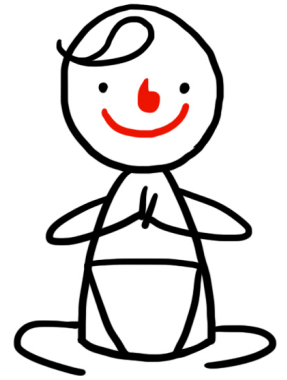


## Humanist naming ceremonies activities

Humanist naming ceremonies provide a good way to illustrate the importance of **freedom** to humanists and the value they place on the **support** we receive from, and the **connections** we make, with other people in our lives.



**Note:** Humanist ceremonies can be a good way to illustrate the features of a humanist approach to life. However, it's important to note that not all humanists have humanist ceremonies (there is no obligation to do so). Many non-humanists will also choose humanist ceremonies.

### Activities

Ask students if any of them have been to a naming ceremony or a christening. Ask what happened.

Show students the reasons why someone might have a naming ceremony and ask them to rank them in order of importance. Ask if they can think of any other reasons.

- 1) To name the child
- 2) To celebrate with a party
- 3) To give special people roles in the child's life
- 4) To bring family and friends together
- 5) To receive gifts for the child
- 6) To make promises to the child

Show the [The perfect welcome film](#). Pause at the questions to ask the students what they think.

The questions in the film are:

- 1) Where would you hold a naming ceremony?
- 2) Who would you invite?
- 3) What would you do to make it special?
- 4) What would you say?  
(Write up key words such as love, care, support, friendship, help, and teach)
- 5) What promises would you make?
- 6) What advice would you give?
- 7) Why do we need support from other people in our lives?

Explain that a humanist naming ceremony is a **non-religious** ceremony at which there are no set words or actions. The parents are free to decide where to hold it, what happens, and what they want to say. **Freedom** is very important to humanists. The focus at a humanist ceremony is often on the child's freedom to decide for themselves what they believe and how they want to live, and the responsibility of other people to **support** them to find happiness. Typically family and friends will make promises or offer advice to the new child. Humanists don't believe in a god or gods. The **connections** we make with other people, and the love and support they can offer us, is therefore very important to them.

Ask why people might celebrate the arrival of a new baby and explain why humanists might celebrate new life.

Explain that, for humanists:

- Every new human being has the potential to lead a happy life.
- Every new human being has the potential to improve the lives of other people.
- Every new human being has the potential to improve our understanding of the world.

Ask the students which of the following promises and pieces of advice they might hear at a humanist naming ceremony (those underlined are those you are more likely to hear - of course, a humanist ceremony is not the only ceremony at which you might hear these):

- 1) Find what makes you happy
- 2) God will take care of you
- 3) We promise to take care of you
- 4) This is how you should live
- 5) You are free to make your own choices
- 6) God loves you
- 7) Make the most of your life
- 8) Be good to other people

Ask students to write messages, promises, or advice that they would give to a new baby, like they saw in the film. Use the leaf template if necessary.

**Extension:** Ask the students to imagine they are helping to plan a naming ceremony for a new baby brother, sister, or cousin. Ask them to write out their answers to the questions in the perfect welcome film.

