

The Child Naming Ceremony for Jenna and Ella

Opening Reading

At sunrise, everything is luminous but not clear. It is those we live with and love and should know who elude us. You can love completely without complete understanding.

Convocation

The coming of a child into the family circle widens its dimension far beyond the simple addition of another member. It brings the miracle of a new personality struggling for its own fulfillment. Therefore, it is quite natural for us to be thrilled at the sight of new births. However, as the years pass, it is too easy for us to take our children for granted. Whatever their ages, they deserve the tender love and guidance, which only we as parents, teachers and friends can give. Moreover, these children have a right to a faith in themselves, in the story of mankind, in their particular heritage, and in the vast universe - home - that is theirs. It is to symbolize these possibilities and responsibilities that we have come to this ceremony.

Address

From the beginning of time, men and women have brought their children before their communities for dedication. In so doing, David and Deborah are dedicating themselves to nurturing their daughters. In our coming together as a community, we are also dedicating ourselves to the nurturing of each child. We have gathered in Nature out of reverence for the mystery of life that we have seen in the miracle of reproduction and birth. We acknowledge the mystery of the power that is in us and works through us, and we are humbled and grateful before that mystery.

Explanation of the Naming and Honoring Rituals

In this ceremony, we give each child a name. In this act, we declare that the child is an individual, a unique and separate person with a dignity and life of her own. She comes from us, but she is not ours. She is herself, an individual. In giving each girl a name, we declare that we will respect her as herself, and give her the freedom to be herself. We perform this ceremony publicly to declare that all of us, as parents and as representatives of society, are responsible for the care and development of all children. It is our task to give them a world of peace and justice in which to grow. It is our task to give them our ideals and our hopes. By presenting the children to this community, David and Deborah acknowledge that the girls are not private possessions but are each new beings in whom we all have a responsibility, and whom we all welcome into the community.

Today, we will use flowers, a time-honored symbol, in this ceremony. These beautiful blossoms remind us of the beauty, wonder and freshness of life. We dedicate ourselves to the task of nourishing the beauty and wonder and freshness of these children, and all children brought into this world.

Dedication

In our service of dedication, we give each child a flower. The flower symbolizes the beauty of life. It also symbolizes the meaning of our dedication. Whether a flower is beautiful or not; whether it comes in to full bloom or not; whether it fulfills itself as a flower or not depends upon the nurturing it receives. No flower grows alone, apart from the sunshine and the rain, apart from the soil in which it lives. So, too, no child grows alone. May the flower then be a reminder of the beauty of fulfillment and of the reward, which comes from this community's love and understanding, teaching and example.

Naming

Jenna and Ella, daughters of David and Deborah, we welcome you into the fellowship of life, and dedicate you to the service of freedom and righteousness of love. May the life of each of you be rich in vision, full in accomplishment, and afire with the highest of ideals.

Closing Reading

Untitled, by Anonymous

For the gift of childhood, whose innocence and laughter keep the world young; we all rejoice and give thanks. May this sweet life, which we have accepted into our community of ideals and friendship, receive abundantly the blessings of health, love, knowledge and wisdom, and in its turn give back to the common heritage that endures from generation to generation. Amen.