

Ceremony Ideas for Cremation Remains

Ash Scattering & Ash Burial

AN ASH SCATTERING

An ash scattering ceremony can follow the [typical funeral template elements](#). Usually, it's OK to scatter ashes in most locations, but do a bit of research for your local area. You'll find some good information from [A Sacred Moment Funeral Home](#) and [The International Scattering Society](#).

This ceremony will be outside, so keep in mind weather and sound. If there is a large group, a portable sound system for all to be able to hear is recommended. Remember that when you scatter ashes, you release the ashes only. Don't drop the urn, container or plastic holding the ashes into the water or air. Always scatter ashes with the wind at your back, so they blow away from you.



Following is a sample ash scattering ceremony, where the man's ashes were scattered along with many ashes from his beloved dogs he had kept in a box on his mantle. This was on a beach in the Pacific Northwest.

Because it was outdoors, and he and his friends and family were dog lovers, there were plenty of dogs present!

Welcome

Celebrant:

Hello and welcome to this beautiful beach where we are gathered to remember <name>.

My name is <name>

I'd like to take a moment to ask everyone to check that your cell phones are turned off.

Thank you.

On this <May. afternoon, let's sit with one another in this time we have together in a spirit of appreciation for <name>.

And we think also of those who cannot be here today. We especially remember <names>.

Flower Scattering

Celebrant:

We have in the center of our circle <name>'s ashes and some ashes from his many dogs, that we'll take to the water to release when we're done here.

So we're going to pass this basket of flowers around. Take one and put them in the middle while we remember <name>, who is out of pain now, and with his dogs who have gone on ahead.

Plants grow and they die. The seasons turn. We are here to remember that the flowers bloom and then die back. And then, they come again in the next season. That is the cycle of life.

People take a flower and place it beside the urns, then return to their chairs.

Celebrant:

Prayer

For every memory of love and joy,
every memory of life well-lived
and every sorrow shared with us,
we give thanks.

Heal any memories of hurt and failure

Give us the wisdom and grace

To use aright the time that is left here on earth, for the sake of love.

Amen

Eulogy

Here is where someone may have written the story of his/her life. Or you may want to go around and tell/share short memories.

Poem

Here is where you can insert a poem, prayer or reading. You might take a look at suggestions in '[At the Commemorative Event.](#)'

Open Remembrance

If you have had a eulogy, you could also have a time for going around and sharing stories.

Announcements

Before we walk to the water to release <name>'s ashes, along with his pups, we'd like to make sure everyone knows they are invited for lunch at <location>.

Let's gather up the flowers back into the basket to take to the water.

Gather up urns and flowers and walk to the water. Assess the wind and huddle. All gather again at the water. Step into the water away from the group so the ashes will scatter on water and not on land.

Final Words & Ash Scattering

We came together on this day to say goodbye to <name>.

Now, before his children take his ashes out a bit, let's take a quiet moment to reflect on our final goodbye to the earthly remains of <name> – while what remains in our hearts cannot ever leave us.

<pause>

We emerge into life from the waters of eternity and when our days are done, it is to eternity we return.

Your life was a gift and now, together we offer it back to the great tide.

From here on, held between all of you, <name> and his dogs will be carried down through the waters of time.

<name>, go on your journey from this world
carried by the spirit who made you and loves you.

May the homeward path rise to meet you
and may you be welcomed across the threshold
and received in love's embrace.

For you, there is no more death or sorrow or pain.

So may the company of heaven enfold you
and keep you in peace this day and always.

Amen

They go into the water and release the ashes. After they return, Celebrant again pass out the flowers for folks to toss into the water.

Celebrant:

Please toss your flowers into the water, as we hold <name's> memory in our hearts.

We remember <him/her>. So long as we live, <he/she> too shall live, for <he/she> is a part of all who have known <him/her>.

We came together today to say goodbye to <name>, and now we have done that. We have done that together, in empathy and consolation.

We will not let the shadow of death keep us from remembering the living person who touched us many times, filling our lives with memories, meaning and love.

AN ASH BURIAL



If you are burying the ashes (cremains), follow the rules of the cemetery as to type of container, whether plastic should be removed, if you are able to put the ashes in directly.

If you are burying the ashes in a non-cemetery setting, make every effort that what goes in the opening is all

natural and organic. Remove the ashes from the plastic bag, for example.

Many find that digging the small grave and then closing it is healing.

Here is an order of service for a short graveside ceremony for burying ashes.

Remember that it is important to have ritual for these events...but that you have freedom to create what would be most significant and unique to your own situation.

Order of Service for Ash Burial

Gathering prayer before processional to gravesite – Make the walk to the grave location fully honor the final journey. Invite everyone to close their eyes and reflect on <name's> memory. Here is a place to pass out flowers and herbs.

Walk to gravesite

Welcome – Acknowledge why you are all here today. To say goodbye to <name> and return <his/her> ashes to the earth.

Invitation to dig the grave (if needed) – If the grave has not been opened (check if this is at a cemetery), people can take turns with a shovel opening a small hole in the earth. This can be a shared task, so invite those who want to, to help.

Prayer to open the grave

We are here to say goodbye to <name> today. As we prepare to open the earth to receive <him/her>, we give thanks that we are all here together. We will stand and witness together. We will say goodbye together. In peace and love, Amen

Dig the hole

One person or several can share the task of digging.

Bless the grave

Here you can lay flowers in the small grave, or sprinkle oils and herbs. Save some to put on top of the ashes afterward.

Place the cremains in the grave

Depending on the grave if in a cemetery, you may need to keep the ashes in a container. But if possible, the best is to spread the ashes directly into the grave. Put herbs and flowers on top of the ashes. Be aware of the wind, and stand with the wind at your back.

Song or reading

You could bring a song on your mobile phone to play here. This is also a good spot to read a poem or prayer. [Find some here.](#)

Remembrance

This could be a time to go around the circle with a short memory. You could prompt folks with the question, “What did <name> teach you?”

Blessing

I lay my head to rest and, in doing so,

I lay at your feet

the faces I have seen,

the voices I have heard,

the words I have spoken,

the hands I have touched,

the joys I have shared.

I lay them at your feet

and, in doing so,

I lay my head to rest.

(A Cornish blessing)

Call and response

When we are weary and in need of strength,

We are lost and sick at heart,

We remember him.

When we have a joy we crave to share,

When we have decisions that are difficult to make,

When we have achievements that are based on his,

We remember him.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,

We remember him.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer,

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn,

We remember him.

At the rising of the sun and at its setting,

We remember him.

As long as we live, he too will live,

For he is now a part of us,

As we remember him.

(Adapted from The Yizkor Service, Jewish Funeral Service Prayer Book)

Invitation to close the grave

Invite whomever would like to close the grave.

Blessing or Prayer

Goodbye <name>. You are now set free in our hearts and memories and we give thanks for all that <you>gave.'

Final thoughts

We've come together to say goodbye to <name>, to return <his/her> ashes to the Earth.
Thank you all for coming.

Recessional to home

All leave.