

THE FUNERAL OF A CHILD

In the following guidelines for the funeral service for a child, it is important to reassure the grieving parents, family and friends that the child has passed into the presence and care of the Gentle Shepherd whose loving arms were waiting to embrace His child and give everlasting peace. It is intended at the same time to assure the survivors of the tender mercies of God as He sustains the family through their loss and brings them to renewed joy while at the same time exhorting them to trust in the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ and the glorious reunion that awaits them in His Heavenly Kingdom.

The proposed guidelines consist of elements that may be used in a more formal church service, or at a funeral home when music accompaniment is not utilized.

Prelude*

Opening or Greeting

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart..." Isaiah 40:11

Jesus said to his disciples, "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy." John 16:22

"The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:17

Hymn*

Dear friends, we have gathered here in our grief to praise God and witness to our faith. We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss of one so young. May God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort; in sorrow, hope; in death, resurrection as we celebrate the life of (name) _____ who has given life on _____ and called to be with (his/her) Heavenly Father on _____.

Gentle God, born an infant in Jesus Christ in the family of Joseph and Mary, we give you thanks for (name) _____ born among us full of hope and promise. We remember that Jesus Christ lifted children into loving arms to embrace and bless them. We ask you to embrace and bless (name) _____ as part of your heavenly family where, by your grace, our lives are brought to fullness in the peace of your eternal home. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your beloved child, and our risen Savior. Amen.

Comments and Sharing

Prayer

O God, whose dear Son took little children into his arms and blessed them; Give us grace, we pray, to entrust this child to your never-failing love and care; And bring us all to your eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, we pray that you will keep in your tender love the life of this child whom we hold in blessed memory. Help us who continue here to serve you with constancy, trusting in your promise of eternal life, that hereafter we may be united with your blessed children in glory everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of all mercies, whose heart aches with our human hurting, we commend to your love the parent(s) of this child, (name(s)) _____, and all (his/her/their) children who mourn. Sustain the family in this loss and in their loneliness. Kindle anew the ashes of joy. Grant the peace of knowing that this child is with you both in this life and in the life that is to come; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Scripture

OLD TESTAMENT

2 Samuel 12:16-23

Isaiah 40:1-11

Zechariah 8:1-8

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Isaiah 65:17-25

PSALMS

Psalm 23 Psalm 130 Psalm 130:1-17

GOSPELS

Matthew 18:1-5 Matthew 10-14 Mark 10:13-16
Luke 18:15-17 John 14:1-6

EPISTLES

Romans 8:14-23 I Corinthians 1:3-7 Revelation 7:15-17

Message of Comfort

Hymn*

Committal

O God, you are the source of all mercy and the giver of all comfort. Deal graciously with all who mourn the death of your little lamb. Assure us with the knowledge that children are precious to our Savior, Jesus, who sought out the children and blessed them, telling his disciples "to such as these the kingdom of God belongs." Help us to entrust our beloved (name) _____ to the everlasting care of the Good Shepherd. Console us and grant us peace as we seek to accept such a profound loss. May we trust in your goodness, knowing that now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now we know only in part; then we will know fully, even as we have been fully known by you. Enable us to go forward with confidence that we will be joined together again in the joy of your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Your infinite wisdom and love, our heavenly Father, You have received unto Yourself the innocent spirit of this little child. We therefore tenderly commit the precious body to its resting place in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Benediction

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Go in peace, remembering Jesus' words to his beloved disciples: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. And I will pray (to) the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

Appropriate Hymns:

What a Friend We Have in Jesus
Jesus Loves Me
Children of the Heavenly Father

* When service is held in church (or when organ or other accompaniment is available).