

NINE RAVENS: Childhood Blessing

Welcome and Holding the Space

A chime is sounded. Everyone gathers in a circle and holds hands.

Reader: *Let us be united;*

Let us speak in harmony; let our minds apprehend alike.

Common be our prayer;

Common be the end of our assembly;

Common be our resolution;

Common be our deliberations.

Alike be our feelings;

Unified be our hearts;

Common be our intentions;

Perfect be our unity.¹

Celebrant: *We gather today to stand under the dome of the sky and surrounded by the beauty of the green world.*

We gather to witness the blessing and first rite of passage of Robert by his family, his friends, and the natural energies of the world.

We gather to give thanks for the wonder of new life and to honor the task of parenthood.

Take a deep breath and allow yourself to be fully present.

We feel the earth firm beneath us.

We feel the breeze blowing through our hair.

We feel the sun warm on our faces.

We feel the water that nourishes our bodies.

We open our hearts to the heart of the universe, and know that we are one.

Honoring the Ancestors

The parents are either seated next to each other with the child on their laps or standing holding the child.

Celebrant: *Life is a thread reaching back into the past and stretching out into the future. Robert has his whole life ahead of him, but he comes from a rich and vibrant family. Their blood flows in him. Their DNA combines to create him unique physical blueprint. Their spirit lives within him.*

Words are spoken to the child. Either the parents or the person speaking can hold the child, whichever works best.

Maternal family member: *You are Robert, son of Barbara, grandson of Mathilda and George, great-grandson of William and Melanie.*

Paternal family member: *You are Robert, son of Mitchell, grandson of Karen and Frank, great-grandson of Bobbie and Stephen.*

¹ From the Rig Veda found on page 93 of *Earth Prayers*

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[This can go as far back as you know or want. You can use first names only or full names as you know them.]

Affirming the union of the parents

Parents face each other and hold hands. The child is held by a grandparent or someone close to the family.

Celebrant: *Barbara and Mitchell, over the years of your relationship, you have explored and expressed your love together. Now there is another soul whose energy plays around and between you, creating new patterns, sometimes tangling the threads, and always changing the world you had before.*

Through the changes of parenthood, you have grown, revealed new facets, new strengths, skills, depths of courage, new vulnerabilities and tenderness. Through it all runs the opportunity for your love and your union to grow richer and stronger.

Witnessed by your family, your community, and the world around us, do you again vow to each other your love, your loyalty, and your commitment?

Barbara/Mitchell: *We do.*

Commitment to the child

Parents hold the child.

Celebrant: *Mitchell and Barbara, as Robert's parents, you have the primary responsibility for the wellbeing for his body and soul, throughout the journey of his childhood. Do you agree to hold this sacred duty wholeheartedly, in freedom, with love and joy, with patience and with trust?*

Barbara/Mitchell: *We do.*

Blessing of the natural world:

Celebrant: *We live in a beautiful world, full of wonder and life. Barbara and Mitchell have asked that their son be blessed by the sacred elements of this world.*

Maternal grandmother offers a bowl of soil for child to place his hands in.

Grandmother: *May the spirits and energy of the dark, fertile earth bless you, dear Robert. May you grow strong and wise. May you know stability and abundance. May you always stand firm.*

Maternal grandfather wafts smoking incense around child.

Grandfather: *May the spirits and energy of the unseen, moving air bless you, dear Robert. May you grow intelligent and true. May you learn to listen for inspiration. May you always breathe freely.*

Paternal Grandfather holds a sheltered candle towards child for the light to shine upon him.

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Grandfather: *May the spirits and energy of the bright, warming fire bless you, dear Robert. May you grow passionate and courageous. May you dare to reach for your potential. May you never be left out in the cold.*

Paternal Grandmother anoints Robert's forehead and hands with water.

Grandmother: *May the spirits and energy of the cool, flowing waters bless you, dear Robert. May you grow loving and kind. May you experience creativity and compassion. May you never thirst.*

Introduction to the spirits of place

Celebrant: *The earth is a sacred, living entity. Moving over her, on her, and through her are the energies of animals large and small, trees and flowers, rivers, stones, and sunlight. Each place has its own feeling, its genius loci, the spirit of place. Where we come from is a part of who we are and what we become.*

Robert, look around you with the wide eyes of childhood. See the enchantment of the place you call home. May the woodland tree protect you. May the voice of the streams call to you. May the creatures of the earth teach you. May you always feel at home in the universe.

I call to the spirits of this place: See this young child. Take him under your protection. Guide her in learning about the world in which he lives. Teach him to walk softly on this earth. I ask you this with all honor. Blessed be.

Community blessings and gift giving

Mother: *Mitchell and I have asked you here today because we cherish our relationships with you – connections we want to pass on to our son, Robert.*

Father: *As we live our lives, we learned through trial and error and observation what qualities or characteristics are needed for a healthy and whole life. We'd like share this knowledge and foresight with Robert. Barbara and I gift our son, Robert, with a handmade wooden box as a container for the blessings and wishes we share with him today.*

Mother: *At this time, we ask that you come forward, one at a time, and share your blessings with Robert.*

Guests come up to Robert and speak their blessings to him and place a token representing their blessing into the box.

Thanksgiving

Celebrant: *We have done great work here today. We have done no less than set a new life on its life journey with the blessings of the wind and the rain, the sun and the earth, and the good people gathered here today. Let us give thanks as we move into the festivities.*

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Friend: *Awakening*
in a moment of peace
We give thanks
to the source of all peace

and we give thanks
both to my mother earth
for sustaining my steps
and to the seas
cycling once again
to bring forth new life

you can see forever
when the vision is clear
in this moment
each moment
we give thanks.²

Celebrant: *Blessed be, amen.*

² excerpted from poem by Harriet Kofalk, found on page 234 of *Earth Prayers*