

Saying goodbye and coronavirus (COVID-19)

Support for households, parents and children

How we acknowledge a death and say goodbye is particularly difficult at this time. Attending a funeral may only be possible for very closest relatives and potentially only those who are funeral professionals caring for the person's body as they are taken to a place of rest.

We still need the opportunity to hold before God the people we love who have died. We also need give thanks to God for the good things and happiness they brought to our lives and honour the ways in which we knew them.

In this time of grief we can support adults and children by doing this in a different, but in an equally respectful and meaningful way.

Here are some ideas for how you might have an alternative to a funeral at home.

Creating a space to remember and honour

Involve children as much as they would like to be in all the choices you are making.

Where?

Decide together where in your home or garden you would like to be - somewhere you feel comfortable and which best allows you to remember your special person. You might even move from one place to another.

What's around you?

Make your surroundings as helpful as possible for remembering. You might want to have photographs, flowers or other symbols to help you remember your loved one.

Where is your focus?

You may want to choose a spot to have as a focal point, like a table for example, to place any photos, mementos or candles.



What to wear?

You might like to dress as you would have for the funeral to help you mark it as a specific moment rather than any other day. Some people choose to wear bright colours instead of dark colours, possibly a favourite one or sports team colour – you could ask everyone to do this as a way of connecting to each other on the day.

Sharing the time

We are getting more used to connecting through technology. Use the way you are most familiar with to share the time together e-mail or send by post (understanding there are currently delays in the post) any readings or words you want to share.

Let others know what time of day you will be having your ceremony so they can be with you in spirit. You might like to share details of this website where people can light a virtual candle.

www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle

For all of us in this unusual time taking photographs or films of our ceremonies will be important in helping us remember that we were part of something. It will be especially important for children in the future to know they were involved.

Preparing for the ceremony

Think about things you might like to include like to include

Music

If you have musicians in your household they might like to play something, or record something ready to play. Alternatively there are lots of ways to download or stream music you will have a preferred option, here are some You Tube links.



Go Peaceful - Paul Field

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoVWJEuZg2E&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3bXB5EmLcnK7kPlt2FOVqkROVfmMbGwulHW5scmnuSe6hxt4JWrPe_olg

In Christ Alone

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnLI663WWnc

The Lord is my shepherd – Howard Goodall i.e Vicar of Dibley theme tune

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLxdb3ov-zE>

The Lord is my shepherd Stuart Townend

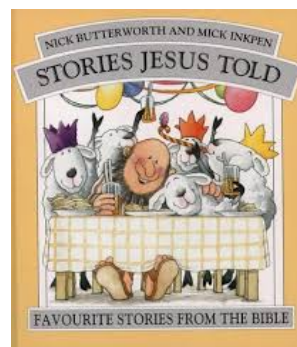
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-elQQayhpak>

My Lighthouse Rend Collective – not a usual funeral song but children love it and the Lyrics are very helpful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFBZJGSgyVQ>

Readings

You may have a favourite Bible reading you would like to share below are some ideas – use a version of the bible you like, you could use a children's version like Stories Jesus Told by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen or The Lion Story Teller Bible by Bob Hartman



The Good Samaritan reminds us of people who help The Gospel of Luke Chapter 10 verses 25 to 37 you could use all or part of it.

The lost sheep The Gospel of Luke Chapter 16 verses 3 to 6
God searches for us and cares for us even when we are lost or stuck.

God Is Love I John Chapter 4 verses 7 to 21

There might be a poem or some song words which are right for you to read.

Responses/Actions

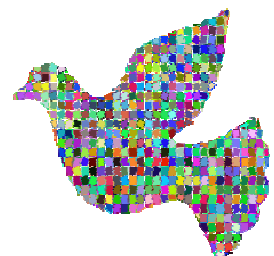
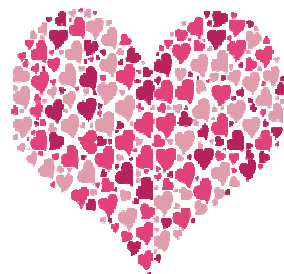
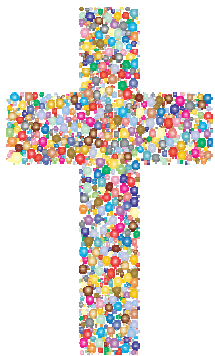
Light a candle – this can happen at any chosen point in your ceremony.

Blow bubbles – as prayers being carried to God or as you think about your special person being received into God's love.

Plant / scatter seeds as a symbol of new life in God.

Draw pictures for / of the person – this can be a helpful way for children to create a tribute.

Make some Christian symbols of love, joy, hope and peace this can help to make your space feel like a sacred space.



Prayer Activities / Responses

Flower Prayers

Flowers are symbolic in lots of ways and a traditional tribute; they remind us of the beauty and the fragility of life.

To prepare

- Cut out some simple flower templates like the one below.
- Get a bowl of water ready
- Gather some pens

During your remembering time.

- Invite everyone to create a paper flower.
- Write or draw something in the centre of the flower – either the name or something special about the person.
- Gently fold the petals towards the centre covering the word.
- One at a time float the flowers smooth side down, in the bowl of water.
- Gradually the petals will unfold displaying the name or words for all to see and share.

Alternatively you could use fresh flowers if they are available.

As each person places a flower into the bowl they may want to say thank you for something that made the friend or family member particularly special to them or simply just say their name.

Rainbow Prayers

Rainbows have been placed in windows as a sign of hope during the coronavirus outbreak. In Christian tradition they are a symbol of God's love and promise that brings hope. You may like to create a rainbow to be part of the focus for your time of reflection, a reminder of this hope and the love of God.



The rainbow and the colourful hope it brings can be a focus for prayer.

To Prepare

- Cut some rainbow shapes from absorbent paper, like coffee filter paper or strong kitchen towel.
- Along the bottom of the rainbow, about 3cms from the bottom, use a black felt pen to make a row of dots.
- Get a bowl of water

During your remembering time

- Place the tips of the bottom of the paper, below the dots, in water and hold it steady.
- Watch as the water creeps up to the dots and then starts spreading colour as it goes.

How might the colours and rainbow help you to pray?

- Thank God for your special person and the colours they brought to your lives.
- Pray that the immediate dark pain you feel will pass into colourful memories.
- Give thanks that our God of hope and love will be with you all at this time.

