

The Naming of Nicholas!

Opening/invocation

Blessings to all of us who have come together to celebrate Nicholas, son of Laura and of Lael!

We have gathered on this fine day in the beautiful outdoors to welcome Nicholas into his life, into his family, into his community, and into the world. We'll begin by invoking the presence of the sacred as it manifests in the physical world.

Rachel gestures East

In many belief systems, East is the direction of air; East represents the world of the intellect. We welcome these qualities to our gathering today.

Rachel gestures South

South is the direction of fire and heat; South represents the world of spirit. We welcome these qualities to our gathering today.

Rachel gestures West

West is the direction of water, of flow and change; West represents the world of emotion. We welcome these qualities to our gathering today.

Rachel gestures North

North is the direction of earth, of rootedness and solidity; North represents the world of action. We welcome these qualities to our gathering today.

As we come together to create a community of spirit, united by our affection and love for Laura, for Lael, and for Nicholas, let us awaken to that which is sacred around us and within us, and let our presence be a blessing.

First Reading

Here is Your First Gift

Here is your first gift
(this blessing, this echo):
sound you'll answer to
turning, always, to see who spoke.

Here is your name,
which people we don't know
will call you years from now,
when your infant face

with its astonished look
is just a picture
and our huge, parental love
a blur of hands.

—Jody Bolz

Naming

[Lael and Laura explain Nicholas' name and its significance]

Second reading

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you they belong not to you.
You may give them your love, but not your thoughts,
for they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies, but not their spirits,
for their spirits dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you can not visit, but only in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backwards nor tarries with yesterday.
Your children are reaching toward tomorrow.
Bless them with your love, faith and traditions.
Teach them by your example.
Stengthen them with your encouragement, and then...let them live.

—Kahlil Gibran

Affirmations

Each of us here has a unique role to play in Nicholas' life. By being part of this naming ceremony, we affirm our intent to be a part of his growing up.

I'm going to ask you three questions; please respond with all your hearts by saying "We do."

Do you promise to be involved with Nicholas and to care for him?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to listen when he needs to talk, and provide support when he needs to lean; to teach him the things that you alone can teach?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to be his friend, to encourage him as he grows, to help him take pleasure in life's beauties and to weather life's storms, to help him connect with others and with himself; to encourage him to laugh and to cry, to hope and to dream, and to grow into the best Nicholas he can be?

(Community: We do!)

Parents' Blessing

Lael and Laura (alternating lines):

We, your parents, promise to nourish you and sustain you;

To create a home for you in which the passage of the seasons and the cycles of time are sanctified and celebrated;

To raise you in respect for the earth and all its creatures;

To nurture your strength and your gentleness, your wisdom and your playfulness;

To love you unconditionally, and forgive you consistently.

We promise to raise you with confidence in yourself and kindness towards others.

May you be blessed with the absolute certainty of our love;

And may you always know that you belong in our family, in the world, and in our hearts.

Circle of Community

Folk and fairy tales are full of births attended by fairy godmothers and spirits who bring blessings to the newly-born children. We're not fairy godmothers, but we can do the same here and now.

We're going to bring Nicholas around the circle; please take a moment to place a hand on him and give him your blessing. That might mean saying words aloud; it might mean closing your eyes and making a wish for him. Give him whatever intangible gifts you can dream.

Closing/Benediction

Before we close, one quick note: a calligrapher has created a beautiful document commemorating this important day in Nicholas' life. It's inside, on top of the television; please take a moment to sign it with the special archival pens provided, so that Lael and Laura and Nicholas can treasure the memory of your being here when Nicholas was given his name.

It's time now for our closing blessing. On the one hand, this is directed at Nicholas; it's our last chance to bless him during this ceremony today. On the other hand, this is directed at everyone here; may we all know the blessings we have wished for Nicholas, and may our good wishes come back to us tenfold.

Rachel gestures East

Blessed be by the element of Air. May you be blessed with communication, intellectual growth, and wisdom.

Rachel gestures South

Blessed be by the element of Fire. May you be blessed with harmony, vitality, creativity, and passion.

Rachel gestures West

Blessed be by the element of Water. May you be blessed with friendship, intuition, caring, understanding, and love, and with the flexibility to accept change.

Rachel gestures North

Blessed be by the element of Earth. May you be blessed with tenderness, and may you know the certainty of being rooted.

Welcome to our world, Nicholas! And thank you all for being a part of his naming/welcoming ceremony.