

IDEAS FOR HOLIDAY RITUALS AFTER A DEATH

Rituals help individuals stay connected in a constructive and useful way while honoring the person who died. Rituals promote healing and help grievers find peace. They are a way to express what is often difficult to put into words. Rituals during the holidays can help make the holidays more meaningful by finding creative ways to remember those who cannot be with us.

- ❖ Light a candle in honor of your loved one and allow it to burn during family gatherings.
- ❖ Read aloud a meaningful poem before the holiday meal or place the poem in a frame at the serving table.
- ❖ Make a memorial donation to a charity in honor of your loved one.
- ❖ Visit the cemetery or meaningful place of memory. Place a holiday wreath or plant in memory.
- ❖ Provide memorial flowers or decorations for the home, your loved one's church, synagogue, or mosque.
- ❖ Plant a tree in memory of your loved one.
- ❖ Hang a special ornament or decoration.
- ❖ Hang a special stocking or holiday basket in which family and friends can place notes and memories.
- ❖ Look through photo albums alone or with the family and reflect on previous holidays.
- ❖ Buy a gift for your loved one and give it to yourself or to someone who would not otherwise have a gift.
- ❖ Place an empty chair at family gatherings or set a place setting for your loved one.
- ❖ Attend a holiday memorial through your faith community, hospice organization, or cemetery.
- ❖ Volunteer at a service organization in your community.

TREASURED MEMORIES IDEA

Supplies:

- Clear vase
- Decorative stones of any color in a basket or container

“When someone we love dies, our memories of them become our treasure.”

Corinthians 13:7

Share this quote with others at the holiday table and pass around the stones. Ask each family member to share a holiday memory of your loved one and then place the stone in the vase and pass to the next person. Each year, continue this tradition and fill the vase with fond memories. This symbolizes how our treasured memories continue to fill us, even in the absence of our loved ones.