

Celebrating Your Child's High School Rite of Passage!

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I vividly remember when my precious son turned one year of age. We celebrated with a delightful family birthday party that included a committed family and friends' rite of passage. Our rite of passage included:

- Asking all to become part of a village of support as guardians and godparents in our son's journey to adulthood

- Standing in a circle and having all explain how they would support my son's emotional and social growth
- Offering words of encouragement on how they would support their newly adopted godson as aunties and uncles

- Envisioning how our son would mature into young adulthood

- Providing a prayer of thanks to all for being part of our extended family in our son's village

High School Graduation

Fast forward eighteen years later, as we just celebrated our son's eighteenth birthday and upcoming high school graduation. We held a renewed rite of passage at the home we resided in throughout our child's life. This rite of passage was far different from our first because our son was fully engaged in the planning, delivery, and expressions of thankfulness. Our spirit was conveyed by these rituals:



Choosing eighteen life-long friends to participate in a candle lighting ceremony. Each friend lit a candle in the order of how long they knew my son and all reflected on their journey of life with my son. Each candle represented how the friend illuminated my son's path in his growth.

Five community leaders that attended my son's first birthday shared their impressions of how my son has grown and achieved many milestones throughout his eighteen-year journey. Each leader provided my son with a piece of advice and wisdom that he could carry as anchors through his future life. Due to a larger attendance, we were limited to the number of folks who could share with the entire group. My son's father and his first-year babysitter were the last two speakers.

Everyone in attendance completed an Advice for the

Graduate form that are being compiled into a graduation scrapbook.

Parenting Reflections

When I reflect on this milestone event and my eighteen years of nurturing my son, I am thankful for the following:

We were able to stay in one home and center our life around a stable and supportive village of family and community members.

These family members and friends provided our son with many unique cultural experiences, leadership development guidance, and financial support for special opportunities.

Although most of our biological family is not local, we were able to integrate multiple cultures and personal experiences of the people in our village to expand our understanding of the opportunities available to us.

Please share your family's rite of passage events with us at hello@genparenting.com or through the comment section below.

Warm regards,

Yvette

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