

## Chapter 1 : 34 Unique Memorial Service Ideas

*How to Plan a Life Celebration and Personalize a Memorial Service and Turn it into a Celebration of Life. Planning a Celebration of Life? Use these memorial service ideas to turn a funeral into a memorable Life Celebration.*

Understand the differences and how best to plan one for yourself or someone you love. A visual tour of our favorite meditative labyrinths in the San Francisco Bay Area. There are peace walks, candlelight walks, and yoga classes every week. Either independently, or through one of their many scheduled walking events, a journey through this labyrinth can be a rejuvenating and transformative experience. Reaching the labyrinth via the winding rock trails brings the cleansing relief of a destination achieved. When the stairs turn sharply left, continue straight ahead on the trail. The labyrinth will soon come into view. To wander its rock-lined aisles, accompanied by no sounds but the playful surfs and the flocking birds, is to discover in yourself, and in your environment, a place of peace and contentment. The Labyrinth is located on the left of the trail five minutes from the parking lot leading to Mavericks beneath the Pillar Point Air Force station. Marked by the ash of old bonfires and accumulated debris, the McLaren Park Spiral offers a secluded retreat for the rugged urban dweller. Enter through Mansell St. Park in the parking lot about a mile further. Follow the trail leading from the parking lot, along the lake, and take the first trail branching off to your left into the woods. There are an endless variety of celebrations, services, and traditional funeral options. By thoroughly planning your event beforehand, you can be surer that it will best reflect both your wishes, and those of the deceased. What is a memorial service? What is a funeral? What do you need to remember when planning a funeral or memorial service? What is a life celebration? This section of SevenPonds will help to guide you through these questions. You can also see [Preplanning a Funeral or Memorial Service](#) for more information. If you are planning a funeral, with the body present, soon after death, and if no plans have yet been made, you may want to hire an event planner or celebrant to assist with logistics. The memorial service or funeral should be an expression of the deceased and his or her loved ones, in total accord with their wishes. As such, it is completely up to you what form your event will take. You can plan a funeral, where the body is present, or a memorial service or life celebration, where it is not. We at SevenPonds encourage our readers to consider natural or green burial or a home funeral, should they be so inclined. A defining difference between a funeral and a memorial service is the presence of the body. The body is present at a funeral, and the body is absent at a memorial service, therefore affecting limitations on scheduling and form of after-death care, among other considerations. The definitions of funerals and memorial services vary considerably by culture, religion, and place. They have meant different things at different times to different people. We have noticed a trend in North America towards freer interpretations, where religion is less a defining factor, and decisions are as much at the whim of the family as they are the edicts of tradition. Alternatives such as cremation, natural burial, and home funerals have further widened our options, and we encourage our readers to look into these more recently embraced grieving events. Traditional funerals are generally held in places of worship or funeral homes. But less traditional funerals, memorial services, and life celebrations can be held in places as diverse as a private home, a hotel, a public meeting space, a mountaintop, a beach, or a park. Funerals and memorial services may be religious or nonreligious, spiritual or nondenominational. Memorial services and funerals can include elements of a traditional service, including music, flowers, prayers, readings, eulogies, and sermons. Memorial services and funerals can also be highly nontraditional, secular affairs; they can include the sharing of stories, displays of photos or memorabilia, bouquets of organic rather than mass-produced flowers, and requests for charitable donations. You can hire a professional caterer, or family and friends can bring food. The event may last an afternoon, a day, a weekend, or even longer. Funerals are typically held several days following death. It may be difficult to coordinate the event if it has not been preplanned, so consider hiring an event planner. Bodies are typically displayed at the visitation, usually held the evening before burial so that the bereaved can pay their final respects. Funerals can be religious, nonreligious, or spiritual, based on the preferences of the family. If you choose cremation as opposed to burial but still wish to view the body to better facilitate the grieving process, you can still have a funeral. Many cremation providers allow grievers to view the body before

cremation, and they may have facilities for on-site services with the body present. Home funerals are events in which the visitation is held in the home, with the body present and the house adorned as the hosts see fit. Friends or family prepare the body, complete some or all of the paperwork to attain after-death documents, and in some cases may also transport the body for cremation or burial after the home funeral ends. If you choose to conduct a home funeral, make sure you are in full accordance with your state and local laws, and you may wish to contact a home funeral consultant near you, through the Home Funeral Directory , for further information. See our article on Preplanning a Home Funeral for more information. Home funerals generally bypass the embalment process, and as such are perfect precursors to an environmentally friendly green burial. Memorial services are held according to scheduling, frequently without the body present, as much as a month or more after death. For this reason, if you have not preplanned your event, this may be an easier logistical alternative to a funeral. Memorial services are remembrance events held for a deceased person whose body is not present, typically preferred following a cremation. Like funerals, memorial services may be religious or nonreligious, spiritual or nondenominational. Life celebrations are fresh and unique. Like memorial services, the body is not present at a life celebration, and the event can therefore be held days, weeks, or even months after death. By holding services at a later date, it is easier to gather the family and friends who want to attend. With enough preplanning, before the death, a more personal service may be able to proceed more quickly. See our article on Preplanning a Funeral or Memorial Service for further information. Decide on the type of service. Did the deceased have a known preference for a funeral or memorial service? If the deceased preferred for their body to be present at their service, than you must have a funeral, and will need to quickly make the necessary legal and logistical arrangements for handling the body. SevenPonds encourages you to consider a home funeral or green burial , if you see fit. Would some combination of funeral, memorial service and life celebration be suitable? For example, you may hold a memorial service with prayers and a eulogy , or a funeral with elements of a life celebration, such as popular music and dancing. Make a list of attendees. Compile a list of those who will be invited. Decide how to notify invitees. Do you have enough time to mail the announcements, or should you e-mail them? Should you invite them by telephone? You may wish to design a paper or electronic announcement or have one designed, and again, remember to consult any preplanned preferences documented by the deceased. Consider group invitations, such as to the members of a book club, a volunteer pet rescue group, or a yoga group. The location will need to be appropriate to the service, the season, the number of attendees, and any special considerations. Refer to any preplanned arrangements or preferences documented by the deceased. It may help to use this location checklist: Must the location be reserved? If so, how long in advance? If not, is there an alternative? Will there be enough parking? Will the location be accessible for everyone? If you plan to scatter the ashes you will need a location where scattering is legal. Is the location pet friendly? Is it wheelchair accessible? Identify one or more facilitators. Whether the funeral or memorial service was preplanned or not, you may need one or more facilitators to aid in implementation. You may designate someone other than yourself to speak or make introductions at the funeral or memorial service. Facilitators may be family members, friends, or professionals. In larger communities, you may be able to hire an event planner or celebrant, much as someone hires a wedding planner. Determine who should facilitate the various tasks. For example, you may designate a relative to select music, a friend to make speeches and introductions, and a professional planner to reserve a location and arrange for catering, while you handle the invitations yourself. Commit the details to writing. Write down the details, especially if your event is in only a few days and you find yourself straining to remember the various logistical concerns. You may find the following checklist helpful: Remember to refer to any preplans left by the deceased. Who will facilitate any prearranged details? What details will the facilitator s handle? Who will speak at the funeral or memorial service? Which family members or friends would the deceased have asked to speak? Did the deceased specify any particular people?

## Chapter 2 : Celebration of Life / Memorial Reception Planning & Decor Services | Lifestory Occasions

*Planning a Celebration of Life Service* A celebration of life service is typically held in lieu of a memorial service after the deceased individual's burial or cremation although it is becoming more common to host this type of gathering in place of a traditional funeral.

Many people feel the traditional funeral leaves them cold. Often funerals are spiritual, but little is tailored to the memories and life of the deceased. The family does not necessarily need to hear their beloved "is in a better place. I have seen people living a life sentence of regret after the funeral, as they simply held a generic service, with no attempt to celebrate the uniqueness of their loved one. Poignant and funny stories are shared. Story telling becomes paramount. Everyone needs that sacred moment when family and friends gather and remember the deceased. Planning a memorial service should consider your desire to celebrate the life of your loved one - as well as sadly, recognize their death. A memorial service allows for flexibility in time and planning. It may take place several days after the date of death or several weeks. However, if family have gathered from across the country, it may be preferential to have the service as soon as possible. Unlike a wedding that can takes months to plan, you may have only a few days to coordinate a memorial service. With our step by step plan, you can plan a unique, memorable tribute to your loved one. When someone you love becomes a memory, The memory becomes a treasure. However, before the date can be finalized, one has to confirm the location of the service. Some of the advantages to this venue is that the sound system and video projection is provided. They will run the music and video for you. There is a microphone and podium for speakers. However, more and more people are turning to destination settings for a more memorable service. Many beautiful facilities such as; gardens and greenhouses, museums, arenas, clubhouses, theaters, parks, lodges, aquariums, wineries. Private event rentals are perfectly suitable for a remembrance of life. The key is to select a location that is symbolic of the deceased. When selecting a venue, some practical considerations should include; the number of people anticipated to attend, is a sound system and podium required? My brother-in-law was a hockey fan and player all his life. For his service, we held it in the mezzanine area of an arena. His last name and number were on the scoreboard. We had a full-size poster made from a photo, pictured in his hockey gear. After the service, many of the guests lined up to have their photo taken next to it. This idea could be used for the service of any sports lover. He was also a scotch lover. Shot glasses of his favorite brand were handed out to the attendees and a toast was made to his memory. After arrangements have been made to secure the venue on a given date, the following specifics and details of the memorial service needs to be decided. Obituary The obituary needs to be written and can be posted in a local newspaper, social media sites, or the funeral home website. Some choose to use all of these options, others only one or two. On-line invitations such as e-vite are an option. Note, if the location for your memorial service is not yet confirmed, one can still publish an obituary, as people need to be made aware of the death. Simply state; the memorial service will be held at a later date. Funeral Handout Program Sample Funeral Programs A funeral program handout needs to be created to give to guests as they arrive for the service. The handout usually consists of the outline of the service, along with the name, date and death of the deceased. It may also include the obituary, or a favorite poem or reading. Music provides quiet background. Often in a memorial service one or two songs are played during the service. Some people select hymns, if they want a spiritual element. Perhaps live jazz or bluegrass was a favorite in which a local band could be obtained. Another option is to perform a favorite song by a soloist. See many more music ideas. Planning The Memorial Service Decor A guest book and pen are required for visitors to sign as they enter. An easel is often required for holding a framed photo of your loved one. Flowers Flowers and decorations are often a very personal choice. Flower arrangements can be made from the favorite flowers or colors of the deceased. Or flowers from regions, such as the tropics, could be used to represent the deceased love of travel. Typically, the family orders a bouquet or arrangement of flowers for the service. Flowers For The Golfer Consider candles. It can be a very tasteful addition to the mood. Some like to have each of the family members of the deceased come to the front of the service venue and light a candle or lantern, in memory of the deceased. This is optional and not a necessity. I

have seen a wonderful variety of items that people have included on the memory table. Photographs, hobbies, pictures of pets, awards for work, sports or community service, favorite books and sayings, writings or creations of your loved one, recipes, sports jerseys, and items related to work. Thinking Outside The Box; Did your loved one like bubble gum? Pina coladas or chocolate chip cookies? Why not add a fragrance oil to the table to remind people of a favorite thing of the deceased. Smell is our strongest sense. Amazon has a variety of inexpensive fragrance oils to choose from for the memory table. Or given as a takeaway gift. It is optional, but it is nice to have greeters at the door as people enter. You can ask family members, close friends, or neighbors if they would be willing to be a greeter. Determining how structured the actual memorial service will be, is a key decision. There are three important rules for planning a beautiful memorial service. The service itself, should encompass three things; first, establishes the significance of your loss, and how much they will be missed. You want to know other people loved them too. That their life touched people. That they had tremendous value. But I did come to say how deeply and tenderly I feel for you in your sorrow. If specific people will speak and musical selections will be played then a scripted program will be appropriate. It is a nice keepsake for the guest to take home with them. A poem or reading is a lovely way to open the service, followed by acknowledgement of the deceased and naming each family member by their name and their relationship to the deceased. This is then an appropriate time for a video tribute. The Master of Ceremonies will introduce the speaker or speakers, as each one speaks. Or you may choose three to five people each speaking three to five minutes, about various aspects of the life of the deceased. It could be a family member discussing their youth and growing up, a close friend, and a business associate. He or she should also be available to help speakers if they are overcome. It is important that each speaker has their speech printed. And sometimes family members will write a speech and ask the Master of Ceremonies to read it. [Click here for a downloadable Eulogy Template.](#) Interspersed between the speakers can be one or two songs, that were favorites of the deceased. A custom personalized remembrance poem written about your loved one is very popular. If the gathering is more like an open house with mingling and conversation, the family can gather the attention of the attendees quite simply and ask for tributes and respects be paid by those who wish to speak. I am not a fan of this open mike concept. Sometimes no one has prepared anything to say, and there is an awkward silence. Other times, people stand up and start rambling with very little thought put into it. Sometimes they talk more about themselves then the deceased! If they do not feel capable of it they can decline, but if they do, they then have time to prepare a story or two. These tributes can also be made personal by reading some writings of the deceased including blog or Facebook entries, reciting a favorite poem or reading. Spiritual touches can be added by family members lighting a candle in memory of their beloved. The music can be favorite hymns. Many times people request the 23rd Psalm. It is important to remember that in planning a memorial service it can be exactly what you want and what you think your loved one would have wanted. Finally, a wonderful addition to the closing of the memorial program is with a memory takeaway. Often I like to close the service with a prayer or a blessing.

*Planning a memorial service, the right way, can ensure it is a unique personalized tribute. The following guidelines will help you prepare a hallmark lasting legacy of your beloved. Planning a memorial service should consider your desire to celebrate the life of your loved one - as well as sadly, recognize their death.*

**Mementos and keepsakes** A keepsake is a unique token for guests to take with them following a funeral or memorial service. It can be as simple as a candle, poem or favorite candy or as personal as the secret recipe to an award-winning BBQ sauce. Whatever you choose, mementos are a way to celebrate the life of someone you love while providing a physical representation to honor their memory. Ask the following questions to help choose the right memento for the occasion: Is the keepsake something from a personal collection? What message should the memento represent? Will the keepsakes be included in the celebration? In what way could the keepsake be given out that is specifically meaningful to the person or their family?

**Food and beverage** Food brings family and friends together and offers a warm environment to gather and share memories. A meal, during or after a celebration of life, is a chance to truly celebrate an individual with loved ones all around. Take into account the following considerations to plan the perfect catering package: How many will be attending? Will there be a full meal or just snacks? Will you need tables, linens and flatware, or a wait staff? How will the food and drinks tie into the atmosphere of the celebration? A meal catered with love and thought will resonate with guests and add to the celebration experience. Slideshows, videos and playlists of favorite songs can usher in memories and create a comforting atmosphere for remembrance. What music, pictures, video or other content will represent precious memories of a loved one? How will a slideshow, video or playlist honor and celebrate the life of the person being remembered? Our planning professionals can also help ensure the right equipment and personnel for a seamless occasion. Speakers provide vocal power to honor the memory of a loved one who has passed. They take many forms and can be as formal or informal as you wish. Will it be family and close friends only? Would you like to open the floor to other guests who have a story to share? Will the service be formal or informal? How personal would you like to make the memories shared by the speaker? Once you determine who will speak, make sure they know how long to talk and how to introduce the next speaker. It can also work well to have one designated person to provide a quick introduction between each speaker. Most importantly, encourage your speakers to share stories from their hearts that reflect the values and the life your loved one lived.

**Venues** A special venue can be the perfect complement to a celebration of life ceremony. In fact, many Dignity Memorial locations offer reception rooms and gathering areas on site. In some cases, you may opt to have the celebration of life service at a funeral home or church and then host a reception elsewhere. No matter your wishes, ask yourself the following questions to narrow down the perfect venue to pay tribute to a loved one. In what space would you like to have the celebration of life? What locations best represent the person being honored? Is there a favorite place or location special to the person being celebrated? What are the costs associated with the desired locations? Is the venue available? Also, make sure to factor in things like time, traffic and weather. As you narrow your decision, our planning experts will work to plan the perfect details for the chosen venue. To make sure nothing is overlooked, we encourage you to share this list with family and friends and to talk about each aspect in detail. On-site catering not available where prohibited by law. Imagine funeral planning differently A funeral or memorial service should be a one-of-a-kind celebration. Everyone has their own unique story. How do you want to tell yours?

## Chapter 4 : Planning a Celebration of Life Service

*A celebration of life service is more than just a trend—it's a funeral or memorial service that has the power to showcase a unique personality. Celebrations of life are as big and bold or as simple and elegant as the person being remembered.*

In the early stages of planning a celebration-of-life, you have 2 priorities: Celebration-of-life funeral announcements. A celebration-of-life can incorporate personal details into a traditional funeral or memorial services immediately following a death or - if a direct cremation or direct burial is chosen - can be scheduled at a later date. The forum for this celebration can be small and intimate or large and extravagant - with many variations in between. If a service is held immediately following a death, then communicating the details quickly and efficiently is important. Some ways to communicate the details are: Ask friends to communicate the details by calling a small group of people and asking them to call others within the same community. If it will be a private event, be sure to include this information too. Using technology can be a great tool to invite key people to a celebration-of-life but should only be used if you are sure the intended recipient is already aware of the death. Using email or social networks should never be used to announce the death to close family and friends. Online communities created for the purpose of celebrating a life lived and sharing service information can be a time-saving tool to use whether communicating details via email or call chain. A community can be created allowing others to check back or receive email alerts when information is updated. A Heart2Soul Community is free and can be set up quickly and easily by a friend and transferred to a family member to manage later. Friends and family can share photographs, sympathy messages and service details. It is completely free to use. Celebration-of-life service The honoree was a unique individual with religious beliefs, cultural traditions and personal accomplishments all playing an important role in how they are celebrated. There is no single format for creating a celebration-of-life, but however you choose to celebrate them, it should incorporate the personal details representing the honoree. For a formal service, a basic layout should be established determining the length of each part - this will prevent things from dragging on. The elderly and very young may have difficulty being seated for more than an hour. Thirty minutes is a sufficient length of time, while more than an hour may be too long. It can be used as a guide and adjusted according to your own personal plans.

## Chapter 5 : Celebration of Life Ideas

*Life celebrations are a newer form of memorial service in which the emphasis is less on grief and more on, as the name suggests, celebrating the life of the deceased. These events tend to be quite lively, with jokes on and toasts to the deceased made instead of tearful remembrances.*

There is a definite comfort in coming together with others to remember someone. People are increasingly planning personalized, creative events at locations that hold special meaning. Events can reflect spiritual beliefs and can be tailored to suit the sensibilities of both the person who has passed and family and friends. Truly, the possibilities for a meaningful remembrance event are endless. Here, we present a sampling of options and considerations for the contemporary person who is looking for something other than the traditional funeral service. Seeking Assistance in Planning Planning a remembrance event can be heartfelt and truly unique experience, but it can also be a daunting task. If you do not want to hire a professional, you can ask friends or family members to help. Take note on your After Death Checklist of who has agreed to help and what aspect of planning they will be responsible for. Alternatively, you can hire an event planner to lead the preparations and implementation of a remembrance event. Event planners typically assist with things like guest list management, location considerations, catering, and servicing. Or you may want to hire a celebrant, who can officiate and also help think up meaningful ways to personalize your ceremony. Budget If your loved one has left a will or trust, or set up a payable upon death account, there may be money set aside for a remembrance event. If there is not, it is a good idea to set up a budget in advance of planning. Types of Services and Remembrance Events Type of Service First and foremost, decide what kind of eventâ€”and also how many eventsâ€”you wish to have. Each type will have its own challenges and rewards. For example, you might want to have a meal at one location, and move to another for an ash scattering. If plan on scattering the ashes, you have the option to wait to hold the ash scattering for many months, until everyone is able to assemble at a special location. You may opt for a small event restricted to family members, a larger event for everyone who knew the person who passed, or both. Memorial Service or Life Celebration You may choose to have a simple memorial service, where a small number of people gather to say a few words. Or, you might prefer to have a grand celebration, like a party with dancing and activities. This event can be held immediately after the death, or you can wait several weeks, months, or even a year. It can be held anywhere from a private residence to a mountaintop. If you choose, you can make it into a weekend event or a destination location, allowing family more time to grieve and bond over the loss. Consider what is special to the person who died, or to you and your family, when planning this memorial event. Ash Scattering Following a cremation, you may wish to hold an ash scattering ceremony. Scatterings can take place on land, lake, or sea. You can also opt for a more unique scattering method, such as via hot air balloon, plane, or even a rocket. If desired, you can hire someone to take the ashes to a special, remote location to scatter. A wide variety of vendors offer urns or cremation vessels to scatter ashes from; see Cremation and Burial Products in Local Resources for some lovely options. Home Funeral A home funeral is a celebration in the home with the person who passed present. This requires the natural death care process and typically includes hiring a home funeral consultant to aid you in keeping the body at home. It is possible to perform natural death care without a consultant, however you will need to plan and prepare for this in advance of a death. In this case, you will definitely need assistance from family and friends. Follow our step-by-step instructions here. With a home funeral comes the comfort of being in the home, and the time it allows you to say goodbye. As you plan, consider the location of the body in the house, and how people will say their goodbyes. You can lay him or her on a bed, on a couch, or even outdoors in grass or in a garden. Also, if you wish, think about purchasing a beautiful cloth shroud or a simple wooden casket. You may want to use a cardboard container, which is easy to custom decorate. Graveside Service First, consider where the burial will take place. You might want to bury your loved one on rural, private land; check local laws regarding private burial. Alternatively, most natural burial grounds or green cemeteries allow the family to be involved in the burial process. For a natural burial, also called green burial, you will need a shroud, a simple casket, or a cardboard container. You might want to conduct a full

service at the graveside with the help of an officiant, or you might want to have a string of events in different locations; your graveside service may follow a home funeral or an event dinner. There are a variety of ways to incorporate a graveside service into your remembrance event, so feel free to be creative in your planning.

**Wake** You may wish to have a wake at the home of a family member or at an outside venue. It can be that simply gathering together for a meal is your way of honoring your loved one. Or, the meal can be part of a series of events.

**Other Options** There are countless ways to commemorate life and death, and today you can be as creative as your ideas allow. From open-air funeral pyres in Colorado to memorial reefs in coastal states, unique options are becoming available. Remember, although legal considerations will limit some choices, it is ultimately your decision how you remember and celebrate the life of your loved one.

**Back to Top 3. Memorial Donations** Think about what you want the guests to bring to a memorial event. While flowers are a lovely gift, you might consider requesting that guests make a memorial donation in lieu of flowers, perhaps to the charity of choice for you or your loved one. This request can be made through written letter or email prior to the event, or in the invitation itself. People can indicate in whose name the donation is being made. The family can then receive a notification following the donation.

**Event Invitations** Make a List of Potential Attendees This list will depend on your budget, timing, and what type or how many events you plan to have. You can also hire a professional to draft them, or ask an event planner to help you select them. However if you have a manageable number of attendees, you might consider just making personal phone calls rather than sending out invitations.

**Information to Include on Your Invitations** Name of person who passed. Date, time, and place of death. Date, time, and location of event or ceremony. Gift or item you may wish attendees to bring: Food and refreshment options, if you choose. Your reasons for the ceremony: For example, for an ash-scattering ceremony in a National Park, include a note about the significance of the particular location.

**Back to Top 5.** If your loved one did not make their preferences for this clear, spend some time thinking about what would be meaningful for you and your family and close friends. Try to recall places of significance to your loved one, such as a family property, beach, lake, park, vacation hideaway, or restaurant. If the person was cremated, you might want to scatter their ashes at the ceremony—a beautiful outdoor location such as a forest or shoreline would be ideal for this though keep in mind legal restrictions on scattering: You can also consider holding the ceremony in your neighborhood place of worship or even in your own home. Choose a location that is personal, meaningful, and appropriate to the size and type of event you want to hold. If your event will be held in two or more locations, consider coordinating transportation for your guests, particularly if they include children, the elderly, and the disabled. The time spent traveling between locations, whether on a limo, a bus, or a private car, can also be a valuable bonding experience.

Some things to think about when selecting a location: Does your desired venue require a reservation? Will religious considerations play a part in choosing your venue? How many people do you expect to attend? Is your desired venue easily accessible by car or public transportation? Is there adequate parking? Will you hire a car or a valet service? Is your desired venue handicap accessible? If you wish to serve alcohol at the event, is it allowed? Are there any accessibility considerations at the venue? If there are young children present, will they need special caretaking? If your desired location is outdoors, do you have a contingency plan in the event of poor weather? Consider asking a clergy member, family member, or close friend. You might want to hire a celebrant who specializes in officiating, and can bring spirituality into the event if you so choose.

**Music** You can hire local musicians or DJs, or perhaps enlist close friends or family members to perform. You can also look up Ceremonial Musicians in our Local Resources guide.

**Food** You can choose to hire caterers to provide food, waiting, and busing service, or you can hold all or part of your event at a restaurant. You can also consider asking family and friends to bring dishes to share. Decide what kind of food you prefer for your event, whether a particular ethnic cuisine, classic American, or a mix. You might want to serve appetizers, offer simple food like gourmet pizzas and small sandwiches, or prepare a full, seated meal. Think about special health considerations:

**Photographers and Videographers** You might choose to hire a professional photographer or videographer to record the event. This can allow you and your guests to have lasting memories of the celebration for years to come. You might even want to arrange a webcast of the event for those who are unable to attend.

### Chapter 6 : How to Plan a Memorial Service (with Pictures) - wikiHow

*Memorial services are not so much rites for the dead as celebrations by the living and for the living of the lives of those who have died. Such ceremonies are an important way of saying good-bye, yet most people are not sure exactly what to do when.*

A celebration of life is a personal and meaningful event to pay tribute to a life lived. As you consider the kind of celebration that best fits your loved one—or yourself, if you are planning ahead—remember that you are limited only by your imagination. Whether considering a simple tribute or a more elaborate event, we encourage you to find inspiration in the little things that made you or your loved one special. Talk with your local Dignity Memorial professional about ideas to create a fitting celebration for your loved one or about planning ahead for your own remembrance event. Inspiration sparks ideas A final tribute should be as special as the life it represents. Start with what they loved. Write down favorite memories to spark ideas and help bring a special touch to the funeral service. Write down a few words or phrases to describe that special person. What were the things that made their eyes light up? Think about the activities they enjoyed, the places they visited, the food they loved and the music they listened to. Your Dignity Memorial provider can help you share these unique passions to help you plan a one-of-a-kind service to pay tribute to a very special life. For more ideas on life celebrations, download *Imagine*, filled with creative memorial ideas, or contact a Dignity Memorial provider near you. Celebration of life ideas Whether you choose burial or cremation for yourself or a family member, Dignity Memorial providers can provide special touches help celebrate each life like no other. Everyone has a passion, a joy or a family tradition. Think about how to highlight that passion in a meaningful way. You can use the list below to spark ideas. From flowers and music to catering and transportation, the professionals at your local Dignity Memorial location can help carry out your plans just as you envisioned. Some ideas for personal touches at a funeral or memorial service can include: Releases You can release doves, balloons, lanterns into the air or on water or butterflies in a symbolic gesture of remembrance. For balloon or lantern releases, friends and family may also write personal notes of remembrance. Music If music was important, consider a live musical performance in your favorite style. Whether you choose jazz, classical, mariachi or something totally unique, Dignity Memorial providers can assist in creating custom playlists from a personal music collection or help to arrange live musicians to play at a final send-off. Music can become the centerpiece that ties together each piece of a special life celebration. Funeral flowers Consider displaying floral arrangements in ways that symbolize the life and passions of yourself or a loved one. A favorite type of flower is often a good way to begin. Transportation As you plan the memorial service for yourself or a loved one, keep in mind that even the ride from the service location to the cemetery can be a memorable event. For a motorcycle enthusiast, you might include his or her motorcycle club. Did your loved one enjoy the serenity of paddling a kayak on a still lake? Carry a kayak with a photograph or urn to his or her final resting place. For a car enthusiast, let us help arrange a procession with hot rods and classic cars. For the equine or outdoor lover, maybe a horse-drawn carriage provides transportation for the casket. Reception Food is often central to occasions of remembrance. For a master gardener or farmer, let us help create a menu that features a homegrown harvest. Do you have a secret recipe everyone always asks for? Consider providing it to your funeral arranger during pre-planning so that it can be given as a precious memento or keepsake to friends and family at the service. Decorations Whatever your passion, whatever meant the most, whatever was synonymous with your loved one, the service location can be transformed to reflect that. Dignity Memorial providers have helped families plan decor for everything from country shindigs to country clubs, from baseball to quilting, from muscle cars to train themes. Personal memorabilia or special collections can also be included in a service and can bring a unique and sentimental touch to the event. Funeral attire As traditional funeral services evolve into celebrations of life, funeral attire can reflect the uniqueness of your loved one. For example, attendees can be asked to wear a certain color to represent a favorite sports team, or a floral pattern to honor a gardener or patriotic colors to honor a veteran. Legacy ideas Honoring your loved one does not have to end after the service. Here are a few ways to keep

their memory alive in the hearts and minds of others for years to come: For animal lovers, consider partnering with a local animal shelter to host an adoption. To pay tribute to an avid reader, donate books to your local library or start a book club with others who knew and loved your book enthusiast. It could be a basketball tournament, golf outing, softball game or tennis match. If your loved one appreciated the outdoors, host an annual event with friends and family to participate in something they cherished. Or host an annual picnic at their favorite spot. Pass out packets of forget-me-not seeds or a favorite flower to remember a family member who loved to garden. Imagine funeral planning differently A funeral or memorial service should be a one-of-a-kind celebration. Everyone has their own unique story. How do you want to tell yours?

### Chapter 7 : Planning a Celebration-of-Life - Funeral Tribute | Heart2Soul

*Planning a Memorial Service - Simple Steps to Celebrate a Loved One* Funeral memorials are often planned to honor and celebrate the life of the deceased person. A memorial service can be planned on the anniversary of the person's death or on another special occasion.

**Creating a Celebration of Life Honoring the Life of a Loved One** When someone dies we want the chance to say goodbye, honor their memory, and look for meaning in the death. For most of history, we have turned to funerals to serve these purposes. And, without a doubt, holding a ceremony to memorialize someone we have lost holds an important place in the process of handling grief. For example, as the use of cremation has increased, holding a memorial service rather than a traditional funeral has become popular. The difference being, during a funeral the body is present while at a memorial service it is not. Memorial services also provide the flexibility our diverse, more mobile society requires since they are not tied to a specific time or place. But for many people, traditional funeral rituals have become too impersonal. A Celebration of Life is a ceremony that is typically held in lieu of a traditional funeral or memorial service. What sets these services apart is the level of personalization and tone. A Celebration of Life is not a somber affair. Instead, we find lots of laughter and storytelling. The focus is not on the death of the person, but on the joy that the person brought to others. But it can stand alone as well as be incorporated as a component of a more traditional service. For some, the best arrangement is to hold a celebration of life in concert with a traditional funeral or memorial service. For others, a separate stand-alone Celebration is more fitting. Planning a Celebration of Life is much like planning any other gathering that commemorates a life event. What is a Celebrant: These professionals work with families to design a service that is customized to their cultural, religious, and spiritual needs. They are trained to help arrange both secular and non-secular celebrations. Celebrant services are not limited to Celebrations of Life. They often work with people planning a traditional funeral or memorial services as well. Learn more about using celebrants. Steps to planning a Celebration of Life Decide on the type of service: Will this be a funeral or a memorial service? Will it be stand-alone or part of a more traditional funeral? What would you like the tone to be? While worrying about the cost may seem inappropriate, it is important that you know how much you can reasonably afford. Having an idea of what your financial constraints are can help you narrow down your choices for the details of the celebration such as the type of food and the venue. Estimate how many people will attend: It may be difficult to determine an exact headcount, but an estimate of the number of people you think will attend is important for selecting the right sized venue and refreshments, if you plan to offer them. Choose a location, date, and time: When designing a Celebration of Life you are not limited in your choice of venue. You can certainly take advantage of the space available at a funeral home but you can also choose to have your event at your home, at a local park, or at some location that held meaning for the person you are honoring. For example, if the deceased was a film lover you consider renting a theater for your celebration. Decide if you would like to use a Celebrant: For many people, the idea of planning a large event can be overwhelming. In these cases, a Celebrant can help take the pressure off by working through the details with you. If you would like to handle just a certain segment of the Celebration, your Celebrant can work with you in that area as well. Decide who you would like to speak: You can ask specific people to share their thoughts or invite anyone who would like to offer an anecdote to speak. You should give them guidance on the type of story they would share. You can also ask the Celebrant to speak on your behalf. Decide on activities you would like to include: Think about the way your loved one preferred to spend his or her time. A sky lantern release, a group motorcycle ride, a book drive, or a group walk are all examples of the type of activities that are common. The important thing is that the activity is an appropriate tribute to your loved one.

### Chapter 8 : Struggling to plan a funeral, memorial service or Celebration of Life?

*Personalize a Celebration of Life with poems, eulogy guide, write obituary, funeral songs, music, memorial gifts and creative obits. How to plan a funeral. Life Celebration Products and Ideas.*

Since the options for memorial service ideas are nearly limitless, it can actually be somewhat daunting to plan and pull off a memorial. This helps keep the blog running and memorial ideas flowing! So here are some creative and inspirational ideas for the perfect memorial service.

**Funeral Flowers** Funeral flowers come in all colors, styles, and designs. You can choose a particular flower or color as part of an overall theme. This can include hobbies, organizations and associations, sports, and much more. There are so many ideas for traditional and creative funeral flowers that include themes like airplanes, motorcycles, footballs, guitars, gardener, fishing, police, Masonic, cross, cowboy, sports teams, colleges, etc. Here are some popular funeral flower resources: **Scholarship Fund in Lieu of Flowers** One option for memorial service decoration is to not do so. These funds can be donated to a charitable organization or fund which reflects the passions and interests of the deceased. **Memorial Painting** A commissioned work of art may take some time, but it will be well worth it when you see your loved one so beautifully and artistically memorialized. The above portrait is a commissioned work by the artist Mary Ann. **Memorial Service Photos** It is appropriate and touching to display a photo of the decedent, and this can be as simple as a framed print or as elaborate as a custom painting or laser engraved portrait. Here are 7 ideas for photo memorials at the service. This makes for a stunning centerpiece at the memorial service, and will be a beautiful keepsake to honor your loved one. **Customized Memorial Candles** Set the mood at the memorial service with these personalized memorial candles , which include custom engraving of any text or photo for a special keepsake for the family after the service has ended. **Collectibles** Display his collection of baseball cards, stamps, or Magic: Showcase her scrapbook creations, nature photography, or Wizard of Oz collectibles. Whatever they collected can be displayed simply on a table near the entrance or can be the backbone of the decorating color scheme. For a hunting enthusiast, cover the walls with camouflage, leaves, and mounted trophies. Use Dallas Cowboys colors or Star Wars decor. Have photos of the inner city kids they mentored, or Habitat for Humanity projects, or volleyball teams they coached. **During the Service** 9. Or try a video montage, which can easily be done through sites such as Animoto and even posted online after the service. **Poems, Quotes, and Sayings** Use quotes to sum up ideas, inspire and encourage, and to eloquently express grief, hope, and love. If your loved one had a favorite quote, poem, Bible verse, or song lyric, that should be your first choice. We also have a wide variety of quote collections to help you, including life celebration , eulogy quotes , epitaph Bible verses , comforting Scripture verses , and even some off-the-wall funeral humor bits which could, with the right crowd, serve as fun and cheeky ice-breakers. **Funeral Songs** A favorite song played at the right time can provide an appropriately emotional or nostalgic touch. And here is a well-edited funeral music compilation with instrumental tracks of classical pieces and traditional hymns. **Dove Release** Dove releases have become a popular way to end a funeral or life celebration. **Butterfly Release** An alternative to the dove release is arranging a butterfly release. Allow the guests to mingle among the butterflies before moving on to the reception. A butterfly release is ideal in tandem with one of our beautiful butterfly urns. **Balloon Release** We had originally featured a balloon release as one of our memorial service ideas. It has been noted, however, that a balloon release is not good for the environment. Please consider this as you think of alternatives to a balloon release. If you are still interest in a balloon release, be sure to get biodegradable balloons , such as this set of 10 dove-shaped eco-friendly balloons. **Scattering** If you are planning on scattering cremated remains , think about incorporating the scattering into the service itself. You can hold a memorial service at the location of scattering, or plan the service so that it leads into the scattering at a different location. The list includes standards such as ocean scattering, scattering at home or other private property, or at a favorite outdoor locations. We also list unique, exciting, and even bizarre scattering choices including planting as a tree, shooting off as fireworks, launching into space, mixed into the paint in a custom painting, made into pencils, and more. Once the urn is placed in water or in the earth; these are also perfect for an eco-friendly ground burial the plant fibers help soak up

water so the urn quickly dissolves. Finished with earth friendly water soluble paints for a natural look. More biodegradable cremation urns Plant a Memorial Tree If outdoor burial away from a cemetery will be part of the memorial service, one option is to plant a memorial tree urn using our unique Biodegradable Memorial Tree Urns. We offer a wide selection of trees which grow using the cremated remains in a proprietary mixture which nourishes and sustains the memorial tree. Have attendees participate in the planting process for a time of healing and connecting with nature. Shop the collection here. Memorial Stones Set up a table near the entrance with river rock and permanent markers, and instruct each person to write a brief note on the rock expressing their love, grief, or cherished memories. These stones can then be read aloud during the service, or be scattered at a favorite fishing hole or hiking trail, kept by the family, placed around a garden bed, and so forth. Here is a neat set that includes a decorative vase. These times are often the highlights of the service, treasured for unveiling little-known nuggets of touching generosity or laugh-out-loud humor, and allowing those who best grieve publicly to have an opportunity to express their thoughts and memories. Display a small tree or a small tree-like creation, and provide tags or cards for attendees to write a blessing or note of encouragement to the family, or as an opportunity to express love or grief directly to the departed loved one similar to the memorial stones, above. Build A Cairn A cairn is a man-made pile of rocks, often used as a landmark. If you will be scattering remains, or even just conducting the memorial service in the great outdoors, having those present help in building a cairn in honor of your loved one will allow everyone to contribute during the service, and will also leave a landmark in memory of the departed which can be revisited by all. Did she always have a pack of Wintergreen Trident? Incorporate a favorite candy bar, chewing gum, or other treat into the memorial service by passing them out as people enter, or by having them in easy-to-reach bowls on each table at the reception. It will add a splash of fun and some spark discussion of fond memories while providing a little treat to the attendees. Memorial Tree Seedlings Give out memorial tree seedlings for attendees to plant in honor of your loved one. Wear a Memorial Photo Pass out mini photos of the loved one which can be worn during the service or celebration. This will give that crafty person in the family an opportunity to use their imagination – create a photo clip attached to flowers as in the picture above, make necklaces with the photo, order photo buttons or wristbands, etc. Memorial Fireworks Light off fireworks during or after the memorial service to provide a splash of color and light, and to emphasize that the purpose of the memorial is a celebration of life. You can use real fireworks if available, or try this LED Fireworks Projector which can be used indoors. Lighting a candle for the deceased is a common memorial tradition, so it is fitting and beautiful to combine these traditions by lighting sky lanterns during or after the memorial service. To keep costs down, here are six ways to make your own floating lanterns for a memorial service. BYOB After Party Truly celebrate the life of your loved one by inviting friends and family to raise a glass to their memory. Or if wine was their thing, a personalized oak barrel that dispenses boxed wine will provide a brilliant and memorable centerpiece to the after party or reception. Sandwich Bar Sandwiches are delicious and easy to make, and relatively affordable. Invite guests to stay after the service and share stories and memories during the memorial reception with a build-your-own-sandwich bar. Use these elegant 3-tier serving trays to create a sandwich buffet Buffet Reception Buffets help keep the costs down, while still affording attendees the opportunity to share a meal together and continue to process grief, encourage the family, and share memories. You can also incorporate a buffet into the decorating scheme by asking attendees to bring dishes in an ethnic or party theme. Make Beads from Funeral Flowers Upcycle the funeral flowers by making them into beads for memorial jewelry. Great for honoring someone who loved to hike. Viking-Style Sendoff In the modern day and age, a Viking-style funeral will only work using cremated remains, due to burial regulations for full-body funerals. But there is little to stop you from a water scattering of ashes via a Viking funeral pyre, or simply having a funeral pyre ship as a memorial after the burial. Here are some tips for a successful Viking-style sendoff. Get Social Was the deceased active on social media? Have attendees live-Tweet, hashtag their Instagram photos, or post photos and messages from the service directly onto a memorialized Facebook page. This is a simple way to allow guests to participate and interact with the memory of your loved one. Visited, times, visits today Further reading:

### Chapter 9 : Creating a Celebration of Life - Funeralwise

*In the early stages of planning a celebration-of-life, you have 2 priorities: get the word out and try to establish a basic plan for the service. Celebration-of-life funeral announcements A celebration-of-life can incorporate personal details into a traditional funeral or memorial services immediately following a death or - if a direct.*

A gift to your family, sparing them hard decisions at an emotional time. Sit down with other family members, at least once, but maybe even more than once; to explore the celebration-of-life ideas which arise from answering these questions: Who will be invited? Ah, this is a big question, as the number of guests define the where, when, and how of your celebration-of-life. Write down the names of everyone you think would want to be there and then set it aside. You can bet that new names will come to mind as you go along. Where, and when, should the event take place? Be sure to check in with out-of-town relatives and friends about their situation before settling on these critical details. Who will orchestrate or conduct the event? If your loved one was religious, you may opt to have their pastor or church minister perform these tasks. Who wishes to speak at the event? Many times family members or friends will be very direct about their desire to make a short presentation at the celebration-of-life; other times you need to come out and ask folks if they would be willing to publicly share their thoughts and feelings. What group activities would be appropriate? One involved flying colorful kites; another incorporated a traditional Hawaiian luau feast into the event. This question involves thinking about what your loved one liked most about their life—and gives everyone a remarkable space to share memories, laugh, and even cry together. What food or beverages should be served? And a second question here would be; "who will supply the food and drinks? What readings and music should you include? Sometimes you can reveal their character by detailing one short moment in their life experience. What decorations will you have? Many families create a tribute video and use it as the centerpiece of the event. Others choose to use a memory table of photographs and other memorabilia instead. A local author, who wrote numerous books, had his books on display, like a bookstore, during his celebration. The family made them available for friends, family and former students to take home after the service.