

# PORTRAIT GUIDE

*for a stress-free experience*

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CJ PHOTOGRAPHY

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# THE PORTRAIT SESSION GUIDE

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WHAT  
**YOU**  
*need to*  
KNOW

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I am *SO* excited for your portrait session! My passion is to capture beauty in everyday life so that you will have memories to treasure forever. Thank you for giving me the honor of capturing these memories for you!

In this guide you will find everything you will need to know about what to expect during our session. I've included some helpful tips to hopefully make this process go as smooth as possible.

By the end of this guide, you will feel more than ready and prepared for your session. Then I will take care of the rest! Your only job is to be yourself, laugh a lot and let me create photos you will love forever. I can't wait to get you in front of the camera!

Caitlin





## WHAT TO EXPECT

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### BEFORE

About a week before your session, I will send you an email with directions for how to get to your session location and where we will meet. You'll also receive a reminder to make your final payment. If you have any questions leading up to your session, feel free to reach out!

### DURING

During our time together, you can expect high energy, lots of funny noises, and probably some squeals as I snap photos! I will pose you and tell you what to do with your hands, so you won't have to worry about any of that. I take LOTS of photos to make sure I get the great shots we need, so you'll hear my shutter snapping pretty rapidly. I also love to capture candid moments in between!

### AFTER

You can expect your photos to be sent to you in an online gallery via email about 1-2 weeks after your session! You'll be able to download your high-resolution images straight from your gallery. Then the best part begins - sharing your beautiful images with friends and family!



## *choosing time & date*

The word "photography" means "drawing with light." Lighting plays a very important role in getting good, flattering photos and I believe natural light is the best source of all.

### **FINDING OPEN SHADE**

My first priority during your session is finding a place with nice, open shade. This open shade ensures that your family won't be squinting, and the light hitting you will be soft and beautiful. I like to shoot within 2 hours of sunrise or sunset to avoid the harsh sunlight that casts unflattering shadows and hot spots on you.



### *blessing in disguise*

*Don't get discouraged if the sky is cloudy on the day of your shoot. Actually, cloudy skies enhance the lighting!*

# search for shade

## STAYING IN EVEN LIGHT

The next thing I look at is keeping you in beautiful, even light. If there are any trees around that are casting spotty light over the shaded area, I'll work to get your family away from those hot spots and into complete shade with even light. Those pesky spots can be quite distracting in photos, so I'll do my best to eliminate that to keep the focus on you.

## AVOIDING DARK/DISTRACTING BACKGROUNDS

The last thing I look for is a clear area where lots of light is able to come through behind you. I like to stay away from thick brush or bushes behind you because those things hinder the light. I'll also watch for people or cars passing by behind you while we're shooting. I may pause and wait for them to move so we won't have them cluttering up your photos.



## SELECTING THE RIGHT LOCATION

The location of your portrait session is up to you! There are many great options and hidden gems all around the state, so even if I am not familiar with a spot you suggest, I am always up for exploring a new area! If you are unsure of where you would like your session, I have some options we can review together.

# PROPS

*for you!*

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Want to add some extra fun and creativity to your shoot? Don't be shy to ask me if I can make any props ahead of time! I have a lot of flexibility with my crafts and I love to personalize special items to make this experience unique for you. If I can figure out a way to make it happen, I will!





*style tips*

FOR HER

# DON'T BE AFRAID TO DRESS IT UP

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There is no such thing as “too dressy” or your portrait session. Dressy photos always stand out amongst those who go the more casual route, and they are so captivating to see. Remember: Don’t be afraid to have some fun!

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*say yes*  
TO THE  
DRESS

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Dresses and skirts look most stunning because they really flatter every female body, especially on camera! Long, full-length, flowy dresses and skirts look amazing on camera because they bring extra movement to the photo. Consider softer fabrics like chiffon or tulle!





## *choosing colors*

When choosing colors for your outfits, I recommend selecting softer, lighter tones and more muted shades. By avoiding ultra-bright, bold colors, it will help bring all the attention to your faces and let the eye focus on the way you feel about each other. The camera loves shades of soft pink and blues, mixed with sophisticated light neutrals like heather gray, creams, leather brown and white. That softer color palette fits beautifully into almost all natural outdoor environments.

## flattering your features

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Every woman, regardless of her shape has an area of her body that she's self-conscious about, so recognizing what area that is in advance is key. Choosing flattering silhouettes and colors that complement your natural features is the best way to ensure you'll love the way you look in your photos.



Three-quarter and long sleeves create an awesome slimming effect on *all* arms, so be on the lookout for an option with a longer length sleeve. You could also bring a cute jacket, blazer or cardigan along, too.

Choosing flattering silhouettes and colors that complement your natural features is the best way to ensure you'll love the way you look in your photos. Remember, heels elongate women's legs, making them look fabulous!

### QUICK TIP

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*Bring a pair of easy-to-kick-off flats to wear when moving from place to place in between photos. Your feet will thank you later!*

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## *make a* STATEMENT

Pairing an accessory or two with your outfit can really help bring some extra dimension to your images, and be a nice tie-in when you're coordinating with a group. Big statement necklaces bring a lot of pop to the photos, while the smaller, delicate ones will not be as noticeable on camera.



Belts, bracelets and earrings bring great visual interest, so choose one or two that don't compete for attention. Consider a nice scarf for a fall shoot or a pretty headband for a summer session.

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*Whatever is uniquely you!*

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## ONE OR TWO? IT IS UP TO YOU!

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You can bring one outfit or two! Most of my clients love having the variety in the photographs that come with an outfit change.

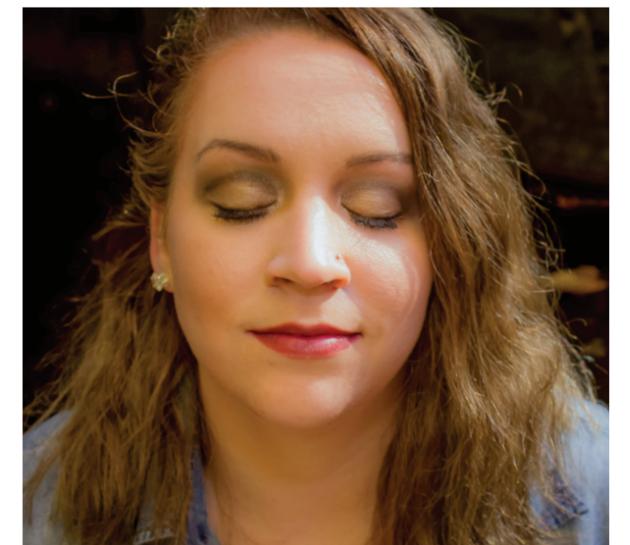
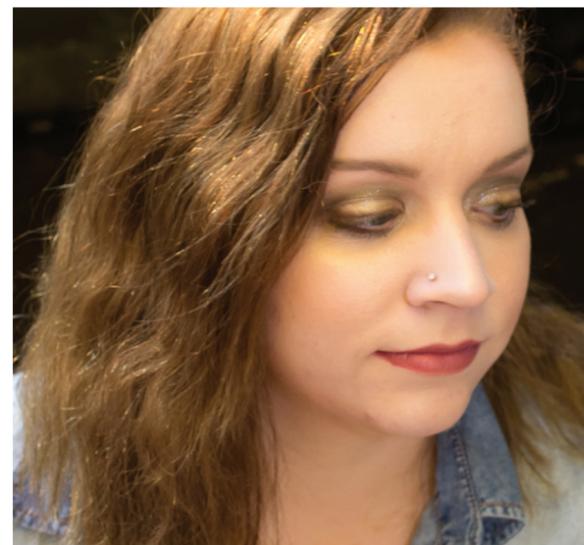
Remember, though, you don't have to bring two looks if it's too stressful to coordinate or if you'd rather just stick to one fabulous look. One outfit that you love will be so much better than one outfit you love and another you're not very excited about. And if you stick with one outfit, you won't have to spend any of your time changing half way through, so we'll be able to sneak in a few more photos! So, one or two? It's really up to you!





## TREAT YOURSELF

This is a great time to treat yourself and go pro! Pamper yourself by getting your nails, hair, and makeup done professionally. It makes you feel beautiful, and it looks stunning on camera!





*fashion tips*

# FOR HIM

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## **FIND THE BEST FIT**

Long, fitted pants and close-toed shoes are the most sophisticated and masculine looks for men. They draw attention away from his legs and feet and place it where you want it: on his handsome face! For your session, it's best to leave the shorts, sandals, and loose-fitting pants at home.

## **BRING IN LAYERS**

Layers on men look great on camera, even when it's hot outside. Trust me when I say it's worth the hour or two of discomfort for photos that will last you both a lifetime! Blazers, vests, and coats up the level of any look and will bring extra dimension to your photos.

## **MIX IT UP**

Many guys love to mix a suit coat, blazer, or sport coat with a different pant color. It adds some extra visual interest and helps to break up the color tones.

## **DON'T FORGET THE DETAILS**

Ties, bowties, pocket squares, colored socks, suspenders, and watches are sharp compliments to any outfit for men. Although small, they add great pops of class to your photos.



*prepping your*  
**FAMILY**

# *coordinating* THE CREW

## **AVOID "MATCHY-MATCHY"**

Although it may be tempting to dress everyone up in the same plaid print or in that white tee and jeans, photos really look stunning when there is nice coordination without overly matching. I typically suggest dressing no more than two people up in the same print or color. This helps to balance out your photos so the attention is drawn to YOU!

## **PICK 2 OR 3 COLORS**

Instead of having everyone wear the same color, try picking two or three colors that blend well together and coordinate that way! Try experimenting with different shades of colors, or adding different prints or fabrics to the mix.

## **DRESSY OVER CASUAL**

I always suggest dressing the little ones in something more dressy instead of their casual playwear. Dressy clothes, even on kids, will automatically make your photos stand out! Some great places to look for unique, beautiful outfits are Moderne Child or Etsy! Remember, there is no such thing as "too dressed up," even for the little ones, so have some fun!

## **THINK LIKE ADULTS**

I know they may be little, but many of the tips For Her and For Him still apply to the kids. (They're basically little adults anyway, right?) For the girls, dresses and accessories are perfect! Maybe add a fun flower crown or bow for an extra pop of beautiful. For the boys, layers are adorable! And don't forget about the cute details like suspenders or a fun bowtie!



# PREPPING YOUR LITTLE ONES

## MAKE IT FUN

This one's a big one! I love interacting with the kids to get the genuine smiles you know and love. This may mean me making crazy noises, or you helping by playing peek-a-boo behind me. Whatever gets those sweet giggles!



## STAY FLEXIBLE

Kids can be unpredictable at times, so I find it best to stay flexible and follow the kids' needs. If they need to run around, I'll let them run and be silly before being still to capture the shots we need. If they don't want to stand but will be held, we'll do that instead. I tend to read each child for cues to capture the best photos we can!

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Sometimes kids get shy when they get in front of my camera. Have a conversation at home with them about the session and reassure them that my camera is very similar to the one on your phone and that it isn't something to be scared of. Make a game out of practicing their smiles in the mirror and help prepare them for following directions by playing a game of "Simon Says" beforehand to make the day go a little bit smoother.

## BRING BRIBES

When all else fails, bribes usually save the day. Be prepared by bringing some sweet favorites like candy or gummies! We can take quick bribe breaks if we need to throughout your session.





## one final note

I can't wait for our session together! I know I gave you a lot to think about and hopefully you found this information helpful. If you have any questions or concerns leading up to your session, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. My goal is to serve you the best that I can!

This is going to be a fun session, so don't stress. Relax and enjoy making these memories with your family that you'll get to treasure forever. Have fun, smile until your cheeks hurt and laugh a lot.

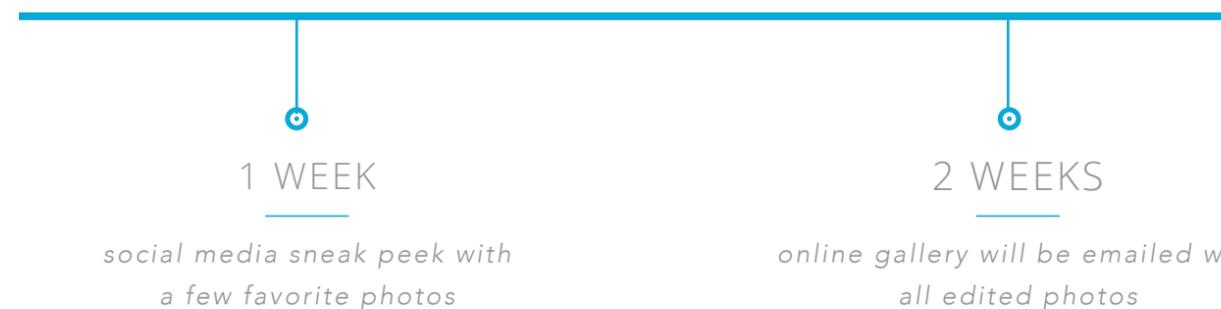
## SEE YOU SOON

CJ

## PORTRAIT SESSION CHECKLIST

- SET DATE, TIME AND LOCATION WITH CJ PHOTOGRAPHY
- REVIEW GUIDE FOR STYLE TIPS
- SCHEDULE HAIR AND MAKEUP APPOINTMENTS (optional)
- CHOOSE YOUR OUTFITS
- PACK A BAG WITH:
  - Flats or flip-flops for walking between photo spots
  - Second outfit (if you're doing two)
  - Touch-up makeup
  - Water bottle (for warmer sessions)
  - Coat or cover-up (for colder sessions)
  - Snacks for little ones
  - If you have a toddler or younger, small eye catching toys (or lollipops) to hold their attention
  - If you have a toddler or younger, small eye catching toys (or lollipops) to hold their attention

## PHOTO DELIVERY TIMELINE



# more FROM CAITLIN

I offer a wide variety of additional products on my Etsy Shop. There is something for everyone, and if you can't find something for someone you have in mind, then let's create it!

I love connecting with people through bringing their ideas to life. I always provide the best possible outcome on any project idea offered to me. Most of my projects involve wood and colored resin. So, let's chat and if it's something I can make, I will.

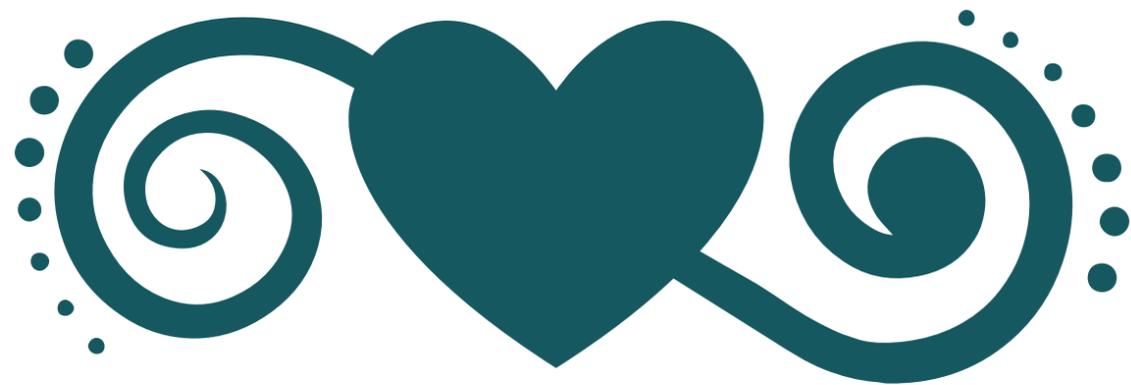
A specialty of mine are Cremation Crystals. While death is inevitable, it doesn't have to be dark. I take precious care to preserve your loved one's ashes in memorial pieces so they can live on in color and beauty rather than in an urn. These pieces are 100% customizable. I work along side with you in every step along the way so you can keep them by your side... forever.

more than a *shop*, it's an *experience*  
**LET'S CREATE TOGETHER!**

- CREMATION CRYSTALS
- CUSTOM PROJECTS
- DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
- HOME DECOR
- JEWELRY
- KEYCHAINS
- MEMORIALS
- ORNAMENTS
- PET PORTRAITS
- PICTURE FRAMES
- THE HEARTBEAT
- WOODWORK
- ZIPPER POUCHES
- & MORE!



# THE HEARTBEAT



## HOW TO USE THE HEARTBEAT:

Begin with your eye focused on the left tip of the spiral. Gently breathe in while following the line with your eye. Count the dots as they pass and notice how they enlarge with your lungs. The heart should be the peak of your breath. Continue on by breathing out, again counting the dots as they pass. Notice how they decrease as your lungs exhale. Once complete, repeat by going in reverse.



## HOW TO USE THE NEW HEARTBEAT:

Start in the middle of the spiral and inhale while following the line. Hold the breath while going around the heart and exhale when you get back to the spiral. Notice how the dots enlarge when the air fills your lungs on the inhale and shrink as the air is leaving your lungs during the exhale.

## DEAR YOU ....

When it feels like the pressure of the world is suffocating you, remember to take a moment to breathe.

Sometimes life feels so intense that things get blurry. It's when you stop for a moment to breathe that you can find clarity and peace again. Nothing is ever so bad as long as you have your breath.

*As long as you are breathing, you are living.*

There are two designs, both serve the same purpose.

I hope you can refer to these designs to remind you to take that moment to find clarity in the hard times.

Keep on breathing, my friend,

*Caitlin*

www.CaitlinsCreationsME.com |    CaitlinsCreationsME

## INHALE • EXHALE • REVERSE • REPEAT FEEL YOUR HEARTBEAT



[www.caitlinscreationsme.com](http://www.caitlinscreationsme.com)

**CJ PHOTOGRAPHY**

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