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GENESIS MISSION TO CAPTURE MORE THAN A PIECE OF THE SUN

When NASA's Genesis mission sends its spacecraft into a two-year orbit to collect particles of wind from the sun, there will be no astronaut on board. But NASA will go one better. It wants to take you along—or at least, a part of you in spirit. The Genesis mission announces its opportunity to the public to submit a Genesis Gram. A Genesis Gram is a 100 character (or less) thought that will travel through space. All acceptable Genesis Grams, with the authors' names, will be engraved on a special "chip" that will be carried aboard the Genesis spacecraft and brought back to Earth. When the Genesis spacecraft returns to the Earth, the project will publish a small commemorative book, *The Best Thoughts From Space*, with multiple author credits.

Genesis grams are unique because they go a step beyond previous mission projects that have sought human interaction with the mission. Rather than simply asking for a name, Genesis Grams ask that space enthusiasts offer a piece of themselves, a thought that the Genesis spacecraft may carry with it on this mission. According to Jet Propulsion Laboratory's (JPL) Genesis Public Outreach Coordinator Dr. Gil Yanow, "Many people believe there is great energy and strength in the human spirit. If this be true, would it not be marvelous to have with us on this Genesis mission a bit of the spirit of hundreds of thousands of people?"

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The Genesis Gram will be sent spaceward after being engraved on a microchip. Around 100,000 grams can be sent on a chip that is smaller in size than a thumbnail. The microchips will be located inside of the space recover capsule, along with the science canister. The space recover capsule is that part of the spacecraft that will be returned to Earth.

NASA is currently accepting Genesis Gram entries. An acceptable Genesis Gram is one that falls within the following categories: 1) a thought for the Earth, 2) a thought for space, 3) a thought to live by, and 4) a thought to make you smile. Teachers are encouraged to submit Genesis Grams as class writing projects.

All entries for the Genesis gram are gathered via the Internet at the Genesis mission Web site. Entries from this site are automatically registered into a database, which is later sent to the JPL Microdevices Laboratory where the long process of getting this information onto the microchip begins. To register, go to <http://genesismission.jpl.nasa.gov/>. Registration is free and open to people of all ages. The deadline for entries is March 31, 2000.

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Notice to editors: More information about NASA's Genesis mission may be found at <http://genesismission.jpl.nasa.gov>. Digital photographs of the Genesis Gram microchip are available, at a resolution of 300 dpi in 3x5 and 5x8 sizes, from Jacinta Behne at McREL (see Contact Info.)