

Benjamin Andrew Franklin

Baby Welcoming Ceremony

May 1, 2010

[Welcome](#)

Celebrant: Good afternoon. My name is Lynn Tyndall and I'm a Celebrant. I invite you to take a moment to prepare to be fully present for Benjamin's welcoming ceremony. Please turn off any cell phones and refrain from texting for this little while as we join together in celebration.

[Pause for cell phone silencing.](#)

Celebrant:

It is a great day! We gather today to welcome this new one to the world, to acknowledge his place among his family and friends and to prepare ourselves to guide his life, but also to enjoy the many gifts he will bring. Jacob and Caitlin are so pleased that you are here to welcome Benjamin. Each of you has a special place in their lives, and they appreciate your support as they begin their family life together.

We express special appreciation to Caitlin's Dad, Terry O'Brien, and her Step-Mom, Theresa O'Brien for hosting our gathering today in this wonderful space, and to Caitlin's Mom, Candace Adair, and her Step-Dad, Robert Adair. We are especially pleased to have Caitlin's Grandmothers with us, Patricia Brown and Sally Griffin.

Jacob's Mother, Anna Strong, and his Father, Samuel Coleman are here, as well as, Jacob's Step-Mother, Theresa Johnson. I am also honored to introduce Annie Coleman, Jacob's Grandmother.

Other honored guests are Benjamin's Sisters, Amanda Loring and Millie Franklin, and his Brother, Jacob Franklin Jr.

I'm sure you've already seen a big change in Caitlin and Jacob since Benjamin's birth. Both Caitlin and Jacob have learned to make do with **much less sleep**. Jacob can now tell you all about Wow Wow Wubbzy and Blues Clues. And, Caitlin has adapted to Benjamin's recent separation anxiety by taking him along for laundry and cooking and most everything else she does.

For all of you, September 3, 2009, brought change to your lives in the form of this new, energetic, curious "ball of fire" as Caitlin describes him.

Parent Pledges

Celebrant to Parents:

You have prepared for and delivered Benjamin into the world. You already know him better than anyone else. You know his precious smile and that his bath book is his favorite toy.

This is the beginning of many joys and struggles that you will have as a family over the years. Together the two of you will support him until he is ready to take his own place in the world.

Celebrant to Jacob:

Jacob, will you protect and keep him safe from harm? Will you work hard to provide for him? Will you teach him the way of life: teaching him to be a productive member of society, teaching him that education and determination are the keys to success, and teaching him to love?

Jacob: I will.

Jacob, will you share with him your own gifts of dedication, determination, and motivation? Will you love him unconditionally?

Jacob: I will.

Celebrant to Caitlin:

Caitlin, will you do your best to meet Benjamin's needs and care for him? Will you always be his #1 cheerleader in life? Will you support him through all of his "downs" and celebrate all of his "ups"? Will you support his dreams and nurture his interests? Will you love him unconditionally?

Caitlin: I will.

Caitlin and Jacob, will you strive to teach him to be a good person who treats others well? Will you help him understand that how we treat the Earth is important? Will you teach him the difference between right and wrong and what to do if he is faced with something that is wrong? Will you teach him to be an honest person who values his family, his friends, and his health?

Caitlin and Jacob: We will.

Grandparents and Naming

Celebrant to Terry, Theresa, Candace, and Robert:

Grandparents, Terry, Theresa, Candace, and Robert, you have raised a remarkable woman, one who brings many gifts to parenthood: she is sensitive and understanding; she is positive and expresses

herself well, making all situations better with her ability to create mutual understanding. This contribution is a gift you have already given to Benjamin. Caitlin and Jacob respect and trust you deeply.

Will you give Jacob, Caitlin and Benjamin your emotional support? When either Caitlin or Jacob ask for your advice or guidance in raising Benjamin, will you provide it joyfully?

Caitlin's parents: We will

Now, Patricia Brown, Benjamin's grandmom will share a poem:

"God Bless You Grandson" by Christopher Robin

A prayer for you Grandson

Asking God up above

To bless you today

With a heart full of love

Praying he sends an angel

To walk at your side

Matching your pace

Guiding your every stride

A prayer today that the Sun

Warms your face

Wherever you wander

Whatever the place

That bird's sing sweetly

Uplifting your heart

With Nature yet blessing

All she'll impart

A prayer asking a Rainbow

With beautiful hue

Lends you its radiance

Blessing you through

A prayer for no reason

But simply to bless

Making your day

That more extra special I guess

Caitlin's Dad, Terry O'Brien, was with her the whole time that she was in labor – a labor that lasted nearly a day and a half! His presence was calming and reassuring even when Caitlin found out that she couldn't have an epidural and would have to have Benjamin naturally. Fortunately, the kind nurses provided a sedative which allowed her to sleep a bit between contractions. Terry and Jacob and Caitlin's mom stayed with her as she alternately "screamed her lungs off" and fell asleep and dreamed. At one point she dreamed she was on a roller coaster, which, indeed, she was!

So, it is appropriate that Terry, as parent to Benjamin's Mom, share this poem with you today:

"On Children" By Kahlil Gibran

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 yet 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 souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Celebrant to Jacob's parents:

Ann, Jacob and Theresa, you parented this wonderful man: a man whose strength is his determination! Jacob has proven that he can overcome life's obstacles by staying focused on his goals. He does not give up, and as Caitlin says, "powers through all the stones that lie in his path". These are gifts you have already given Benjamin through your raising of his father.

Will you be "old school grandparents"? Will you find time for Benjamin and never be too busy for him? Will you share "that old wisdom that parents don't have": the wisdom that helps develop a child as no others can?

Jacob's parents: We will.

Celebrant to the group:

The next ceremony is based on the Nigerian naming ceremony, called a cebe (pronounced "chay-bay"). African baby naming ceremonies are elaborate and occur over many days. The name is highly important; determining the role of the child in the community and setting in motion his journey toward the realization of his unique gifts. In the original ceremony, all of the community gathers for the naming. Family members and neighbors take turns whispering possible names to the baby while the mother holds him. Finally, after everyone has made their suggestions, the father approaches and whispers the name to the mother who announces it to the community.

We've adapted the ceremony a bit but we perform it today in honor of Benjamin's African heritage. I would like for each of you to take a few moments and think of a single word that you can wish for this child and his life. What traits would you like to see within him? What attributes do you see in him now? There is a basket of blocks that we are passing around with markers. Each of you please take one block and on one side write this one word "name" /wish for him, and on the other side write your own name.

[Pause for everyone to finish their block.](#)

Has everyone written a one word wish on one side and your own name on the other?

When you are ready, come forward one at a time with your block, whisper your wish to the baby and replace the block in the basket. When everyone is done, Jacob will whisper the baby's name to Caitlin, and she will announce it to us.

One at a time, everyone brings his or her block to where Jacob, Caitlin and Benjamin are sitting, whispers it to the baby and places the block in the basket.

When everyone is finished, Jacob stands up:

Jacob: Thank you for your kind and generous wishes. We will now name our son.

Jacob whispers to Caitlin: Benjamin Andrew Franklin

Caitlin: We name you "Benjamin Andrew Franklin". The name "Benjamin" honors your Celtic/Gaelic heritage and means "Brave". The name "Andrew" honors your Grandmothers who both share the name "Ann".

And now one of those special grandmothers, Sally Griffin, welcomes Benjamin:

"Welcome Home" by Jane-Ann Heitmueller

Precious baby, all brand new, a welcome to the world to you.

May life be filled with joy and love from those on earth and God above.

May you be blessed with friends and health,

which truly is your greatest wealth.

May minute things bring thrills unknown and give you peace when you're alone.

May you walk close with man and God, as your life's path you daily trod.

May fowl and tree and rain and wind, as nature's gift...become your friend.

May your heart hold a merry soul, with happiness your constant goal.

May your small spark ignite the earth and radiate for all it's worth!

A miracle sent from above...

We welcome you with joy and love

Celebrant to the group: What will you call this child?

Everyone: Benjamin Andrew Franklin

Applause

[Honoring Great-Grandparents and Tree Dedication](#)

Celebrant: Please gather with me around the young tree at the corner of the yard. [Everyone moves to circle the tree.](#)

With your wishes, you have provided firm roots upon which a new family and new life can be built. As you see, Benjamin's heritage is rich with branches that have come together to bring us the unique person that he is. The tree is a universal symbol of life and the interconnections we share. The oak tree was sacred to the Celts and it is fitting that we honor Benjamin's Celtic heritage by planting an oak today. The tree's roots remind us of our deep connection to the earth, and its branches reaching upward symbolize our hopes and aspirations. Oak trees lose their leaves in winter and bring forth green growth every spring, a visible reminder of the cycle of renewal. The oak tree also bears acorns, each holding the essence of a new tree, the never-ending regeneration of life.

Great Grandparents, Barbara, Shirley and Tennie, we are honored by your presence here today. You are the elders of this clan and your blessings are particularly meaningful to us. We also take time today to remember Lawrence O'Brien, Sr, Marie Tarver and Minnie Stroman, letting the many wonderful memories of those great grandparents fill our hearts.

Pause

A tree is a visible reminder of the strength of our community and our heritage. All that came before us is within us, and all that will come after is also ours. Today we plant this tree to honor Benjamin Andrew Franklin and his Great-Grandparents, the eldest and the youngest of the clan, the deep roots and the fresh green leaves reaching ahead and upward.

As Terry and Donnie set the tree in place, Shirley Loughlin has a song for you:

John Lennon's "Beautiful Boy

Close your eyes,
Have no fear,
The monsters gone,
He's on the run and your daddy's here,

Beautiful,
Beautiful, beautiful,
Beautiful Boy,

Before you go to sleep,
Say a little prayer,
Every day in every way,
It's getting better and better,

Beautiful,
Beautiful, beautiful,
Beautiful Boy,

Out on the ocean sailing away,
I can hardly wait,
To see you to come of age,
But I guess we'll both,
Just have to be patient,
Yes it's a long way to go,
But in the meantime,

Before you cross the street,
Take my hand,
Life is just what happens to you,
While your busy making other plans,

Beautiful,
Beautiful, beautiful,
Beautiful Boy,
Darling,
Darling,
Darling Sean.

Presentation of the Child

Celebrant to Benjamin:

Benjamin, you are surrounded by love and welcomed with joy into this community of family and friends. Each of us here today has offered wishes and committed support to you. A space is made for you here to grow, to make mistakes, to love and to learn.

I present to you **Benjamin Andrew Franklin!**

Applause

Caitlin and Jacob thank for coming and sharing this day with them. It means so much to have you here. Please join them now for coffee and dessert. Enjoy!