

## WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE (EULOGY): A GUIDE

One of the ways we may want to celebrate a loved one's life is by sharing stories of them. There are many opportunities to do this, as outlined below.

**WAKE (or visiting hours):** allows many individuals to share their memories one to another. It is also a place where you may consider appointing a specific period of sharing with all those present at the funeral home. This could take place during the prayer service led by the priest/bereavement team member or the funeral home personnel could be asked to gather people together when you feel it is best or a relative/friend could gather people to listen to stories at your request. Here at the wake, any number of people may speak. It can be a combination of prepared and spontaneous remarks.

This time of storytelling at the funeral home is best suited for stories that make us laugh and cry, a recounting of the person's life history, insider glimpses of the person, more colorful stories, etc.

**GRAVESIDE:** Here is another opportunity for someone to offer a brief prayer, thought, reflection, or poem. Simply let the priest/bereavement team member or funeral home know that is your desire.

**POST BURIAL:** There will be lots of time for remembering and sharing stories if there is a gathering following the graveside service.

*If you prefer not to have Words of Remembrance, you may provide the celebrant with some details of your loved one's life focusing on the themes of Faith, Family and Friends so he may incorporate them into his homily.*

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If you accept an invitation to take on this task, we strongly urge you to consider these tips:

This is not the setting for a chronological history of the person's life. A chronological history may be printed up and available at the wake or distributed to attendees as they leave the church.

- This is the setting for a sharing of how the person touched your life and the lives of others for the good.

This is not the setting for a recounting of youthful misdeeds.

- This is the setting for examples of how the person showed love, was a model for your life, turned to God, became strong in their faith, or overcame adversities, etc.

This is not the setting to process your own grief.

- This is the setting to do your best to offer comfort, hope, and strength to your listeners.

***The Archdiocese of Boston provides these suggestions for composing Words of Remembrance:***

A remembrance may take 3-5 minutes. Longer remarks make it difficult for those gathered to pray. Prepare your remembrance in writing. Use your own words. Speak from your own experience.

Avoid using “inside jokes” or forms of humor that may be misunderstood or sharing incidents not widely known, which may cause confusion or hurt.

Choose one trusted advisor who also knew the deceased, and use him/her as a “sounding board” when you prepare your remarks. You may wish to discuss your written remembrance with the priest the day before the funeral.

During the preparation and delivery of your remembrance, pray. Pray that you will do honor to your loved one's memory, that your words will be a witness to faith, and a blessing of comfort to your family and friends.

If you have been asked to offer a remembrance, but are unaccustomed to public speaking, or are concerned that your emotions may hinder your ability to speak, do not hesitate to respectfully decline the task.