



Celebrate the Life of Your Animal Companion

Human beings have always honored the passing of a member of the family, or community, with ceremony. Around the world, such remembrance ceremonies exist to honor and pay tribute, but also to unite the participants in healing after the loss.

As your pet was truly a part of your family, we urge you to have such an event, bringing together everyone touched by their life, and their passing. Here at *Family Pet Cremation & Burial*, we've helped families just like yours to stage remarkably moving ceremonies in honor of their animal companion – and always work with the creativity of the family to create a personalized tribute.

Here are some of our suggestions, based on experience. It doesn't matter if you've chosen private burial, or cremation, a ceremony binds and heals; honors and remembers.

1. Pick a time and place for this event. If you are choosing to bury your pet in a private location, the burial itself becomes the focal point of the ceremony. However, if you've chosen cremation with Family Pet Cremation & Burial Services, our location may provide the setting for a simple viewing and remembrance event. Or you may choose to have a private ceremony after the ashes are returned to you.

2. Create the ceremony structure. We always invite our families to personalize the event. One family sang "All You Need is Love" as they dug the grave of their pet together. They then planted a tree over the grave, and surrounded it with abalone shells (their pet's favorite "toy") and candles, lighting the candles in the evening hours. "It was absolutely beautiful," shared the mother. Each of us lit and candle, while sharing a memory of a special time.

As you've seen, the ceremony can include music, either sung or played by the guests, or simply broadcast over a sound system. Candles are universal symbols of light, and life – and often a valuable way to keep the energies of participants focused on an activity of lighting, and holding a candle. Remember! Safety first – if using candles as part of the ceremony (unlike the situation mentioned above, where candles were grave decorations) we advise using short tapered candles, each fitted with a *bobèche*, or drip guard. See the following page for directions.

3. If you plan to bury keepsakes with your pet's remains, gather them ahead of time. Some families choose to inter their pet's toys, collar, or other items as part of the ceremonial structure. If that's your intention, have a special box for all these items, and bring them to the ceremonial site. Each participant can select an item, and then place it in the grave, while sharing their memory.

4. Always give voice to your sorrow, and gratitude. While we often have "moments of silence" in honor of someone, silence doesn't necessarily heal broken hearts. Speaking of your loss, sharing your feelings,



reaching out for comfort from others – that’s what ceremony is all about. Invite each participant to speak, but never force the issue. If they’re not ready to share, so be it. It may take time for them to find the right words. To that end, we suggest simple ceremonies on the anniversary of their pet’s passing – a month, a year...you’ll know the right time. Often, it’s the younger children in a family who are the catalyst for such an event. Be watchful of their hearts – they are usually more in tune with feelings than us adults.

Please know we are always here to assist you in creating a fitting, personal, and moving ceremony in honor of your pet. Should you need support in this difficult time, call us. We’re here to help.

Vigil Candles with Bobeches

Bobeches are small, round disks placed at the base of candles to catch wax drips. They can be made out of just about anything, including paper, copper sheeting, crystal, metal or wood. For simple, sturdy bobeches, you can cut circles out of card stock and place them around the base of your vigil candles. This is a moderately easy activity, and can involve younger children in the decoration of their bobeches.

Things you'll need:

- Card stock
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Utility knife
- Compass

1. Place the candle for which you are creating the bobeches on a piece of card stock, and trace around the base with your pencil. We suggest the utility candles sold in grocery and hardware stores, but any tapered candle will do.
2. Take a compass and place the point in the center of the circle you just drew. Extend the compass out an extra inch or so, depending on the size you want your bobeches to be, and draw a larger circle.
3. Sketch any decorative accents, such as scalloping, along the edges of the larger circle.
4. Cut out the center circle using your utility knife.
5. Cut out the rest of the bobeches, being careful to preserve any detailed accents you included. Make one straight cut from the outside of the bobeches to the inner circle so you can open your bobeches and place it around the base of your candle.