

At-Home Memorial Service

Over the years families have shared that the *Children's Minnesota Memorial Service* is a special and meaningful annual event for them. As we are unable to gather as a community for our 2020 Memorial Service, we have developed an idea for an "at-home Memorial Service" which you and your family can do if it would be meaningful to you.

We invite you to modify the idea below so that you are celebrating and honoring your child who died in a way that is unique and special to your family. The idea may also be adapted for other family members that have died.

Ideas for an At-Home Memorial Service:

- **Opening**
- **Special reading / poem / sacred text / quote / music**
- **Memory Moments – a sharing by those gathered**
- **Activity**
- **Closing**

Opening

"We gather today to honor the life of (name), to acknowledge the loss of (name)'s physical presence in our lives, and to cherish the memories we hold close to our hearts".

Special reading / poem / sacred text / quote / music

Choose something to read aloud, sing, or listen to that is meaningful for your family *(Few ideas on back page)*

Sharing by those gathered – Memory Moments of your loved one

This is a time for family to share some of their favorite memories of their loved one, or of how their loved one's life has impacted their own. These words could also be written down ahead of time and then read aloud.

Activity (Optional)

At this time there can be a symbolic activity to enhance the ceremony. Some ideas include lighting a candle, playing a meaningful song, doing a communal art project, or planting a tree. Another option is to participate in something that represents "letting go" such as releasing a butterfly or lantern into the sky, blowing bubbles, or dancing to music.

Closing

"May the days ahead, in time, hold peace, hope and healing for us all".

(Before "closing" your service, consider when your family wants to end certain symbolic activities. For example, if you chose to light a candle, consider whether you extinguish the candle at the end of your service, or if you are choosing to keep it lit for the duration of the day).

I will love you

*As long as I can dream,
As long as I can think
As long as I have a memory,
I will love you.*

*As long as I have eyes to see,
And ears to hear,
And lips to speak...
I will love you.*

*As long as I have a heart to feel,
A soul stirring inside me,
An imagination to hold you...
I will love you.*

*As long as there is a time,
As long as there is a love,
As long as I have breathe to speak your name
I will love you.*

(Author unknown)

Footprints

*How very softly you tiptoed into my world
Almost silently,
Only a moment you stayed.
But what an imprint
Your footsteps have left
Upon my heart.*

(Dorothy Ferguson)

*“What we once have enjoyed and deeply loved we
can never lose,
For all that we love deeply becomes part of us.”*

(Helen Keller)

Lighting of the Candles

The light of a flame has always been symbolic to the human world. The eternal flame stands for the remembrance of those gone before; the light of a candle has come to represent rebirth and renewal. These two meanings are incorporated into the lighting of this candle today. Let this light signify the ever-present love and memory of our child that will always live on in our hearts. At the same time, let it symbolize the renewal we must seek as we continue life without our beloved child, and as we strive to walk forward with others.

(Adapted from “Lighting of Candles”
By Ann Castiglia)

Presence

*Some people enter our lives like deer
Slipping in and out of the woods
They touch our earth
as we stop to look at them
They disappear as quietly
as they came.*

*But you feel blessed
for having experienced
their gentle presence.*

*And you give thanks
That the world is a better place
because of the joy
they brought.*

(Sr. Joan Metzner)