

Graveside/Outside Funeral

If the entirety of the service will be held outside or by a graveside, then you should use an abbreviated version of the indoor service. Be sure that a place to sit is provided for those who cannot stand for long periods of time.

Gathering music

Opening music can give people time to gather at the graveside or ritual space and settle down. Live music can be especially effective in an outdoor setting, but a portable music player works well.

Opening remarks

As with the indoor service, one of the first things that you should mention is the name of the deceased. Talk about gathering together to mourn or remember.

Gathering together of family and friends

Depending on the number of people, you can have them either form a "circle" or just link hands from row to row.

Opening prayer

This serves to invoke the Lord and Lady (Wiccan) or other Neo-Pagan deities and to establish a zone of comfort and love for the soul that is moving on to a wonderful, loving place. (Depending, of course, on the family's beliefs, this place could be "in our hearts and memories." If you are not sure of the family's beliefs, talk about how the person will be kept "in our memories").

Song/chant

Singing or chanting can be an embrace or continuation of the opening prayer.

Second prayer or poem

The purpose of this prayer or poem is to acknowledge and consecrate the earth (or vessel), to preserve what the deceased person's life meant, and to establish a link between this world and the world of the afterlife.

Eulogy

As with indoor services, a family member usually gives a tribute to the person and his or her life.

Sharing of memories

If time permits, others are called to share a SHORT memory of the deceased and what he or she meant to that person. If this would take too long, then it may be done at the reception with a few representatives participating in the funeral.

Graveside activity

Many graveside activities can be meaningful. Examples include placing dirt, coins or flowers on or by the casket or urn. These activities are nicely accompanied by music or a chant.

Final prayer

This prayer should be powerful and solemn; the purpose is for release of the loved one.

Formal words of parting

If a reception is being given by the family, you should inform people where it will be held. Mention that the family should stay for a private moment after the official ceremony.

Short circling with immediate family and close friends

The graveside service should end with a private moment with just the family and close friends. Offer private words and prayers just for them.