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PLANNING A NAMING CEREMONY

*"May you seek to learn, may you learn to live,
May you live to love, and may you love – always"*

The arrival of a baby or a child into your lives is one of the most exciting events in a family's life, and many of us want to celebrate the occasion in a special and memorable way. Some feel that a traditional religious ceremony just isn't right for them so a naming ceremony or celebration can be a perfect alternative. Family and friends get the chance to meet the new arrival, and catch up with old faces. Your new child gets to know very early on that he or she is part of a wider community. And as the parent, you get a chance to make promises to your child, publicly, which is very meaningful and significant. You can include any religious views you or the wider family would like. Holding a naming ceremony for an adopted child is also a lovely way to welcome them into the circle of their new family and friends.

As there is no legal format to a naming ceremony (as you have already registered the birth at the registry office) you have, in effect, a blank sheet of paper in preparing for this joyous occasion.

A few things to think about when planning a naming celebration

Date: You may feel that you'd like to choose a significant day such as the child's 6 month birthday or first birthday. You could choose Mother's or Father's Day. In essence, this is totally your choice.

Time of day: This, again is up to you. It is probably a good idea to decide this with an appreciation of the child's age. You can do your best to avoid the time your child usually has a nap, but as we know, this is never a given and can change at any time without notice! It might be also worth picking a time that is appropriate and sympathetic to the times that might suit the majority of your guests (i.e. if there will be lots of other children there).

Venue: The beauty of a naming ceremony is that it can be held anywhere. The sorts of places that work well are your own home, your garden, a village hall, an open space, a function room in a pub or hotel ... the list is endless.

'Godparents': Whether there is or isn't a religious element to your planned ceremony, you can include appointing special adults who will fulfil this sort of role. They can be called anything of your choice such as 'guiding adults', 'sponsors' or 'guardians' and you can choose as many as you see fit. You can ask them to make promises directly to the child.

Siblings: If your child already has older siblings, it can be very special to include them in the ceremony. Older children really love it and most (if not too shy) enjoy a role in the welcoming of their sibling.

Theme/decorations: This can be a nice thing to do, bringing a personal touch and will be dependant on your choice of venue.

Refreshments: Depending on your venue and the time of your celebration, you might like to provide these. You could have refreshments either before or after.

Cake: Think about serving some cake to your guests.

Music: Any music you decide to play is an opportunity for your guests to see what's important to you.

A Celebrant will plan, write and conduct a naming ceremony for you. They will ensure that the celebration is personal and unique to you and your child. They will work with you to design your parent promises and your guiding adults promises so that are authentic and individual.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if there is any help or assistance I can give you. **Jane**

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