

Celebrating Grandparenthood

A WATER-POURING 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 your children, 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. You can also use it to mark the birth of each grandchild, as we are different people each time. The words can take on different meaning at different stages of grandparenting.

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.

WATER

Water is a central theme in Jewish life: from the primordial waters of creation to the blessings for rain and dew, to the traditional washing the hands at the Passover seder and full body immersion in a mikveh, the Jewish people recognize the power of water. This water-pouring ceremony invites you to pour from one vessel to another, affirming the constant movement of life forward.

PREPARING FOR THE CEREMONY

All you need is a cup or vessel that holds meaning for you (for example, a Kiddush cup, heirloom goblet, or cup from your own wedding), filled with tap water, a large attractive bowl, and a hand towel. While it is helpful to perform the ceremony in a quiet, uninterrupted space, you can take part wherever you are most comfortable.

Created by Mayyim Hayyim for the Jewish Grandparents Network



Ritual Steps

FIRST POUR

עֲטֶרֶת זְקֵנִים 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

I honor the stage of my life where I now hold the title of grandparent. As I pour water into this vessel, I affirm and celebrate the transition of grandparenthood.

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

Pour about a third of the water from the cup into the bowl.

Option: Let the water trickle over your fingers as you pour it into the bowl.

SECOND POUR

Here I am, 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 a Divine presence.

Modim anachnu lach.

I thank the Abundance of the Universe 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.

I pour *meyyim hayyim*, living waters, to recognize the abundant gifts in my life and the gift of being a grandparent.

Pour some more water into your bowl

Option: Let the water trickle over your fingers as you pour it into the bowl.



THIRD POUR

May the blessings and lessons of my experiences guide and sustain me as a grandparent.⁴

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

I pour mayyim hayyim, living waters, in recognition of l'dor vador (from generation to generation). I honor my ancestors who came before me, and I take my place in this legacy.

Pour the remainder of the water into the bowl.

Option: Let the water trickle over your fingers as you pour it into the bowl.

After the ceremony, you may wish to use the water in the bowl to water plants around your home (or offer to pets) as an affirmation of the chain of life that is interconnected.

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 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

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

4: Adapted from Mayyim Hayyim 70th Birthday Immersion Ceremony

