



## Types of Tributes

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A funeral is so much more than a way to say goodbye; it's an opportunity to celebrate the life of someone special.

Today, a funeral can be as unique as the individual who is being honored. From simple touches like displaying personal photographs to events created around a favorite pastime, funerals can reflect any aspect of a person's life and personality.

Following are questions you can use to help you decide how to personalize a service:

- What did the person like to do?
- What was the person like as an individual?
- What was the person like as a professional?
- Was the person spiritual?
- Was the person proud of their heritage?

For additional ideas on personalizing a funeral, please contact your local NFDA funeral director.

### What did the person like to do?

Often people have hobbies that become more than just a casual pastime. Their activity could have been as much a part of who they were as their smile. Why not showcase that important part of their life during the funeral?

Incorporating a hobby can be as simple as:

- Displaying items used for their hobby; e.g. sports equipment, gardening tools, or collections.
- Personalizing the casket or urn with a symbol of their hobby.
- Displaying trophies or awards they won.
- Creating a picture board or presentation featuring pictures of them engaged in their hobby.
- Having someone speak about the person's passion for the hobby.

By adding these or other personal touches to a funeral, the service becomes a reflection of the person's life and personality.

### What was the person like as an individual?

One way to enhance a funeral is by bringing a piece of the person's personality to life. Consider what made that person special, what made them who they were? Then find ways to link their individuality to traditional aspects of a funeral service.

As an example, an avid cowboy or cowgirl may want to ride off into the sunset one last time. Tasteful ways to honor their wish include:

- Using a covered wagon rather than a hearse
- Having their saddle and riding equipment displayed
- Playing western music
- Having their horse walk in the procession
- Having a barbecue after the service

Other themes you may want to consider:

- Military honors for a member of the armed forces
- Tailgate party for a sports enthusiast



- Harley-Davidson rally for the Harley owner

### **What was the person like as a professional?**

Many people take great pride in their career. Perhaps they dedicated a lifetime to a profession that transformed into more than just a job. If this holds true for your loved one, you may want to consider ways to include their professional life into their funeral service.

Following are two examples of how you could incorporate a profession into a service:

#### **For a teacher:**

- Have the choir or band from the school perform during the visitation or service.
- Encourage students to write essays about the person, which could be displayed.
- Invite a past student to speak at the service.

#### **For a fire person/police officer:**

- Incorporate any honors or traditions that their department has established.
- Use fire trucks or police vehicles in the procession.
- Have bagpipers play at the visitation or service.
- Display their uniform and equipment.

### **Was the person spiritual?**

Through organized religion or personal beliefs, most people have some sense of spirituality in their life. Often those values are from the very core of who the person was in life. Therefore, you may feel it is important to incorporate the individual's sense of spirituality into their funeral service.

Following are ideas on how to incorporate spirituality into a funeral service:

- Hold the service at the person's parish or religious facility.
- Have someone read excerpts from a key religious publication (i.e. Bible, Koran, etc.).
- Decorate the funeral home with symbols of the person's faith.
- Have the person's cremated remains scattered at a place of spiritual significance to them.
- Read a prayer that touches on their key beliefs.
- Include sacred music from the religion in the service.



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