

Alan B. Singer, M.D.

Mohel serving the Phoenix Jewish Community
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Dear Parents-to-be:

Congratulations on the upcoming birth of your new son! I am pleased that you have asked me to perform the Brit Milah. I am a graduate of the Brit Kodesh program at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and thus am certified by the Conservative Movement as a Mohel. I do Britot for Orthodox, Conservative and Reform families, as well as for many unaffiliated couples.

I like to "preview" the whole ceremony via this letter. Since I am a Certified Mohel, it is not necessary to have a rabbi present, but I am happy to share the officiating with a rabbi, if you so wish. If a rabbi is present, he or she may have some modifications of the ceremony, but the general order is the same.

The "cast of characters" includes, of course, the baby and parents! In addition, someone needs to carry him into the room at the start of the ceremony. This honor is often given to a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Another person is honored as the Sandek....the one who holds the baby during the actual circumcision. This can be a man or woman, as long as they are Jewish. This person needs to be comfortable with some minor surgery being performed in front of their eyes. As the enclosed papers indicate, grandparents can have an English reading if they are present.

We start the ceremony with the guests gathered in a semi-circle, usually in the living room. When it comes time for the actual circumcision, those who are interested can watch closely, with the others standing quietly in the back of the room.

During the circumcision, the baby lies on a table (usually the dining room table), with cushioning provided by a pillow, a pad from the changing table, or a folded blanket or bath towel. The Sandek sits near the baby's head, and reaches across to keep the infant's legs still while I perform the circumcision.

There's an option for one or both parents to actually handle the blade and complete the circumcision once I've done the preliminary placing of the clamp. This literally fulfills the commandment in the Bible to do your own child's bris. If you so choose, I will guide you through it, and you cannot hurt your child. Very few parents choose to do this, but I always ask in advance rather than surprising you at the ceremony.

In the days before the ceremony, you should

- Contact me to arrange the date, time and location
- Choose a Hebrew Name
- Choose a Sandek to hold your baby
- Ask your guests to arrive 15 minutes before the expected ceremony

ובן-שמנת ימים ימול לכם כל-זכר לדרתיכם

On the eighth day you shall circumcise your sons

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On the day of the ceremony you will need:

- A sturdy table to hold the baby (it is also possible for the baby to be held by the Sandek in a chair)
- A changing pad, towels or pillow
- Kosher wine in a Kiddush cup or other glass
- A clean diaper on the table.
- It helps if the baby is well-fed about 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony.
- It helps if the child's outfit permits easy dressing and undressing of the lower part of his body. A gown with a drawstring at the bottom instead of pants really is ideal, but not mandatory.

After the ceremony you will need Vaseline for diaper changes for the five days following the circumcision. I bring all sterile supplies and the gauze necessary to place on the penis.

I always anesthetize with Novacaine for the circumcision. This involves two small injections at the base of the penis about five minutes before we start the ceremony. This insures that he will not feel pain during the procedure.....he may fuss about lying flat on his back with his legs restrained, but he will not scream in pain.

Instead of my professional fee, I recommend a contribution to a Jewish charity of your choice. I will suggest charities if you need advice in this regard.

Please contact me at the alan@dralansinger.com if you have more questions. You are welcome to meet with me in advance, if you wish. Otherwise, please Email me as soon as possible after the birth, so we can plan the time and date of the ceremony. In the Email, please include your cell and home phone numbers, as well as the direct dial number to your hospital room. I should get back to you within 6 hours of getting your message.

I look forward to meeting your family and friends, and hope to make the bris a most meaningful experience.

Sincerely,

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