

Personalized Memorial Options for Gravesites



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Many individuals seek to personalize their loved one's gravesite memorial, fostering a deeper connection. From the graveside service to the procession and the funeral home, there are numerous avenues for personalization. This offers a meaningful way to honor birthdays and holidays in remembrance of your loved one. Here, we'll provide ideas and tips to assist you in this process.

Ideas for More Memorable Gravesite Expressions

Western burial rites are often brief and minimalist. However, there are numerous ways to enhance the celebration of the deceased's life. Incorporating additional elements into the service can create a more memorable and dedicated tribute to their memory.

Consider reading a poem as it offers a timeless expression of emotion. Many renowned poets have crafted pieces that resonate with the feelings experienced when losing a loved one. Poems can celebrate their life, express sadness at parting, and convey hope for reunion. Sharing such a poem is a poignant tribute, providing insight into your true emotions for family and friends.



Release butterflies or doves as a symbolic gesture. Butterflies represent beauty and freedom, embodying the spirit of your loved one as they take flight. This act fosters a

sense of harmony and peace, expressing hope and acceptance as your loved one transitions.

Releasing doves, akin to butterflies, is a poignant gravesite gesture. Setting these graceful creatures free symbolizes the start of the grieving process and signifies the act of "letting go" of the deceased.

Opting for a horse-drawn carriage to transport your loved one's casket to the burial site is a dignified and memorable choice. The majestic horse leads the deceased to their final resting place, infusing the occasion with a sense of dignity and grace during this challenging time for you, your family, and friends.

Enhancing Western burial services with personal touches can significantly elevate the experience, making it more memorable and reflective of your loved one's personality. By celebrating their unique life and honoring their individuality, you can create a more meaningful tribute.



You can create a memorable and meaningful funeral service.

What are Some Common Gravesite Traditions?

You may know about decorating gravesites with flowers and other items to honor your loved one. However, there are also other traditional ways to pay homage at the gravesite that you may not be aware of.

In the Jewish faith, it's customary to place small rocks on the headstone, a tradition originating from desert burials centuries ago. This practice has now spread beyond Jewish communities.

Various traditions exist for honoring the final resting place of a veteran, with the most common being the display of an American flag.



Another long standing practice is placing a photograph of the deceased on the monument or grave marker, aiding visitors in remembering them in their prime.

Not all gravesite traditions focus on decorating the memorial. You can also mourn by being present, whether it's reading aloud, meditating, praying, or simply spending time in silent reflection or speaking lovingly to the deceased.

There's no wrong way to grieve or pay respects at the gravesite. When planning a visitation, remain open to various ways of honoring your loved one and facilitating the healing process. Consult your funeral director or cemetery service professional for additional ideas to make your visitation meaningful.



What are Some Ways to Personalize the Funeral Procession to the Cemetery?

The procession is when mourners travel from the memorial service to the burial site.

Not everyone realizes the potential for personalizing the funeral procession. Nowadays, there are countless ways to customize the journey to the cemetery.

You can customize the funeral procession by deviating from traditional norms if desired.

Transportation

Consider how everyone, including your loved one, will travel to the cemetery. You can personalize transportation based on their hobbies or profession. For instance, if they were a firefighter, you might opt for a fire truck. Other options include a tractor, horse-drawn hearse, motorcycle, fishing boat, or helicopter.

Music

Consider incorporating music that was special to your loved one, or reflects their musical interests if they were a musician themselves. You might have recorded music or a live band playing as people walk from the cemetery entrance to the gravesite. Choose music that resonates with your loved one's culture or heritage, such as a mariachi band or a bagpipe player.



The Drive Itself

Consider visiting places that hold significance for your loved one. Drive by their homes, schools, workplaces, clubs, or the courthouse, if relevant. Alternatively, take a scenic detour near a park or through beautiful back roads.

Other Options

Butterfly, lantern, or dove releases are popular options for families. Consider pausing to do this upon entering the cemetery or at the gravesite itself. These gestures symbolize love, peace, and hope during a sorrowful time.

If you have questions about personalizing the funeral procession or any aspect of the service, consult your funeral director for assistance. They're ready to offer guidance and ideas.

Choosing the Right Flowers for Your Loved One's Grave

Decorating your loved one's grave with flowers is a traditional practice. Nowadays, flowers can be either natural or silk, with silk flowers lasting longer at the gravesite in some cases. Various options and styles of floral decor are available, including wreaths, bouquets, pillows, or sprays. Wreaths symbolize life, death, and the immortality of the soul, while flowers carry their own unique meanings.



Flower Meanings

Flowers convey significant meanings. You can select them based on personal preference or choose ones that represent specific sentiments.

- Rose (red) - Passionate love

- Rose (pink) - Friendship
- Rose (yellow) - Zealous
- Rose (white) - Purity
- Poppy - Consolation - Also symbolic for veterans
- Calla Lily - Marriage and fidelity
- Sunflower - Adoration
- Peony - Healing
- Zinnia - Thoughts of friends
- Daisy - Innocence
- Hydrangea - Perseverance
- Gladiola - Strength of character
- Carnation (red) - Flashy



- Carnation (pink) - Gratitude
- Carnation (white) - Remembrance
- Larkspur - Beautiful spirit
- Orchid - Delicate beauty, Innocence
- Chrysanthemum - Loyalty, Love
- Freesia - Passion, Joy

- Iris - Royalty, Faith
- Lilac - Tranquility, Passion
- Peony - Romance
- Tulip - Love, Confidence

The Dos and Don'ts of Cemetery Decorations

Personalizing a loved one's monument or gravesite is a tangible way to honor their memory for many. Various decorations are available for this purpose, but it's crucial to understand the cemetery's regulations beforehand. While many decorations are permitted, some may pose maintenance or safety concerns. Additionally, inquire about the policy regarding worn decorations—whether they should be removed by visitors or by cemetery staff.



Typically Allowed Decorations:

- Fresh flowers
- Silk flowers
- Wreaths
- Small flags
- Crosses

- Wind chimes
- Grave blankets
- Notes and photos

Typically Prohibited Decorations:

- Glass candles and jars
- Stuffed animals
- Large flags
- Light-up decorations
- Ground-staked decorations
- Grave borders
- Free-standing decorations
- Planted bushes, trees, and flowers (vary by cemetery; inquire for permission)



What is Perpetual Floral Care?

Ideally, someone would always tend to your loved one's gravesite. However, distance or busy schedules may prevent family members from doing so regularly.

Perpetual care services offer ongoing maintenance for gravesites. In such cemeteries, maintenance includes grass cutting, fertilization, and cleanliness by dedicated gardeners on a weekly basis. Typically, this service is secured with a one-time payment, ensuring perpetual care.

The fee for perpetual care doesn't cover everything, such as ongoing floral arrangements for the gravesite. Families can opt for perpetual floral care, scheduling periodic flower placements—quarterly, monthly, or for special occasions.

Families can arrange perpetual floral care through their funeral home or a third-party vendor. They can select flower arrangements to be delivered to the gravesite, with silk flowers often preferred for their durability.



Families can choose a delivery schedule for floral arrangements by contacting their funeral home or a third-party vendor. Fees for flower delivery are typically charged to a credit card on a periodic basis. This ensures that the loved one's final resting place is consistently adorned.

How much does perpetual floral care cost?

Prices for arrangements vary depending on the selection, typically ranging from \$20 to \$100 per arrangement. It's an affordable way to honor and remember a loved one.

What other things do I need to keep in mind?

Keep in mind that there's an additional cost for a bronze vase, which serves as the usual placement for flower arrangements. If the original grave marker lacks a bronze vase, you may need to purchase one separately.

Ensure that the flower delivery service not only delivers the flowers but also places them on your loved one's grave. Cemeteries typically don't directly place flowers, so confirm with the delivery service that they will do this.

Check the cemetery's rules regarding floral options. Some cemeteries permit silk arrangements for a limited time to maintain appearance. Additionally, ensure compliance with rules on flower placement to avoid interference with groundskeeping. Certain types of flowers or wreaths may also have seasonal display regulations.

When uncertain, contact the cemetery office for policy clarification, or search online for information.



Personalizing Cremated Remains

After cremation, you might wonder about the urn's placement. Displaying the urn in a cemetery provides a dedicated spot for remembering and honoring your loved one at your convenience.

Glass front niches are popular for displaying urns within a columbarium—a structure with multiple niches for urns. These niches offer ample personalization options.

Glass front niches are available in individual or companion sizes, with individual niches accommodating one urn and companion niches holding two.

After purchasing the niche, you can personalize it to best memorialize your loved one. Glass front niches offer the flexibility to personalize them as a tribute.



What are some things to consider when planning your niche?

Familiarize yourself with the columbarium rules. While there may be some flexibility in what you can display with the urn, certain cemeteries have restrictions, such as prohibiting artificial flowers or specific urn designs.

Consider the niche size when selecting an urn and deciding what to place inside. Larger urns may limit space for additional items within the niche.

What are some things to place in the niche?

Common Memorial Items for a Niche:

- Pictures: Include photos of your loved one, family members, or pets.
- Religious articles: Display items like rosaries or crosses honoring your loved one's beliefs.
- Mementos: Showcase smaller objects of significance, such as souvenirs from travels or hobby-related items.
- Jewelry: Feature special pieces like wedding rings or sentimental jewelry worn by your loved one.

If you have questions about finding a cemetery with a suitable columbarium or need assistance, consult your funeral director. They can provide answers and guidance as needed.



Honoring Loved Ones on Father's Day, Mother's Day or Veteran's Day

Father's Day, Mother's Day, and Veteran's Day can be particularly challenging after losing a loved one. Whether it's the first year or many years later, there are various ways your family can honor and remember them during these holidays.



Visiting your loved one's final resting place can be a meaningful way to remember them, though it may evoke mixed emotions. Consider planning a special tribute during holiday visits to make the time more meaningful.

1. Flower arrangements: Fresh or silk flowers themed around your loved one's interests or hobbies.
2. Write a letter: Pen letters to your loved one and read them silently or aloud during your visit.
3. Plant a tree: Depending on cemetery regulations, consider planting a tree, bush, or flower near the gravesite.
4. Cemetery Cross: Personalize a cross for the grave, noting dates of service for veterans.
5. Marble photo: Engrave a photograph onto marble to affix to the headstone.

6. Patriotic decorations: Create patriotic wreaths or ribbons for veteran graves.
7. Grave jewelry: Engrave meaningful phrases, Bible verses, or poems onto marble slabs.
8. Resin sign: Opt for personalized resin signs to stick into the ground.
9. Personalized grave marker: Have a marker with your loved one's photograph made.
10. Meditation or prayer: Spend silent time reflecting, either through meditation or prayer.
11. Play music: Play their favorite song or patriotic music associated with their service.
12. Share memories: Gather family to share stories and cherished memories.
13. Clean the monument: Clean the headstone with soap, water, and a rag.
14. Check cemetery events: Inquire about special holiday events or ongoing memorials.
15. Wear red: Honor soldiers by dressing in red when visiting the gravesite.
16. Grave blankets: Lay patriotic-themed blankets with red, white, and blue flowers.
17. Plant a flag: Place a flag by the headstone to honor your loved one's service.
18. Reflect at 3:00 PM: Observe a moment of reflection at 3:00 PM on Memorial Day.
19. Presidential Memorial Certificate: Order a free certificate signed by the current U.S. president.
20. Favorite food: Enjoy a picnic with your loved one's favorite foods during your visit.

There are numerous ways to honor deceased parents. Hopefully, one of these ideas will be perfect for you and your family.