

# CLOSING CEREMONY

## CANDLELIGHT PROGRAM

A closing candlelight ceremony is a powerful remembrance ritual that gives participants a memory they'll treasure. In general, it includes music, poems, and candles as a symbolic release of their sadness. The following instructions use two facilitators to coordinate and lead a candlelight ceremony. Modify as needed.

### PLAN

1. Allow 30 minutes at the end of your final group session for the closing candlelight ceremony.
2. Confirm whether use of lit candles are allowed within the facility. If not, consider LED candles or glowsticks.
3. If desired, invite one or two church leaders to attend and give opening prayer and/or read poems.
4. Secure music. Invite an a cappella singer or use CD or digital music. Song suggestions:
  - ☐ Somewhere Over the Rainbow
  - ☐ I Will Always Love You, by Whitney Houston
  - ☐ Amazing Grace
  - ☐ To Where You Are, by Josh Groban
  - ☐ Wind Beneath my Wings, by Bette Midler
  - ☐ Go Light Your World, by C. Rice

### MATERIALS

- ☐ Refreshments
- ☐ Candles
- ☐ Wax catchers
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Poems
- ☐ Tissue

### PREPARE

5. Purchase candles with wax catchers online, from religious store, or arts & crafts store. Assemble candles inside wax catchers prior to ceremony. Don't forget matches or lighter.
6. Secure use of mic and speakers for the music, if needed.
7. Purchase or find donated cookies and bottled water to serve.
8. Secure bucket of water for participants to drop candles in when finished.

### SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

1. Opening prayer.
2. Comments about past 8 sessions, importance of continued use of self care tips, continued support of one another, and local grief resources.
3. Start music. While music is playing, facilitators light each other's candle. Participants should be close enough together so they can safely dip their candlewick into the flame of the closest facilitator.

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4. After all candles are lit, facilitators may each recite one poem.
  5. Allow music to finish, and then ask for a moment of silence. Play second song if desired.
  6. End with closing prayer.
  7. Distinguish candles and dispose of in bucket of water.

## SUGGESTED POEMS

### FIVE CANDLES

UNKNOWN AUTHOR

The first candle represents our grief.  
The pain of losing you is intense.  
It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

This second candle represents our courage.  
To confront our sorrow,  
To comfort each other,  
To change our lives.

This third candle we light in your memory.  
For the times we laughed,  
The times we cried,  
The times we were angry with each other,  
The silly things you did,  
The caring and joy you gave us.

This fourth candle we light for our love.  
We light this candle that your light will always  
shine.

As we enter this season and share this night of  
remembrance with our family and friends.  
We cherish the special place in our hearts  
that will always be reserved for you.

This fifth candle we light to thank you for the gift  
your living brought to each of us.

We love you.

We remember you.

### TIME WILL EASE THE HURT

BY BRUCE B. WILMER

The sadness of the present days  
is locked and set in time.  
And moving to the future  
is a slow and painful climb.

But all the feelings that  
are now so vivid and real  
can't hold their fresh intensity  
as time begins to heal.

No wound so deep will  
ever go entirely away,  
yet every hurt becomes  
a little less each day.

Nothing can erase the painful  
imprints on your mind.  
But there are softer memories  
that time will let you find.

Though your heart won't let  
the sadness simply slide away,  
the echoes will diminish  
even though the memories stay.