occasion.

A BOOK OF GOOD WISHES

Today Parents want to share in the celebration of their baby's birth and to ask you to share in this first step – her introduction to this gathering who will guide her along the way. So for that purpose, at some time today, they hope that all of you will record your thoughts and your messages for her in the Wish Book (add location). Over the years, they will share your good wishes with the baby and she will know that she is a part of the fabric of this family and community.