



Feature

Celebrate Life

How to Honor a Loved One Before, During and After the Funeral

Viewings, funerals and wakes offer ways to focus on the life of a loved one and help create closure for family and friends. What follows are some special ways to remember a loved one:

- A themed funeral - Use a consistent theme that represents a love of the person's life for the casket or urn, decor and music. For example, if the person was a baseball fan, place memorabilia from a favorite team around the room, display photos of the person at the ballpark, include ballpark music (for instance the instrumental of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame") and consider an official Major League Baseball® licensed image casket or urn.
- A slide show - Gather photos of the person you are remembering. These could be with family and friends, during celebrations or from that person's travels. Include quotes (or lyrics) that were loved by or exemplify the person. Use these to create a slide show and play it on a continuous loop at the viewing or wake.
- Plant a tree - Choose a special place such as a trail, a park or camp and plant a tree. Place a plaque next to the tree in remembrance of the person.
- Baby pictures - Frame pictures and place them around the funeral home.
- Music - Play a song, band, or genre of music that the person loved, or have a friend or family member sing a favorite selection.
- Awards and honors - Display the loved one's certificates of awards or honors they received.
- Order flowers with meaning - Create an arrangement where each flower represents a person or memory. Example: a bouquet of ten small flowers each representing a grandchild. The grandchildren each take a flower home with them after the ceremony.
- Testimonials - ask family and friend to tell funny stories or remembrances about the person.
- A dove/balloon/butterfly release - Release any number of doves, balloons, butterflies. Each one can fly away representing a person, memory, etc.
- Candlelit vigil - Give each guest a small candle and say something about the person being remembered as you light each candle.

- Scholarship fund - Open a fund to help a good cause in memory of the person.
- A family tree - Display a completed family tree or have family members fill in their names as they arrive. This can substitute a guest sign-in. Non-family members can be on their own "branch" or on a list to the side of the tree.
- A memory walk - Join with family and friends to walk in memory of the person.

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