



NAMING CEREMONIES

It is a natural human instinct to mark life's change-points and mileposts through ceremonies or festivities. The arrival of a new member of the family is such a time. The naming ceremony is our opportunity to welcome the child into our family circle, and to consider the differences and changes that the child will make to us all.

The forms of the various types of ceremony often follow similar themes and share the generally common purposes of expressing our joy in the child, welcoming into the family, putting form to our hopes for the future etc. A Naming Ceremony is one such ceremony. It implies something special and does serve the purposes mentioned above. The ceremony will be vested with the meaning and importance that we assign to it and the child will always know that the family has cared sufficiently to have welcomed them with due thought, happiness, love and joy.

It is usual to conduct a naming ceremony in the early stages of a child's life, though again there is no strict rule. If the child is older, the ceremony can be more of a 'welcoming' ceremony than a naming ceremony. Your child's naming (welcoming) ceremony is specially composed for the occasion. We will work together to develop exactly the service you want, though of course I can provide, as a starting point, some outlines of other services and samples that have worked well.

In the Christian church, godparents undertake to see that the child is brought up in the Christian faith, and in times past would probably become the child's guardian should the parents die early.

Today it is traditional to ask two relatives or friends (usually one man and one woman although there is no 'rule') to become 'supporting adults' or 'mentors', 'or special friends' or 'godparents' which still has a special meaning in the secular world in the same way as the child may have a 'Christian' name. These people pledge to take a special interest in the child's development and to support the parents. They can also be there in the future, as a refuge for the child outside the immediate family circle.

There is the opportunity for family members and friends to be 'honoured' by their inclusion in the ceremony by the reading of a poem or special verse, by offering prayers for the child or even singing etc. The child may wear special clothing which may have a long family tradition, or be made from the mother's wedding dress, or be otherwise specially made for the purpose and thus commence a family tradition. You may have a special baby/child/children's book for guests to sign, and I will usually prepare a certificate for the child and another for each godparent as a memoire of the occasion which the parents and godparents will sign. This can be part of the ceremony or a separate activity. The ceremony can end with a toast and the cutting of a cake or this can be a separate part of the day as part of a special lunch or other meal.

You will note that there are, indeed, many alternatives and possible combinations. What is certain is that the ceremony will be special to you, your child/children and to the occasion.

CELEBRANT

As a naming or welcoming ceremony is not a 'legal' requirement, you can use anyone to conduct the ceremony, though it is advisable to use the services of an experienced celebrant. Many wedding celebrants offer to undertake naming ceremonies.

If you wish, I will be very happy to act as celebrant for you.

My name is Adrian Downey and I am an experienced Civil Marriage Celebrant having performed many ceremonies over a number of years.

In my service as a celebrant I am pleased to conduct ceremonies that allow for the type of ceremony that you are looking for as I accept that not everyone holds the same beliefs. In a naming or welcoming ceremony I try to work with the family in such a way that all your family and friends, what ever their background, can relate to what is being said.

Naming Ceremony Format

- Introduction and welcome to guests
 - * Reading/s
 - * Godparent commitment
 - * Giving the Name
 - * Reading/s
 - * Final declaration
 - * Signing of Certificate

Music is an appropriate accompaniment to a Baby Naming. There is also the possibility of using candles and wish cards, which can be incorporated into the ceremony. The celebrant, family, friends or the parents themselves can do the readings. The ceremony can be easily adapted for single parent families.

Most parents choose to hold the ceremony at the start of a celebratory party or meal, either at their own home, grandparents home or at a special venue. If the weather is fine, the ceremony can take place in the garden and the ceremony can be as long or short as you wish, but the ceremony itself usually lasts a maximum of about twenty minutes. The website of your local council is a good place to start to gather some ideas if considering a park or hall as a potential venue.

CHARGES

My fee is \$250.00; this includes assistance with preparation of the ceremony tailored to your requirements, delivery of the ceremony and naming certificate. This also includes use of my PA system should it be required based on the location and number of guests. A deposit of \$100.00 is required to confirm the booking and balance payable prior to the ceremony day.

WHAT NOW

Should all of this strike a chord with you and you would like to know the best way to start preparing a ceremony for your baby or child, then you are welcome to contact me. I can arrange a meeting with you to discuss your ceremony requirements. Further information can be found on the naming page of my website www.nswcelebrant.services/namings.html

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Member of the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants and Australian Marriage Celebrants Inc.

Adrian Downey

