

A white marble statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, set against a cloudy sky and a brick wall. The statue is the central focus, with the text overlaid on a semi-transparent white band across its middle. The background is a soft-focus sky, and the base of the statue is a red brick wall.

Planning for a Child's Funeral



OUR LADY OF GRACE

CATHOLIC CHURCH
EDINA

Few things are as heartbreaking as planning a child's funeral. We do not merely bury a beloved child. We say goodbye to our hopes and dreams for that child as well. We lament not only the death of the child, but all the future lost opportunities—graduations, weddings and births.

Out-of-season deaths shock us like no other. We can feel lost and angry, knowing this child did not have the "full measure" of life. Sometimes we wonder where God is in our tragedy. When we bury the "flesh of our flesh", we come to understand the biblical phrase "gnashing of teeth". Our hearts are broken, and we may wonder how we might go on from this wrenching tragedy.

One of the sad first steps after the death of a child is planning the funeral.

This booklet is designed to help you choose readings and music for a child's funeral Mass. **You are not restricted to these readings.** We have included them knowing that you have many decisions to make in a short time. We simply hope that this selection of readings will simplify this overwhelming time.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament: Pick one (1) Old Testament reading for the Mass. Typically a family member or close friend proclaims the Old Testament at the funeral Mass.

Jeremiah 1:4-8

I Formed You in the Womb

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Then I said, “Alas, Lord GOD!

Behold, I do not know how to speak,
Because I am a youth.”

But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’
Because everywhere I send you, you shall go,
And all that I command you, you shall speak.

“Do not be afraid of them,

For I am with you to deliver you,” declares the LORD.

Genesis 1:27-31

God Created All, and It Was Good

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Isaiah 49:1-15

Can a Mother Forget Her Child?

In a time of favor I answer you,
on the day of salvation I help you;

I form you and set you as a covenant for the people,
To restore the land and allot the devastated heritages,

To say to the prisoners: Come out!
To those in darkness: Show yourselves!

Along the roadways they shall find pasture, on every barren
height shall their pastures be.
They shall not hunger or thirst; nor shall scorching wind or sun
strike them;

For he who pities them leads them and guides them beside
springs of water.
I will turn all my mountains into a roadway, and make my high-
ways level.

See, these shall come from afar: some from the north and the
west, others from the land of Syene.

Sing out, heavens, and rejoice, earth, break forth into song, you
mountains,
For the LORD comforts his people and shows mercy to his
afflicted.

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me;
my Lord has forgotten me."

Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the
child of her womb?
Even should she forget, I will never forget you.
See, upon the palms of my hands I have engraved you;

New Testament: Pick one (1) New Testament reading for the Mass.

Philippians 4:4-9

The Peace which Surpasses All Understanding

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentle spirit be known to all. The Lord is near.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Peter 4:8-11

Each has a Special Gift

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Believers Who Have Died

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Romans 8:31-39

Who Can Separate Us from the Love of Christ?

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel: Pick one (1) Gospel reading for the Mass.

Matthew 18:10-14

The Lost Sheep

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

[“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]

“What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go search for the one that is straying?

“If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

“So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.”

John 9:1-7

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Luke 18:15-17

The Little Children and Jesus

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly, I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

MUSIC SELECTIONS

- I Can Only Imagine
- The Cloud's Veil
- Oh God, You Search Me
- Take Me Home
- Just a Closer Walk With Thee
- And Jesus Said
- May We and God Be One (Tate)
- Like a Shepherd
- Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- Give Me Jesus
- Journey for Home (Bolduc)
- On That Holy Mountain (Mattingly)
- Wonderful, Merciful Savior
- Lord of All Hopefulness
- We Shall Rise Again
- How Can I Keep From Singing
- Gather Your People (Hurd)
- Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled
- Gathered in the Love of Christ
- You Are the Voice
- Psalm 116: In the Land of the Living
- Psalm 25: To You, O Lord
- Psalm 27: The Lord is My Light
- Psalm 23: Shepherd Me, O God
- Psalm 91: Be With Me
- My Soul Is Still
- You Are Mine
- Here I Am, Lord
- We Remember
- You Raise Me Up
- On Eagle's Wings
- Blest Are They
- Holy is Your Name
- Here At This Table
- The Love of God
- Table of Plenty
- Taste and See
- May Choirs of Angels
- The Hand of God
- Celtic Song of Farewell
- Onward to the Kingdom
- Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone
- We Shall Rise Again
- This Little Light of Mine

THE DRAGONFLY

Once, in a little pond, in the muddy water under the lily pads, there lived a little water beetle in a community of water beetles. They lived a simple and comfortable life in the pond with few disturbances and interruptions.

Once in a while, sadness would come to the community when one of their fellow beetles would climb the stem of a lily pad and would never be seen again. They knew when this happened; their friend was dead, gone forever.

Then, one day, the little water beetle felt an irresistible urge to climb up that stem. However, he was determined that he would not leave forever. He would come back and tell his friends what he had found at the top.

When he reached the top and climbed out of the water onto the surface of the lily pad, he was so tired, and the sun felt so warm, that he decided he must take a nap. As he slept, his body changed and when he woke up, he had turned into a beautiful blue-tailed dragonfly with broad wings and a slender body designed for flying.

So, fly he did! And, as he soared he saw the beauty of a whole new world and a far superior way of life to what he had never known existed.

Then he remembered his beetle friends and how they were thinking by now he was dead. He wanted to go back to tell them, and explain to them that he was now more alive than he had ever been before. His life had been fulfilled rather than ended. But, his new body would not go down into the water. He could not get back to tell his friends the good news. Then he understood that their time would come, when they, too, would know what he now knew. So, he raised his wings and flew off into his joyous new life!

Author Unknown

PRAYER FOR A PARENT WHOSE CHILD HAS DIED

Mysterious Lord of Life and Death,
a very part of my own life has died
in the death of my child.

My soul is weighed down with sorrow
and bears the wound of a lifelong scar.

Send to me Your angel of consolation
for the pain is heavy and deep.

Come to my aid, Lord of Mercy,
for I lack the power of the holy parent, Abraham,
who was willing, in obedience to Your command,
to sacrifice to You his beloved son, Isaac.

Lord God, You who are also a parent
surely know my pain at the loss
of my beloved child, (name) ,
who has been taken from my side by death.

Do not take my tears and sorrow
as a sign of my unbelief that all who have died
are resurrected to eternal life in You,
but, rather, see in these tears
a sign of my great love for my child.

As I held her/him in the embrace of love,
may You, her/his Divine Parent,
hold her/him close to Your heart forever.

Help me, Lord,
for I do not seek to understand the why
of this mystery of death
as much as I desire to accept it in a holy way
and to be healed and once again whole.

Support me, my Lord and God,
and wrap me in Your gentle love
as I attempt to carry this bitter cross
as Your Son, Jesus, carried the cross
which You gave to Him.

Amen

Author Unknown

CONTACT NAMES AND NUMBERS

Planning a funeral is difficult. You may find your thoughts are more scattered. You might forget to mention significant details at the planning meeting, please call us with any questions. We're here to help.

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