

This ceremony asks for a wreath decorated with 4 white candles and flowers, or 4 vigil candles and a family Bible, to be adopted according to the particular circumstances. A parent, grandparent, sibling or friend may take the role of the presider.

INTRODUCTION

(To be read by a family member)

Our faith assures us that the life of every child, even if it be only for a few days or weeks within the womb, is part of God's plan. He who created us will never forget us. Scripture reminds us, "Can a mother forget her infant, or be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even if she should forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name." (Isaiah 49: 15-16).

The Naming Ceremony allows those who are suffering the loss of this child solemnly to remember the child and to write his/her name in the family book of life.

OPENING PRAYER

PRESIDER:

Father of all consolation
from whom nothing is hidden,
you know the faith of these parents
who mourn the death of their child.
May they find comfort in knowing
that he/she is entrusted to your loving care.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
you Son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
forever and ever. Amen.

The purpose of the readings at the ceremony is to proclaim the Paschal Mystery, teach the remembrance of the dead and convey a hope for the salvation of all God's children.

FIRST READING

Sirach 39:16-21, 32-35

The works of God are all of them good;
in its own time every need is supplied.
At his word the waters become still as in a flask;
he had but to speak and the reservoirs were made.
He has but to command and his will is done;
nothing can limit his achievements.

The works of all mankind are present to him;
not a thing escapes his eye.
His gaze spans all the ages;
to him there is nothing unexpected.
No cause then to say: "What is the purpose of this?"
Everything is chosen to satisfy a need.

So from the first I took my stand,
and wrote down as my theme:
The works of God are all of them good:
every need when it comes he fills.
No cause then to say: "This is not as good as that";
for each shows its worth at the appropriate time.

So now with full joy of heart proclaim
and bless the name of the Holy One.

The Word of the Lord.



The four candles are lit one at a time during the recitation of the following litany. The litany can be read by one person, or a group of people, in which two sides are formed, alternating stanzas. The name of the child is inscribed in the family Bible with the last candle.



LITANY OF LIFE

Psalm 139:1-18

SIDE 1: O Lord, you have probed me and you
know me;
you know when I sit and when I stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.

SIDE 2: My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know the whole of it.

SIDE 1: Behind me and before, you hem me in
and rest your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
too lofty for me to attain.

Light one candle.

SIDE 2: Where can I go from your spirit?
from your presence where can I flee?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I sink to the nether world,
you are present there.

SIDE 1: If I take the wings of the dawn,
if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall guide me,
and your right hand hold me fast.

SIDE 2: If I say, "Surely the darkness shall
hide me, and night shall be my light"
for you darkness itself is not dark,
and night shines as the day.

Light the second candle.

SIDE 1: Truly you have formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I give you thanks that I am fearfully,
wonderfully made;
wonderful are all your works.

SIDE 2: My soul also you knew full well;
nor was my frame unknown to you
When I was made in secret,
when I was fashioned in the depths
of the earth.

SIDE 1: Your eyes have seen my actions;
in your book they are written;
my days were limited before
one of them existed.

ALL: How weighty are your designs, O God;
how vast the sum of them!
Were I to recount them, they would
outnumber the sands;
did I reach the end of them,
I should still be with you.

Light the third candle.

*The name given to the deceased child is now inscribed in the
family Bible. The fourth candle is lit.*

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 11:25-30

On one occasion Jesus spoke thus: "Father, Lord of
heaven and earth, to you I offer praise; for what you
have hidden from the learned and the clever you have
revealed to the merest of children. Father, it is true.
You have graciously willed it so. Everything has been
given over to me by the Father, and no one knows the
Father but the Son - and anyone to whom the Son
wishes to reveal Him. "Come to me, all you who are
weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you.
Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will
find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light."

ALL: **OUR FATHER...**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

*A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of
blessing with hands outstretched over the parents; a lay
minister says the blessing with hands joined.*

PRESIDER:

Lord, God of all creation,
we bless you and thank you for your tender care.
Receive this life you have created in love and comfort
your faithful people in their time of loss with the
assurance of your unfailing mercy. We ask this
through Christ our Lord. ALL: AMEN



NAMING CEREMONY

This ceremony is a ritual act to help those who are
mourning the loss of a child, to express their sorrow
and to find strength and consolation through the gift
of faith in Christ and His resurrection to eternal life.
Our faith tells us that every human person is created
in the image of God. From the very moment of
conception God wills us into being and desires that
we should spend eternal life with Him. We are
made for immortality. Our soul does not perish
when it separates from the body at death, but will be
reunited with the body at the final resurrection. (cf.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 366)

The Church teaches us that with "regards to children
who have died without Baptism, [she] can only
entrust them to the mercy of God. Indeed, the great
mercy of God who desires that all men should be
saved, and Jesus' tenderness towards children which
caused Him to say: 'Let the children come to me, do
not hinder them' (Mark 10:14), allows us to hope that
there is a way of salvation for children who have
died without Baptism" (CCC, no. 1261). We, the
living faithful, can acknowledge this hope by
actively participating in a ceremony which gives
dignity and recognition to a deceased child.