

Cut to the chase

Cake that reveals baby's gender becomes sweet slice of fun

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CHRIS RUSSELL | DISPATCH PHOTOS

Mimi Anglin cutting the “reveal” cake before family and friends, with husband Jonathan hovering

On a recent Friday night, 12 members of the Anglin family stared anxiously at a layer cake.

Boy or Girl? was written on top — and the answer lay inside.

The family, of Hilliard, was about to discover whether Jonathan and Mimi would have a fourth daughter or their first son.

As the moment arrived for Mimi to cut the cake and find out, her two youngest daughters — Shelby, 5, and Janna, 2, leaned forward, eager with anticipation. Emma, 8, remained more calm. All three were hoping for a brother, and Mr. Anglin cautioned: “If it’s a boy, cover your ears.”

But as soon as Mimi, 31, sliced into the cake and blue icing was visible — the telltale sign for a boy — her husband, Jonathan, 37, shouted the loudest: “Ohhhh, that’s crazy!”

The “reveal” party is not a new phenomenon, but learning a baby’s sex by cutting into cakes is a relatively recent activity.

The idea started to take hold in June 2009, when Josh Duggar — from the TLC reality show *19 Kids and Counting* — and wife Anna revealed their baby’s gender during a cake-cutting on the *Today* show. (They had a daughter, Mackynzie Renee.)

That’s where the Anglins got the idea.

During an ultrasound three days before their party, the parents-to-be asked sonographer Kathy Riggs to write the baby’s sex on a piece of paper and seal it in an envelope.

An Anglin relative delivered the news to the Original Goodie Shop in Upper Arlington, where the cake was made with blue icing in between the layers.

Riggs, at Specialists in Obstetrics and Gynecology of Columbus, said she does 10 to 15 ultrasounds a day during which a baby’s sex is determined.

She gets several requests a week from parents who want the results for a party.

Some bakers, such as Tricia Gale of TG Patty Cakes, color the entire interior of the cake. Others, such as the Goodie Shop, simply color between layers. Typically, bakeries do an 8-inch round cake, which costs about

§30.

"It's one of my favorite things to do here," said Sue Baisden, owner of Capital City Cakes in Grove City. "To get to be a part of such an intimate celebration is really special."

For families, though, the suspense of waiting can be excruciating.

In November, Benjamin Stenberg, 32, of Dublin picked up the cakes that would reveal the sex of the twins that he and wife Shannon, 29, were expecting — their first children.

"She made me promise not to stick toothpicks into the bottom of them," said Benjamin, whose wife was out of town.

The next day, with 40 family members and friends present, the Stenbergs cut into both cakes and learned that they are having boys. The due date is May 1.

"It was nice to be with everyone at once, rather than saying, 'You're the fifth person we told, or the 12th person,'" Benjamin said. "It was great — I couldn't think of a more fun way to do it."

When Sherry Baugh, 34, and husband Bryce, 35, of Bexley were expecting their first child in 2007, they sealed the ultrasound results in an envelope to open on Christmas morning.

Daughter Natalie was born in March 2008.

Expecting again in 2009, the Baughs had a cake made.

"We always have birthday cake on Christmas morning, for Jesus' birthday, so we thought, 'Why not incorporate the two?'" Sherry said. "We always open our stockings before (eating cake), and that morning, it seemed to go so slow.

"It was hard to wait, but it was worth it."

The cake revealed the Baughs would have a boy, and son Braxton was born in April 2010.

At the Anglin party, many of the family members were in shock. The group included Mimi's two grandmothers, Mimi Richardson, 98, and Louise Hedman, 86.

Jonathan also made sure his parents — Gary and Barbara Anglin — could participate, though they live in Pascagoula, Miss. They, too, purchased a specially made "mystery" cake and — with an open phone line to Hilliard — they cut into it at the same time.

In the excitement, Mimi Anglin mistakenly put the first slice of cake onto a pink plate.

"It's pretty surreal," she said. "I really had envisioned pink because that's what we've seen for so long."

She surmised — correctly — that her husband was secretly hoping for a boy.

"I'll probably yell later," Jonathan said, as his daughters pulled out noisemakers.

The Anglins had elected not to learn the sex before the birth of their daughters, so the "reveal" cake was a first for them.

"I'm so glad we did this," said Mimi, whose due date is April 22. "For the girls to be part of this is huge. We have some exciting days ahead."