

Beautiful
BLESSINGWAYS

HOST GUIDE





TIME TO CELEBRATE

A Blessingway is a beautiful way to celebrate a pregnant Mum-to-be, making her feel very special, loved and supported, as she nears the arrival of her baby.

Having a family member or friend facilitate the smooth coordination of the Blessingway will help the Mum-to-be feel relaxed pampered. So if that's you, thank you for stepping into this space!

We are so excited to provide you with this guide to go alongside the beautiful products in the Beautiful Blessing box to assist you in creating a wonderful experience.

This guide will help you in hosting a Blessingway, performing the ceremonies using the products in your box, and will also provide you with tips and ideas in preparation for the celebration.

Of course, this is only a guide and you may have your own ideas on how you would like the Blessingway to run. Our intention is only to make this as easy as we can for you.

We would LOVE to hear from you and the Mum-to-be after the Blessingway and encourage you to send any photos and a written account of the celebration to us to possibly be featured on our blog and social media accounts. Of course, if you share any photos on your own accounts we would love you to tag us @beautifulblessingways and #beautifulblessinways so we can see your beautiful celebration.

*Community, joy, positive energy, strength, support, connection, ceremony,
honour, simplicity, love and beauty... delivered to you in a box.*

*Beautiful Blessingway boxes are curated and created with love, care
and special attention to detail, for expectant mothers everywhere.*

The mother in me sees the mother in you, with love.

Beautiful
BLESSINGWAYS

BY SPECIAL INVITATION

In your Beautiful Blessingway box you will find 20 bespoke quality printed **invitations with envelopes.**

There is something very special about receiving a handwritten beautiful invitation by hand or in the mail which is why we have included invitations in your box.

A Blessingway is a very special occasion, so making your guests also feel special to be a part of it starts here.

There are a few things you will have to plan before filling out and sending the invitations.

Ideally, a Blessingway is hosted by another woman or women close to the Mum-to-be, family or friend. Together decide where the Blessingway will be held. As a Blessingway is about the Mum-to-be feeling pampered, even if the Blessingway is held at her house, having someone else bring it together and coordinate it on the day is a great idea. Next choose a date and time of day to suit the Mum-to-be.

Who to invite is up to the Mum-to-be but having said that you may have a very clear idea of who she would want there, if you want the Blessingway to be a surprise. A Blessingway is a special celebration and it is important that she feels comfortable with those there and guests are women she feels most supported by.

The Mum-to-be may supply a list of who invitations are to be sent to and the host may send them.

We have left the back of the invitation blank for you to write any other message. This is a good place to ask each guest to bring with them a blessing to read out on the day (see bead ceremony).

You may also want to create a digital format of communication either via email or a private facebook event, in addition to the special handwritten invite. If you feel it necessary, you can include a simple and easy link to our website and blog so the guests may know what to expect.

FOOD

What type of food you decide to have as part of your Blessingway will depend on a few factors, including what time of day it is held, the duration, or whether you are catering to a specific dietary concern. You may be happy for people to graze throughout the Blessingway or you may find it easier to run the ceremonies if people aren't eating at the same time, as it can be distracting. You could instead announce that there will be ample opportunities to eat and choose a couple of times during the celebration that suit the time of day and how you would like it to flow. You may want a full feast or just be happy with tea, coffee and a cake. Here are a few ideas for you to consider.

BRING A PLATE

With everyone contributing by bringing a plate of food to share it obviously takes the pressure off of the Mum-to-be or hostess. It also ensures there is plenty of food to go around.

If you wish, you could specify which guests bring sweet or savoury so there is a balanced choice, either on their invitation or by following up after as people RSVP. Having everyone bring a plate generally ensures that most dietary concerns are taken care of as a guest is unlikely to bring a plate of something they can't or won't eat. Just make sure you have a table or bench big enough to put all the food on.

GRAZING PLATTER

Having a grazing platter takes some of the formality away from eating which is perfect for a Blessingway. There is also usually a huge variety of food, so tastes and dietary concerns are catered for.

Grazing plates are usually bursting with colour from fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, chocolate, possibly edible flowers, meats, cheeses, crackers, bread and other delicious morsels - a bounty of plentiful nourishment celebrated with gratitude.

The great thing about grazing platters is that they can be made ahead of time and clean up is limited afterward to wiping down the platter, especially as most things on a grazing platter are easily eaten with fingers. The emphasis is on having a bit of everything. The hostess or a group of family and or friends may like to put this together or there are plenty of catering companies who specialize in this type of cuisine.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

Maybe you would like to have a special cake to mark the occasion of your Blessingway.

HENNA PREPARATION

In your Beautiful Blessingways box you will receive your very own pregnancy Henna kit. Fresh and pure is best when it comes to henna which is why we have supplied you with the ingredients you will need to mix up a pregnancy safe henna paste. In your kit you will find pre-measured organic henna powder and 100% pure essential lavender oil which not only smells wonderful, it is also the safest option for pregnancy henna.

Mixing the henna paste is very simple but it must be done at least 5 hours before you intend to use it (ideally the day before). You will need:

30 grams of henna powder (this is the amount in your sachet in your kit)

10ml of Lavender oil (this is the amount in your bottle in your kit)

10 grams of sugar

water

glass bowl

spatula

large piping bag

empty henna cone

cellotape

Empty henna powder and lavender oil into bowl. Add sugar and carefully add in a tiny bit of water, mixing all ingredients with a spatula until you have a thick paste.

Cover henna with cling wrap and set aside for 5 - 12 hours in a warm place (not the fridge). You will know the Henna is ready once it has changed colour. If you scrape the top layer you will see it is a different colour to what is underneath which is perfect.

Keep out of reach of children at all times.

Mix the paste again adding a little more water if you wish until you have a smooth toothpaste-like consistency. Transfer paste into a large piping bag (great example at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bew4Yyk2KwQ>). Pipe paste into henna cone with enough space at the top of the cone to be able to fold and tape ends down.

Use as much tape as you need to feel that it is secure.

Pipe a small dot onto your hand and leave for 5 minutes. When you wipe the henna off you should have a bright orange dot which is the stain from the henna. This will darken over the next 12 hours. If any irritation occurs stop use.

There is a great step by step process shown in photos on the blog.

CREATE THE SPACE

A Blessingway is all about making the Mum-to-be feel comfortable and special. Therefore, when planning what space to hold the celebration in, it's a good idea to consult the woman of honour.

Most of the ceremonies work well if everyone is seated in a circle type arrangement but it's certainly up to you whether this works or not. You can be on cushions on the floor or on chairs of some sort which may, of course, depend on the place/space you are in. One thing to take into consideration is the comfort of your pregnant Mum-to-be. She may or may not be comfortable on the floor. If she is going to be on the floor lots of cushions is a great idea and if she is to be seated in a chair make sure it's a comfortable one for her.

Make sure you have everything needed for the ceremonies close at hand to assist the smooth running of the celebration.

You may want to have everything set up in the one room/space or you may like to have the food separate.

As mentioned later in this guide it is wonderful to have the dreamcatcher hanging somewhere in view but the rest of the decoration can be as simple or as intricate as you like.

The main thing to remember is to create a space that is full of ease, joy and love, which amplifies and supports the beautiful positive energy.

We have a Pinterest account that has LOADS of inspiration for you. Go take a look and follow us while you are there.

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/beautifulblessingways/>

COLLECT DREAMS & BLESSINGS

In ancient cultures, dreamcatchers were hung over the beds of sleeping infants, ideally where they would be exposed to the light of the morning sun. It is believed that the web attracts and catches thoughts and dreams. Any bad dreams would be trapped in the web and dissolve with the morning light. Good dreams were thought to pass through the holes in the web and gracefully slide down the feathers that hung from the dreamcatcher, to bless and comfort the sleeping child below.

In your Beautiful Blessingway box, you will find a stunning **dreamcatcher**. Having the dreamcatcher hang at your Blessingway is yet another way to capture all the positive energy and love of the day. Hang it in the room or space that you are holding the Blessingway, in clear sight.

MUSIC

Choice of music at a social gathering is an important part of setting the mood. As a Blessingway is all about the Mum-to-be, it's important to decide, with her, the type of music she'd like to have playing. Create a playlist beforehand so on the day all you have to do is hit play and possibly adjust the volume periodically.

CROWNING OF THE QUEEN

The beautiful flower crown you will find in the Beautiful Blessingway box is adjustable and ties gracefully with a ribbon to fit any goddess's head. You may also wish to have some bobby pins ready in case you feel it needs extra securing.

Mum-to-be may want to greet guests already wearing her flower crown as they arrive at the Blessingway. Alternatively, you may wish to incorporate it into the day's festivities by marking the beginning of the Blessingway, once everyone has arrived, with a crowning ceremony. Everyone sits in a circle and the friend or family member who is hosting or coordinating the Blessingway places the flower crown on the Mum-to-be, perhaps saying a few words to recognise the celebration of her fertility and the gift of new life and pronounces her Queen for the day.

HENNA DECORATION

Henna has long been used to decorate and adorn women in various celebration ceremonies in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, many of which are still practiced today. Traditionally henna is applied to the hands and feet of a woman before her wedding and also during pregnancy and after childbirth. It is thought to ward off evil spirits and it is said that while the henna stains are visible a woman shouldn't do any housework.

This is part of the reason we included henna in our Beautiful Blessingway box, apart from making the Mum-to-be's belly or hands even more beautiful, it can act as a reminder for her to take it easy at the end of her pregnancy.

One of the things to consider if the Mum-to-be is wanting to decorate her belly, is her choice of outfit for the Blessingway. As her belly will need to be uncovered, it may be best for her to wear a skirt/pants and top rather than a dress.

If the Mum-to-be isn't keen on having her belly decorated, she can still have her hands and or feet decorated, which is the more traditional use of henna.

You can create a design of your own or you can use the designs in the free PDF downloadable file, which you will find a link to in the henna blog post on our website. Simply download and then print so you have a visual reference.

If you would like to have a stencil to trace you can use the designs in the file provided. Depending on how big you would like it, you may need to enlarge it and then print it out. Trace over your design with a ballpoint pen (it must be a ballpoint). Apply clear roll-on deodorant to the place you would like your design then gently press the paper, ink side down, onto the skin. Carefully pull the paper away and you should be left with an outline of the design on your skin, ready to henna. You will find step by step photos of this process on our blog.

Applying even pressure as you gently squeeze the henna cone, use it to draw your design onto the skin. When creating the henna design you may also want to have a small paint brush handy to help create smooth lines and finer ends to the lines.

Once your design is finished allow the henna to dry completely. It will eventually flake and fall off leaving the tattoo stain underneath. At first, the stain will appear quite a light orange but within 12 hours it will darken. For best results keep water away from the decorated area for around 12 hours.

BEAD CEREMONY

In your Beautiful Blessingway box you will find a gorgeous organic cotton bag containing semi precious stone beads. You can read about the properties of each of the stones on our blog.

Each guest is asked to bring with them to the Blessingway a blessing of some sort for the Mum-to-be. This may be a poem, some words of wisdom or some words of encouragement. The blessing is to be written down and brought with them to the Blessingway. This will be given to the Mum-to-be to keep, so some guests may like to write it on a card.

When it's time for the Bead ceremony each guest is asked to select a bead from the bag. As with most of the ceremonies, everyone then sits in a circle, including the Mum-to-be, each guest holding their written blessing and bead.

One by one each guest reads their blessing out loud and then passes their bead around the circle so that each and every bead is infused with the blessing, positive energy and love of each and every guest. This is usually a very emotional part of the Blessingway. The room or space may feel charged with love and there are often a few tears shed. Once read out, these blessings are given to the Mum to keep. The stunning white box you receive containing all your goodies when you order a Beautiful Blessingway box, is a perfect place to keep these as very special reminders to reflect on for days, weeks and years to come.

Each bead is then placed in a bowl that the pregnant Mumma holds then threaded onto a necklace of the Mums choice. It could be a thin ribbon, a chain or jewellery making elastic, which you will find in your bag along with the beads.

The Mum-to-be then wears this necklace throughout her birth. The love, positive energy and blessings of all the special women that were at the Blessingway, infused in the beads, is then with her to support and empower her during the birth. It reminds her of her strength, the love of her sisterhood, that women are truly amazing and have been birthing since the beginning of time and that she is not alone.

BEAD CEREMONY CONTINUED...

If, for some reason, the Mum-to-be can't or doesn't want to wear the beads as a necklace the string can be worn as a bracelet, held or simply hung in clear vision during the birth.

The blessings and positive energy don't stop there. The threaded beads can then be securely attached to the dream catcher, also found in your Beautiful Blessingway box, and safely hung in your new baby's room, where the love and blessings of the sisterhood are bestowed unto him or her.

CANDLE CEREMONY

The candle within your Beautiful Blessingway box can play a part at the Blessingway, your labour and birth and even after the birth.

It is lovely to light your candle towards the end of the Blessingway. While all seated in a circle, place the candle on an even surface in the middle. Take some time to all close your eyes and breathe deeply inhaling the lavender scent. We use lavender essential oil in our candles as it is well known for it's calming effect.

Depending on the time of day or where you are holding your Blessingway you may want to close curtains or turn other lights off. Candlelight is beautiful and very soothing.

CANDLE MEDITATION

Staring into a flame has a very hypnotic effect and can be used to help you calm a busy mind and focus. During your Blessingway you can ask all guests to focus on the flame. Then visualize the flame as a source of love representing the flame we all have inside us that gives us life. Each of us has our own light to shine and as we take part in a candle meditation at a Blessingway, we can also then focus on the new light that is about to be born and shine its way into life. Doing a candle meditation like this as a group doesn't have to last long, but the energy in the room will be positive and strong and a beautiful way to celebrate the new life of the baby.

THREAD CEREMONY

The Thread ceremony ties the whole event together (pardon the pun) and usually this takes place at the end of the Blessingway.

In your Beautiful Blessingway box, you will receive a ball of yarn. This is used to literally bind all the women present at the Blessingway together and also represents the cord of life, the umbilical cord.

As with most of the ceremonies, the Thread Ceremony is performed with everyone sitting in a circle. The Mum-to-be can either be part of the circle or in the middle of the circle.

One by one each woman in the circle wraps the yarn around their left wrist twice (not too tight) then passes the ball of yarn to the next woman who does the same etc.

Once each woman is connected by the thread, the host (or another guest) may wish to say a few words about the connection and support of all the women present.

You will also need a pair of scissors. Each woman then cuts the thread that connects her to the woman on her left and each woman takes their turn at tying the thread around the wrist of the woman to their left (much easier than trying to tie your own and nice to help one of the other girls).

Each woman then wears the thread on their wrist until they hear of the baby's arrival as a symbol of solidarity and support to the Mum-to-be. Each time she sees the thread around her wrist she takes a moment to send a loving thought to the beautiful Mum-to-be. After the baby is born the thread is taken off the wrist.

Apart from literally connecting each woman at the ceremony, the thread also symbolises our lineage and celebrates all the women who went before for us - our mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers etc, the matriarchs and all the innate feminine strength and love that is passed onto us from them.