

Rituals & Ceremonies

Over time, I've had the pleasure of seeing some unique ideas when officiating at Naming ceremonies. Here are some of my favourite ways to enhance the ceremony and make it truly unique. Hopefully they will inspire you too.

Ritual can involve just the child or you can include siblings, parents, grandparents and Godparents too.



- ♥ **Wishbox**
- ♥ **Time Capsule**
- ♥ **Memory Box**
- ♥ **Baby Sand Ceremony**
- ♥ **Candles**
- ♥ **Soaring Spirit Celebrations**
- ♥ **Balloons**
- ♥ **Plant a Tree**
- ♥ **Rose Petals**
- ♥ **Teddy bears – The 4 elements**

♥ *Wish Box*



Choose some people, ie. Grandparents, Godparents, Uncles and Aunts etc. to place symbolic items into the Wish Box. You can go to great expense and purchase a solid box for safe-keeping or just use a decorative cardboard box. The items that are placed inside usually represent qualities that are wished for the child. For example: something that symbolises strength like an anchor, or inner peace like a dove figurine, or good luck, or a sense of humour. You can also leave blank cards for others guests to write down wishes and place into the Wish Box.

The Wish Box can be opened by your child when they are old enough to understand the meaning behind the items within.

Examples of Symbolic Gifts

<i>Peace</i>	<i>Dove, white crane, olive branch, peace symbol, lamb</i>
<i>Music</i>	<i>Instrument, musical note</i>
<i>Love & Compassion</i>	<i>Heart, red rose, rose quartz</i>
<i>Happiness & Laughter</i>	<i>Bluebird, comedy mask, smiley face, joke book, kookaburra</i>
<i>Nature</i>	<i>Leaf, flower, tree</i>
<i>Good luck</i>	<i>Rabbit's foot, shamrock, horseshoe, wishbone, jade, cricket, ladybug, dragonfly</i>
<i>Wealth, Prosperity</i>	<i>Coin, gold, silver, rainbow, pig</i>
<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Jade, owl</i>
<i>Protection, safety</i>	<i>Shell, amethyst, padlock, egg, Saint Christopher, fan</i>
<i>Long life</i>	<i>Bamboo, cicada, peach, turtle, elephant</i>
<i>Strength</i>	<i>Chain, castle, anchor, lion, horse</i>
<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Eagle, butterfly, key</i>
<i>Health</i>	<i>Sapphire, olive oil, apple</i>
<i>Success</i>	<i>Dragon, bat, swallow, star</i>
<i>Friendship</i>	<i>Dogs, chrysanthemums, pineapple, Claddagh, frogs, dolphins</i>

♥ Time Capsule



A time capsule is a way to communicate from the present to the future.

It may also be a way to preserve parts of the past

Time capsules are a glance into the past, a chance to see how much things have changed and what your child and yourselves have lived through. A time capsule can be given as a 16th, 18th or 21st birthday gift, a way for the new adult to look back on their life and reminisce on their childhood and remember the things they may otherwise have forgotten.

Newspaper

“For Baby to look back on our times and the events we found interesting, I give her a newspaper. She can read about world events, the price of a house, petrol or a loaf of bread and get a picture of Australia’s place in the world in 2012.”

Magazine

“For Baby to look back on our times and the events we found interesting, I give her a popular magazine. In it she will find the fashions of 2012 and the obsession we all have for dieting and exercise. Who knows if make-up will still be used in 2029 when she is 18 or who knows if we will still cook a cheesecake in 2032 when she is 21?”

Letter to Baby

“I place a letter to my daughter in this time capsule. I tell her about being a parent for the first time and my hopes and dreams for her future and ours”.

Favourite Music

So that she can hear the beauty of our time, I enclose a CD of my favourite music. We live in a universe where rhythm and beat are embedded in our lives. Music is powerful and can influence our lives. I hope Baby can listen to this music in years to come and hear who we were”.

Silver Coin

“I place the gift of a silver coin in Baby’s time capsule. The coin is from the same year that she was born. The coin is a symbol of luck. May she never want for money in her life.”

Favourite DVD

I include a DVD of for Baby’s time capsule. Many is the time that I have seen her complete absorption in this show. No doubt the interest, laughter and joy will be replaced by something else as she grows, but at this moment she is truly amazed by

Favourite Toy or the “latest craze”

I include a for Baby’s time capsule. Many is the time that I have seen her laugh/chase/play with this. No doubt the interest, laughter and joy will be replaced by something else as she grows, but at this moment, this is what excites and delights her.

Baby Clothes or Shoes

“I place this pair of baby shoes into Baby’s time capsule. Two little shoes that haven’t even worn out. That’s because she grows so fast. When she wore these shoes she was smaller than she is now. I know that she will grow up and go out dancing and wear shoes very different from these ones, but, these shoes were worn when she still needed a hand to guide her along.”

“I place this little dress into Baby’s time capsule. This little dress isn’t even worn out – that’s because she grows so fast. When she wore this dress she was smaller than she is now. I know that she will grow up and go out with boys and wear dresses very different from this. But this is the dress she wore when”

Favourite Poem

“This is my favourite poem. I’m going to read it to her often as she grows up – as often as I am a part of her life. I hope that when she opens the time capsule, she will remember these words and remember me too.”

Photographs of the home

“I place a picture of the family home in the time capsule for Baby. This is where she currently lives her life and loves those important to her. The place where she resides may change in the future, but this is the place where she started.”

Footprint and handprint

I place a tracing of Baby’s footprint and handprint in the time capsule today. Everyday she will grow a little bit and soon those little fingerprints will be hard to recall. This is how her tiny fingers and toes looked on this day.

Technology of the day

I place a mobile phone in Baby’s time capsule today. It represents today’s technology. Things are moving at such a fast pace in our world today. There are more mobile phones in Australia today than there are people. It is definitely a popular item and it might be fun to look back in 20 years time to the way we communicated with each other.

Story book

Here is the story book I have read to Baby many a time. I place it in her time capsule as a reminder of the special moments we have shared, she curled up on my knee turning the pages and my voice droned on and on. She doesn’t understand all the words yet, but maybe she will remember the calm, the closeness and the love.”



♥ *The Memory Box*

You can combine the symbolism of the Wish Box along with the items in the Time Capsule and create one big box of memories

This memory box I give you today
is to be filled with things from your Naming day
A day to be cherished from beginning to end
Here's a list of the friends and family who attend

Fill this box with pictures, fill it with joy
Fill it with good luck and a few of baby's toys
Remember how baby walked about all on her own
These things will be important when she's all grown

Fill this box with gifts given from the heart
Fill it with best wishes - that's a good place to start
Don't forget that ribbon or that special card
And that little flower that came from your backyard

You will never ever want for anything more
for inside this box are hugs and kisses galore
This will always be a memory box full of love
I has love from Mum & Dad and love sent from above



♥ Baby Sand Ceremony



A beautiful keepsake that is a visual reminder of the Naming Day. A great way to involve many people at once. You will need the containers as well as white sand + a different coloured sand for each participant, as many or as few as you wish. Below is an example using 7-8 people.

*Firstly, I will place a layer of **white sand** in the bottom of this jar to represent the purity and potential that we all begin life with, the perfect base on which to build a meaningful life.*

- 1. The next layer is now to be placed by Mum to represent the unconditional love that a mother has for their child.*
- 2. Dad will now add sand to represent a father's unconditional love for his daughter.*
- 3. The next layer is to be placed by (name) to represent fun and friendship. The ability to make the best of any situation and the virtue of faith and acceptance that loyalty brings.*
- 4. The next layer is to be placed by (name) to represent humour and witticism. A sense of the ridiculous to uplift people's spirits and make them laugh.*
- 5. Now (name), will place a layer to represent generosity and kindness, and the ability to see the inner beauty of all the people (Baby) comes in contact with throughout her life.*
- 6. (name), will now place a layer of sand to represent the ability to have good judgement about others and to be of good character herself and to have strength and understanding through good and bad times.*
- 7. (name) will now place a layer of sand to represent a happy and healthy life and respect of the mind and body.*
- 8. (either me or the child) will now pour a final layer of pure white sand to seal the values that have been offered to Baby today.*

What we are left with now is a jar holding all the love and wishes for (Baby) in her future life. All the love shared and wishes given are now blended together in this jar. You can see that the layer contributed by each person blends with the others, that all the people in (Baby's) life who are meaningful play their own special and important part in her life. It is the combination of everyone in her life that will make her a unique person

♥ Candles

By far the most popular.

Candles can be personalised and decorated with little flowers, butterflies, sporting items, cars, child's name, photo, date of birth, weight and length and a poem etc. The parents light the candles, make wishes for their child and promise that on each birthday when they light the candles on the cake they will remember what a miracle their child is. I have ceremonies to incorporate a single candle at the beginning or multiple candles at the end.

Below are a small selection of words that may be used during a ceremony.

I would like to invite (parent's names / godparents etc) to light this very special candle for Baby. A candle gives light, in fact, in the darkest room the light of one small candle can make the difference and give hope to people who are trying to find their way in the dark.

As the Godparents light this candle we are reminded that Baby is a new light in this world, and has the same opportunity to be as powerful and as effective with her life as one small candle in a large darkened room.

Baby, you are the light of your parent's world. May the blessing of light be with you always, Light without and light within. And may the sun shine upon you and warm your heart until it glows like a great fire, So that others may feel the warmth of your love



♥ Soaring Spirit Celebrations



At the conclusion of the ceremony, you may like to release balloons or butterflies to encourage your child's spirit to bloom and grow.

Let Your Spirit Fly

*When you walk your longest mile
When you face your hardest trial
If it hurts too much to cry
Let your spirit fly*

*There will be love on the wind
There will be hope in the end
So let us soar you and I
Let our spirits fly*

*May you be wise, may you be kind
May you be happy with what you find
May you dance on higher ground
May you keep a simple sound
And never have to question why
Just let your spirit fly*

***Just as a caterpillar grows into a beautiful butterfly
May your spirit grow into something even more beautiful
than it is today!***

***We hope that you can be like these balloons, soaring higher than the
trees, reaching for the sky!***



♥ *Balloons*

Balloons are a great feature in a baby naming ceremony. They are connected in the minds of everyone with the joy and irrepressible fun of childhood and so they are commonly used as decoration in the area in which the baby naming ceremony is being held, and at the front gate, and may be incorporated in the actual ceremony as a balloon release at the end to symbolize hopes and wishes for the child.

You can have the godparents release balloons, the parents can release a single balloon, you can orchestrate a mass release of balloons (put them in a box turned upside down so all you need to do is lift the box up and they will make their way to the sky) or you can give each individual a balloon to hold between their hands and release at a particular point in the ceremony.

Because balloons can present a hazard to small children and to wildlife, you should take precautions both when using balloons as decorations and when releasing them as part of the naming ceremony. Choose latex balloons, made from natural rubber, for a balloon release because they will explode once they reach the stratosphere and so minimise the risk to wildlife.



Let Your Spirit Soar - Words to Live By

Celebrate yourself by being yourself, accepting yourself, and loving yourself.

Rejoice in your own uniqueness.

Sing, even if you can't carry a tune, dance in the rain, run through a sprinkler, build a fort with blankets.

Take time every day to laugh and discover what makes you happy.

Find what makes you unique, (child's name)

Celebrate it, let it nourish your Spirit and encourage your spirit to soar!

(Release the balloons)

♥ *Planting a Tree*



In the ground or in a pot

Many young couples today are buying a home or still establishing gardens when their children are born. A lovely idea is to include a tree planting in the ceremony. A tree, shrub or rose bush is planted and a plaque is placed in front of it commemorating the day.

Guests can help plant the tree and as they place the soil into the ground, they can say a few words expressing their wishes for the child.

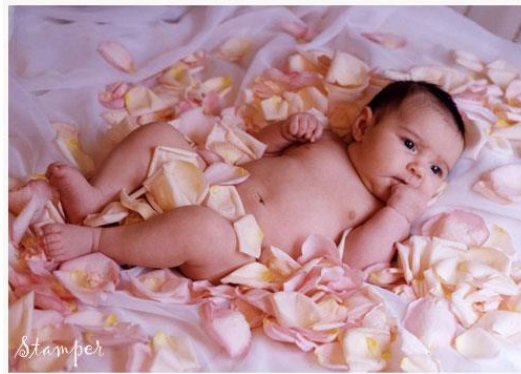
Don't forget the watering can for the first watering by the guest of honour!

"This tree is dedicated to Baby. May they grow and mature together, enduring whatever may come. It is planted in the hope they will both grow tall and proud and nurture the earth.

As they grow, the roots will provide strength; as the branches reach towards the sun they will offer stability and balance, and the leaves will offer a canopy of shade and protection.

On this whole planet, Baby now has one very special place that is his, one that will depending on his need, provide peace and a sense of belonging. So it is hoped that Baby will leave his mark upon the world in a positive way and that he, in turn will continue this tradition and plant a tree for each of his children in the future"

♥ *Rose Petal Ceremony*



Rose petals are soft and fragrant and perfect to use with babies.

A universal symbol of love.

*They are usually allowed to be scattered in places that do not allow confetti.
If you are holding your ceremony in a place other than your home, you would
need to check with the venue first.*

(First person showers the baby with white rose petals)

As the petals of the white rose symbolize innocence, may (Baby's) ideals and heart remain untarnished and ever pure, with the wonders of childhood, innocence forever hers.

(Second person showers the baby with yellow rose petals)

May the petals of the yellow rose foreshadow the friends and the friendships, steadfast and unwavering, that will bless her in the years ahead.

(Third person showers the baby with pink rose petals)

The pink rose and her petals speak of the tender love and compassion her spirit will know.
The love that knows no bounds.

(Fourth person showers the baby with red rose petals)

And as always, may the passion of the red rose forever kindle the fire in her heart for both life itself and for all the passions she will find there.

May you know blessings in your life that your Father and Mother have had in theirs.

Friends and family, please welcome Baby

♥ 4 Elements Ceremony



Since ancient times, people have communed with nature. Since it is within nature that we all abide, and nature is within us, we ask for the blessings of Nature's 4 Elements for (baby). The 4 elements are Fire, Air, Water and Earth. The attributes of each element are examples of nature's power to us all, within our beliefs, and also within ourselves.

Spirits of **Fire**, we ask that (baby's) passion for life, remain ever strong and vital, fortifying each day with a vibrancy rooted in strength, boldness, and courage. As Fire clears the way for new growth, may he know that this power is his, to create change and bring about the richness and quality that comes with a true love of life.

(Give baby a Red Bear)

We ask the spirits of **Air** to open the lines of communication for this child. As Air flows freely to and through and from us all, may his heart, and mind, and soul come to know the world in this manner. Seeing not only with *his* eyes, may he grow wise with wisdom.

(Give baby a Yellow Bear)

We ask the Spirits of **Water**, that the comfort of loved ones, like the serenity of the deep blue ocean, be the oasis that forever surrounds Baby. May he be well loved and love well, As water makes its journey to the sea, flowing over rocks, around trees, even turning into vapour and riding a cloud, may this serve as a reminder that love will endure.

(Give baby a Blue Bear)

Spirits of **Earth**, we ask that you give unto this child a rock solid place to stand and fulfil his destiny. May he find the right seeds to sow to ensure a bountiful harvest. And when he looks up at the Southern Cross, may he know it is as bright and constant as the love that surrounds him. *(Give baby a Green Bear)*

In keeping with the true spirit of the word 'celebration,' we ask that you remember this is an event that involves EVERY ONE of you, which is why these bears will be left out throughout the rest of this gathering today for all of you to hold and touch.

As you give the bears a cuddle, think of all wonderful things that you would wish for Baby for his happiness and for his future.

And people, today nobody will say anything if you are seen hugging a teddy bear, but don't let it become a habit. These bears will stay by Baby, symbolic of how he will forever be encircled, surrounded and protected by the love and blessings of his friends, family and the 4 elements.