



ShalomBaby

Jewish Adoption

The same rituals that mark the birth of any Jewish baby are appropriate for adopted babies, with exceptions made to the customary timing. It may also be necessary for your baby to undergo a conversion at a *mikvah* (explained below). Your rabbi can advise you on what rituals are customary for your specific synagogue community. If you don't have a rabbi, please call Jconnect at (301) 348-7356 or (703) 286-1022 and you will be referred to a rabbi of the denomination you prefer.

Mikvah

Halachah (Jewish law) traditionally requires that an adoptive baby boy or girl participates in a conversion ceremony at a *mikvah*. In the case of an infant boy, this usually takes place after the circumcision has healed. A *mikvah* is a warm pool, a portion of which must be rainwater, built in a ritually prescribed manner. A parent enters the *mikvah* holding the baby and participates in the entire event with the child. The baby is fully immersed in the water for a moment. After the immersion in the *mikvah*, the child receives his or her Hebrew name and is considered to be *halachically* Jewish. Usually, a certificate attesting to the child's new status is issued at that time at the religious bathhouse in which a ritual purification takes place. Ceremonies can vary and your rabbi will inform you as to what is expected.

Please contact your rabbi for any other questions you have regarding Jewish adoption. If you require assistance in contacting a rabbi, please call Jconnect at (301) 348-7356 or (703) 286-1022.