

Planning your Funeral ***Making your wishes known***

An Information and Resource Booklet





Pastoral Introduction

Throughout your life, you've been a source of support for your family members and friends. This Funeral Planning Guide will help you support your loved ones at a time when they need it most. By documenting your funeral preferences, as well as other key information for your survivors, you can provide support posthumously – a final act of love.

Talking about death can be difficult. It is often painful and emotional. This booklet is designed to help you work through the process of planning and preparation in advance.

When completed, the booklet will provide your family with personal details and information, helpful notes, funeral service and burial / cremation wishes, and other information. With this information your family will know your personal wishes and be able to carry them out.

Funeral arrangements made in advance can help to lighten the family's burden. Such planning often spares loved ones from confusion, uncertainty, and concern over funeral and burial / cremation expenses.

It is important in considering your funeral wishes to be aware of the purposes of a funeral ceremony. There are 4 main purposes:

1. To give the bereaved **comfort** and opportunity to reflect on and share their loss
2. To acknowledge and **give thanks for the life of the deceased** in a truthful way and give thanks for that life in its richness and diversity. There person who has died will have meant different things to different people.
3. To ask the **safe transition** of the spirit / soul / character of the deceased into whatever is believed to lie beyond death
4. To **give the bereaved inspiration and hope** to resume their lives in the knowledge that things have irretrievably changed.

If you would like your funeral to have 'unconventional' elements, it may be best to talk these through with family and/or friends in advance. It is worth bearing in mind that a funeral ceremony is both for the deceased **and** for those who are left behind, and they will embrace a wide range of views and expectations.



Typical Structure of a Funeral Ceremony

- **Gathering**
- the Funeral Celebrant welcomes everyone and 'sets the tone' of the ceremony. A Eulogy may also be given at this point
- **Readings / Reflections**
*Particular readings, poems, music, other words are shared.
A special action might happen at this point - Eg lighting of candles*
- **Time to recollect / remember / express hope**
A time to give thanks for the departed, to express comfort for those who mourn, an opportunity to express a commitment to continue our own life's journeys in hope and trust (in religious ceremonies this section will usually be the prayers)
- **Entrusting**
*The deceased's soul / spirit / character is released into the next part of the journey, whatever that is considered to be.
For some people the releasing of balloons / doves has been an expression of release*
- **Farewell**
To say goodbye, committing the body for burial or cremation
- **Closing words**
To encourage

BASIC INFORMATION



Name _____
FIRST MIDDLE

FAMILY NAME / LAST NAME

Address

_____ Zip code _____

Date of Birth _____ Birthplace _____

Occupation (or retired from) _____

Single Married Civil partnership Living together
 Divorced Separated Widowed

Name of Spouse / Partner _____

Is Spouse/Partner living? Yes
 No: date of death _____

Children:

NAMES	AGE
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



INFORMATION REGARDING ESTATE

I have made a will Yes, it is held by _____
 No

FUNERAL CEREMONY INSTRUCTIONS

The Funeral Director I have chosen _____

I would like to be:

Buried At _____
Can be in a cemetery, churchyard, Woodland burial site (biodegradable coffin)

cremated At _____
Ashes to be scattered / interred where?

NB The Episcopal Church allows only for the burial of ashes directly into the earth

I would like a:

- traditional funeral followed by cremation / burial
- Burial / cremation followed by Memorial / Thanksgiving
- Burial / cremation, no Memorial / Thanksgiving
- Service followed by coffin sent (unaccompanied) for cremation
- Service I have designed myself (please give / attach details)
- Other _____

Please specify location(s) _____

Will there be a headstone / plaque? If so, please give details:

Any other details:

FUNERAL CEREMONY (Thanksgiving / Memorial)



I would like the Funeral Ceremony to take place in:

- a place of worship *PLEASE SPECIFY* _____
- the funeral home
- other venue *PLEASE SPECIFY* _____

I would like the Funeral to be conducted by a:

- Minister of Religion
- Funeral Celebrant (not necessarily linked to any church)
- Friend
- Family member
- Humanist Celebrant
- Other

Please specify / give details _____

I would like the following people present at each part of the Ceremony:

- Graveside:**
 - Close family and friends only
 - Close family only
 - All are welcome
- Funeral Home**
 - Close family and friends only
 - Close family only
 - All are welcome
- Thanksgiving / Memorial in church (or other venue)**
 - Close family and friends only
 - Close family only
 - All are welcome

Dress code details: _____



CONTENT OF THE CEREMONY

I would like a ceremony in the tradition of *(Christian, non-religious etc)*

I would like the following beliefs / philosophy to be reflected in the ceremony:

I would like the following music in the main Ceremony:

- Music as people arrive
- Music during (for reflection)
- Hymns
- Music as people leave

Details: _____

I would like the following to be included:

- Requiem
- Bible reading
- Poem
- Specially written piece
- Eulogy
- other (*perhaps something you have written yourself?*)

Details: _____

Who will read? _____



I would like the main address about my life to be given by:

If there will be no coffin / casket of ashes present at the Memorial / Thanksgiving Ceremony (ie when the cremation / burial has already taken place) would you like another focus?

(Eg projected photograph, candles to be lit, other items / memorabilia)

I would like donations to be made to:

Special Requests *(Eg special actions during the service: candle-lighting, placing of flowers etc)*

GATHERING AFTERWARDS

I would like there to be a time to gather after the funeral.

Venue:

Provisions:

Any other issues / 'loose ends':

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____