

Celebrating Grandparenthood

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY

Whether you became a grandparent yesterday or years ago, it is likely that much has changed — including your own role in the family, your relationship with the parents of your grandchild, and your view of your place in the world and your legacy. This ritual is a way to celebrate your status as a grandparent and affirm your place in the generations.

There are many ways to become a grandparent: through your children adopting or giving birth to a grandchild, being chosen as a surrogate grandparent, or any way that your status as “grandparent” has emerged. This ceremony is for grandparents within any family constellation.

While you may choose to immerse alone or with others present, you might consider inviting others to attend as witnesses to affirm the moment after you emerge from the mikveh. You may choose to have a celebration after your mikveh or have each person come with a blessing to share as you celebrate and affirm your role of grandparent. If your grandparent-in-laws are of a different or no faith tradition, inviting them to offer a blessing, piece of wisdom, or wish after your immersion is a powerful way to continue building your relationship as co-grandparents.

Created by Mayyim Hayyim for the Jewish Grandparents Network



Immersion

טבילה T'VILAH

FIRST IMMERSION (SACREDNESS)

עֲטֶרֶת זִקְנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְתַפְאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם: Ateret z'kenim b'nai vanim, v'tiferet banim avotam.

Grandchildren are the crown of their elders. Parents are the light to their children.¹

As I immerse myself, I honor the stage of my life where I now hold the title of grandparent.

May my entry into the waters of the mikveh strengthen me as I grandparent the next generation.²

May I continue to discover new parts of myself and deepen my relationship with my children and grandchild(ren).

Slowly descend the steps into the mikveh waters, and immerse completely so that every part of your body is covered by the warm water.

When you emerge, recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּטַבִּילָה בְּמַיִם חַיִּים. Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam
asher kid'shanu bi-t'vilah b'mayyim hayyim³

Blessed are You, Source of Life, Majestic Spirit of the Universe,
who makes us holy by embracing us in living waters.



SECOND IMMERSION (AWE)

Hineni.

Here I stand having become a grandparent, knowing I have created a full life for myself, knowing that I have a circle of loved and loving ones who continue to celebrate this life stage with me, knowing that I am sheltered beneath the wings of the Divine Presence.⁴

Modim anachnu lach.

Infinite Presence, I thank You for the good I know, for the life I have,
and for the gifts that are my daily portion:

For health and healing

For the ever-renewed beauty of earth and sky,

For thoughts of truth and justice which stir us from our ease

And move us to acts of goodness.⁵

Take a deep breath and exhale while gently and completely immersing for the second time.

THIRD IMMERSION (PROMISE OF THE MOMENT)

L'dor vador, I honor my ancestors who came before me, and I take my place in this legacy.

May the blessings and lessons of my experiences guide and sustain me as a grandparent.⁶

May I love my grandchildren in the way they need to be loved, may I be a nonjudgmental presence to my children as they may parent differently than I, and may I be a safe and embracing presence for my grandchildren throughout their lives.

Relax, and let your body soften, as you slowly and completely immerse for the third time.



When you emerge, recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam*
שְׁהַחֲיוֹנוּ, וְקִיּוֹמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה. *shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Holy One of Blessing, for giving me life, sustaining me,
and through one miracle after another, bringing me to this moment.⁷

CLOSING KAVANAH

May I live to see my world fulfilled
May my destiny be for worlds still to come,
And may I trust in generations past and yet to be.⁸

ATTRIBUTIONS

This ceremony was adapted by Rabbi Amalia Mark for Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Paula Brody & Family Education Center and the Jewish Grandparents Network.

1: Proverbs 17:6

2: Adapted from Mayyim Hayyim 60th birthday immersion ceremony

3: Adapted, originally created by Mayyim Hayyim Ritual Creation Team, 2004

4: Adapted from Gal Berner, Leila. "Our Silent Seasons." In *Lifecycles: Jewish Women on Life Passages and Personal Milestones*, Vol. 1, ed. Debra Orenstein. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1994, p. 135

5: Adapted from Healing Service, Temple Israel Boston, 2000

6: Adapted from Mayyim Hayyim 70th birthday immersion ceremony

7: Interpretive English translation by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson, and Judith D. Kummer

8: Adapted from Talmud, Berachot 17a

