

FORMAL ELEMENTS OF A FUNERAL CEREMONY

These elements are, in general, what you would find in a funeral, celebration of life, memorial, cremation, ash-scattering ceremony – even in a Living Memorial. There are no fixed rules here. Discuss with the loved ones what they want and move things around or remove an element. This is fine. However, the funeral elements tend to go in this order, but again, each ceremony is unique. 30 minutes or under will feel about right for any group. Forty-five minutes would be a long time for guests to sit quietly, so watch the time.

We have selected some passages from our Urantia Book and the teachings of Jesus as suggestions. Find some passages that you appreciate for use and ask the family and loved ones if they have any to offer as well.

It takes a special skill-set to ‘hold’ the energy, to keep on track, to ensure that all are comfortable and can hear, see, etc. As a Jesus MeetUp Leader you may be looked to as a person with experience for this event. Think through how you will do this, or consider if you know someone who is a teacher, speaker, or gifted group facilitator you could ask to officiate.

Finally, encourage many voices – have family and friends come up to read a poem or the eulogy, to sing, and to share. It’s important to have the subject present: a casket, urn, or at the least, a large, framed photo. This should be near the Celebrant, where mourners can focus their memories and attention.

MUSIC FOR PROCESSIONAL/ENTRY

WELCOME

(remember those who can’t be there too)

We are all gathered here today to celebrate the life of <_____>. Although we are sad at this time let us remember the words of our beloved Master who walked a human path as well.

Jesus said: "...let us who have seen the light of life no longer approach our Father by the darkness of death. Let us be free in the knowledge of the truth of our Father's eternal love." 127:6.6

As these candles are lit we remember the light of <_____> life and the joy given to us by this child of God who has gone to continue life on the Mansion Worlds.

CANDLE LIGHTING, CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS RITUALS

To the earnest leader of the Mithraic cult Jesus said: "You do well to seek for a religion of eternal salvation, but you err to go in quest of such a glorious truth among man-made mysteries and human philosophies. Know you not that the mystery of eternal salvation dwells within your own soul? Do you not know that the God of heaven has sent his spirit to live within you, and that this spirit will lead all truth-loving and God-serving mortals out of this life and through the portals of death up to the eternal heights of light where God waits to receive his children? And never forget: You who know God are the sons of God if you truly yearn to be like him." 133:4.4

POETRY/READINGS

EULOGY/BIOGRAPHY

(someone shares a brief synopsis of the departed's life.)

REMEMBRANCES FROM FAMILY & FRIENDS

(keep each short and have someone facilitate in case someone goes long or is inappropriate)

REFLECTION, PRAYER or MEDITATION

The pursuit of the ideal — the striving to be Godlike — is a continuous effort before death and after. The life after death is no different in the essentials than the mortal existence. Everything we do in this life which is good contributes directly to the enhancement of the future life. 103:5.7

As we all live our lives we are building our souls with each and every free will choice that we make. As <_____> has now done, we will follow this example and journey on towards our Father in Paradise one fine day. And our beloved Jesus also said:

"A righteous soul is more to be desired than the sovereignty of all the earth. Immortality is the goal of sincerity; death, the end of thoughtless living. Those who are earnest die not; the thoughtless are dead already. Blessed are they who have insight into the deathless state. Those who torture the living will hardly find happiness after death. The unselfish go to heaven, where they rejoice in the bliss of infinite liberality and continue to increase in noble generosity. Every mortal who thinks righteously, speaks nobly, and acts unselfishly shall not only enjoy virtue here during this brief life but shall also, after the dissolution of the body, continue to enjoy the delights of heaven." ~ Jesus 131:3.7

Let us now reflect in our hearts and minds those good and beautiful moments in <_____> life as we listen to this music.

MUSIC or SOLOISTS

SLIDESHOW

Although these are popular there is some technical skill needed for a smooth presentation. Have a technical person handy and do a testing/run-through beforehand. Keep this under 5 minutes if used during the funeral ceremony. If the presentation is longer it is fine to do this before or after the service.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(refreshments, where to proceed to next/committal service to be held at [location])

CLOSING WORDS/PRAYER/BLESSING

Beloved friends and family, let us pray: Father, we thank you for <_____> life and the blessing that he/she has been to us. Although we feel great sorrow and loss on this day we know that he/she has gone on to a better place, a more beautiful country, a new and more spiritual body and more heaven-like experience. We thank you for the gift of life and that we all will experience this release one day as we seek to see you face-to-face, as it were in the glories of your Paradise. Encourage this family and their friends as they grieve during this time. Give them comfort as only your Spirit of Truth can do. Thank you for all that you have given to us. May we find ourselves a bit closer to you because of this celebration of life eternal. Amen

MUSIC FOR RECESSIONAL/ENDING