

Indoor Funeral

Respects to the dead (optional)

This is a time during the service where family and friends may view the body or place flowers by a picture or casket. The family's wishes are key here. However it is best if no one is forced to view the body. The viewing may happen before, during or after the service.

Gathering music

This is a time for people to gather and be seated. Good music sets the mood for a funeral.

Opening remarks

One of the first things you should mention is the name of the deceased. Talk about gathering together to mourn or remember.

Dedication of space

Here, the people move from their normal lives into the ceremonial space. You should explicitly acknowledge that everyone has permission to feel what they feel. In Neo-Pagan funerals, this is the time where the Gods and the elements may be called. In a non-Pagan funeral, perhaps, this may be the time to pray to God or simply state that we are gathered together to remember the deceased.

Discussion of life and death

As clergy, this is the time for you to speak of life and death. Death and life are tied together. Death affects and changes us. Loss is common, and we gather together to gain strength and hope. You should mention that while we mourn the loss of someone that was special to us, we also gather today to celebrate that person's life. Acknowledge that sorrow and happiness are not mutually exclusive. Also, do not be afraid to include humor in the ceremony, as long as the family approves.

Music

A nice time to play a piece of music that meant a lot to the person who died or to the deceased's family. The music may be performed live or electronically. Make sure to check what equipment is available so you can have the music in the correct format.

Readings

These normally short poems, read by clergy or family members, give comfort or express the depth of the grief felt.

Eulogy

Webster's dictionary defines a eulogy as a "commendatory oration or writing especially in honor of one deceased" The thesaurus gives the words tribute, acclaim, homage, and praise as synonyms. Thus, the eulogy is a fitting tribute to the person and his or her life. A family member or members will usually give the eulogy.

Sharing of memories

If time permits, other friends or family are called to share a SHORT memory of the deceased person and what he or she meant to them. If this would take too long, then it may be done at the reception with a few representatives speaking at the funeral.

Closing words or prayer

You should consider a prayer that all can participate in, giving particular care if it is a mixed Neo-Pagan/other religion service. You can also encourage thoughts and prayers for the family that is left behind.

Announcement of reception (optional)

If there is a reception, you should let people know the location. If there is a graveside memorial, mention that also. In addition, let people know if the family is receiving people somewhere else (like at their home).

Indication that ceremony is about to end

In a Neo-Pagan funeral, if the Gods and elements have been invoked, very briefly release them. You then should inform the people that the rite is ended—or that it will now move to a graveside ceremony, if one is to take place.

In a more secular funeral, mention that the service is now complete.

Departing music

Music provides a backdrop for people as they leave. If there are a lot of people, you might want to instruct people to leave starting with the family and then working the way back each row. This lets people touch the family as they leave (and also manages traffic).