

Our Home is Your Home

When words are inadequate.....

.....we have ritual.

The purpose of this brochure is to give some examples of how to make this meaningful event full of significance.

The funeral is needed to help family members face the loss and learn to cope. The value of the funeral is based on the healthy impact a funeral can have on our emotional and mental health. Rightly done, a funeral is therapeutic.

When bad things happen to us, the first thing we want to do is establish the significance of the event. If a little boy falls down and hurts his hand, he comes to his mother in tears. She may clean the hand and find there is nothing wrong, but he wants a bandage on the place. Then he will show everyone his boo-boo. They must see his boo-boo. That is human nature. What do we do after a surgery? Show the scar. If we can't show the scar then we tell anyone we see – strangers or not – about the surgery. We need to establish the significance of the event. If we can establish the significance, we can move on.

When a loved one dies we need to establish the significance of the loss and the significance of the



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loved one. The first step in this process is to establish the personal significance of the person. It is almost as if we must inventory the loss before we can grieve. We need to talk about the person. We need times of remembering who the person was and what they meant to us. We do not know what we have until it is gone. Then it comes in waves and it comes in ripples. These remembrances hurt and yet they heal, for they are establishing significance.

Then we need to know the social significance of our loved one. We need to know that the person had value to others. Flowers at funerals say the person had significance, and the family needs to know what the person meant to friends. That is what a funeral is supposed to be. We gather together to establish the significance of a life.

Almost everything about a funeral has the potential to heal, even the tough parts that seem hard on the family. The funeral ceremony is also vital. Ceremony can speak for us when we have no words to say. When we are too upset to speak, we need ceremonies to speak for us. Ceremonies matter. Ceremonies heal. The funeral may bring some pain to the surface, but it heals much more than it hurts.

INSIDE

- ② Visitation Ideas
- ③ Service Information
- ④ Personal Effects Information
- ⑤ Home Front Issues
- ⑥ Services Schedule

Ideas and Variations in Visitations!

Pictures - There is a growing trend with visitations, customizing this time to match the life we are trying to commemorate. One of the most often seen is the use of pictures. We, at Bissler & Sons, have **posterboard, easels and even large tables** to assist you in displaying your memorable pictures. Families often bring in wonderful collections of other important artifacts as well; such things have included golf clubs, quilts and other handicrafts. Some of these items may be placed into the casket for the visitation and service. Before closing the casket these items may be removed or some special mementos may remain. We will discuss the specifics with you prior to the services. We will also need to know specifically to which family member these items are to be returned.

Name Tags - We have found that families are very mobile; and many family members come to the services from areas out of town. Many people attending the visitation or service recognize them as members of the family, but are often unable to properly identify them. The same often holds true for the grandchildren, who have grown and are hard to properly identify. We provide name tags for the immediate family, if you wish, to help the visitors identify the family without the embarrassment or awkwardness associated with confusing names of the family.

Personal Comfort Issues - We suggest wearing **comfortable shoes** and clothing, as you may be standing longer than you normally do. We have seating for family if necessary, including a couple of **elevated chairs** because it is easier to greet friends and family if you are at a similar height. We do have a **wheelchair** available if necessary. We hope that with a little thought, you may be as comfortable as you can be under the conditions at hand.

Children's attendance - We encourage the attendance of children. It reinforces the strength of the family. We do try to make it easier for you when they become restless, as we have crayons and paper or age appropriate coloring books or pages for them. We find it helpful when families assign a specific person to watch over the youngsters thus allowing the family to participate more fully in the visitation.

"Favorite Memory Cards" - Many times at celebrations such as birthdays or anniversaries, there are books for those in attendance to write a favorite memory. We have taken this a step further, in that we provide a card and envelope. When someone tells you their favorite story, please have them take one of these cards. They can fill it in at the time or take it home and mail it to the family when it is completed. They can be accumulated into a scrapbook to allow the families to reminisce in the years to come; thus allowing future generations to have an important and highly personal insight into the deceased

Funeral Service Information

There are a great many details that have to be dealt with during the funeral process. Some of these things have to be handled more quickly than others. The following items have to be addressed during the **next few days**. We have included this information so that you may give it some thought now; however, you do not have to come to a decision right away. We will discuss the Casket Bearers, flowers and funeral procession line-up with you usually toward the end of the evening visitation or earlier, since by then you will have a good idea who will be attending the services.

Music - Music is an important part of the funeral for many people. Here at the funeral home, usually we play background music before and after the service in the funeral home. We have a cassette tape library for your use. Many families find that our selection does not include their "kind" of music. Please feel free to provide the selections you wish, however it might be appropriate to discuss this with the officiant of the service first. We can play CD's as well as cassette music.

Listen to the Funeral Service at the Funeral Home - We have a service to offer those who are out of town or unable to attend the service at the funeral home. Through TRZ Religious Services, for a flat fee of \$10.00 anywhere in United States or Canada including Hawaii and Alaska, anyone that wishes to listen to a service will simply:

Dial: 1-800-846-4808 ... It is answered "TRZ Religious Services"

Enter: "5857" for The Bissler Funeral Home

Enter: Any major credit card for payment.

Casket Bearers - The custom of using casket bearers (Pall Bearers) to carry the casket to the grave has a very long history. (Please know that a couple "bearers" can be used for urns as well.) Today, depending on the circumstances, they may also be called on to assist in moving the casket into or out of the church. We will go over the specifics with you. Many families opt for close relatives to fill these 6-8 positions; while some choose representatives of the various clubs or organizations that were important to the decedent. Please keep in mind that even though there is lifting involved; women are as capable as many of their male counterparts, however low-heeled shoes are recommended. We usually have two staff members assisting the Casket Bearers as they proceed to the grave. By identifying the Casket Bearers in the parking lot as they arrive for the funeral, we are able to give them the proper instructions. When you ask them to be a Casket Bearer, if they have any reservations or questions, please have them ask one of our staff. We will gladly answer their questions.

Flowers - The sending of flowers at a time of a death is a very old custom. Flowers help establish the significance of the loss to the senders. We do generally take the family spray and 2-3 other pieces (as room in the hearse allows) to the cemetery. Prior to the services, we will discuss which pieces

are to go with us. After the committal or the gathering after the services, we invite you to come back to the funeral home to pick out the arrangements you wish to take home. Many times there are more flowers than you wish to take home. We will take any remaining arrangements to the local nursing facilities. We are told that the larger arrangements are rearranged into smaller containers so that more residents may appreciate them, also it looks less like "funeral flowers" in the nursing care center.

Funeral Procession Line-up -

Usually the order of the cars is based on the relationship to the deceased. Starting with immediate family, the line-up then continues with the grandchildren, siblings and cousins. We do try to put the Casket Bearers close to the front of the procession so that they are immediately available at the cemetery. If you know the make and/or color of the vehicles, it will make lining up the cars in the parking lot easier.

Graveside Committal Service

- We are firm believers that the committal at the graveside provides a sense of closure. We strongly encourage attendance. We have an audio system available for family members who find getting to the graveside a challenge. They can stay in their automobiles and still hear the services. These people will need to be made known to us as early as possible so that we can be prepared and we can see to it that they are seated in a car close to the front of the procession. We also carry with us several umbrellas in case of rain. We would recommend that families remember to dress for the inclement weather, rain, cold or snow, if it is forecast. In inclement weather conditions, appropriate footwear is

recommended.

Veteran Options - With a copy of the veteran's Honorable Discharge, we are able to obtain the **American flag** from the Veterans Administration for you. It is used at the visitations and/or services either displayed folded or fully open covering the closed casket. If used on a closed casket, the casket spray can not be placed on the flag. It is presented to the nearest next of kin at the cemetery by one of our staff at the conclusion of the committal services. Some families wish more military presence. If you so desire, the Kent American Legion offers to its members (and to other local veterans for a \$50.00 donation) an **Honor Guard** detail at the cemetery. They will provide personnel to remove the American flag from the casket, fold it and present it to the next of kin. They then conduct the rifle salute and play taps. If this option would enhance the services for you, please let us know so we may schedule with them.

Personal Effects

Clothing - We all look more like ourselves in the clothing that we wear day to day. Just as it would be inappropriate to change a person's hairstyle or color, we feel that appropriate clothing is important. One of the most important items is the **eyeglasses**. If they were worn day to day, then they should be strongly considered. Another item often overlooked is the sense of smell. Some people always wear the same **cologne or perfume**. The application of their favorite scent will help make them seem more like themselves. Please keep in mind that there

are some specific requirements for the clothing. A low cut or scoop neckline is usually difficult to work with and thus should be avoided. Sometimes IV's and other medical therapies necessitate a long sleeve to cover bruising or discoloration. A full set of underclothing is also most appropriate. Footwear is optional. A snapshot or two will assist us on providing the proper hair style and cosmetic application.

Jewelry & Other Valuables -

We are aware that some people look much more like themselves wearing their jewelry and we agree that it is fitting and appropriate that they wear it. Most items may be brought in with the clothing and we will place them. Sometimes some items can be brought in at the beginning of the visitation or services. We will gladly assist you in placing these items or you may do this if you wish. Most families have us remove these items prior to burial or cremation. As with the pictures, we will need to know specifically which family member we are to return these items. Please keep in mind that this is a public building and as such very valuable items or family heirlooms should be limited in their exposure and should be carefully watched by all family members. We would appreciate your understanding and cooperation in these circumstances as we are not in the room at this time.

On the Home Front

It is human nature to assist each other in a time of crisis. It is said that one of the major supports we have during this time, is the love of our family and friends. The "grapevine" connections in a community like ours causes the news of a crisis like death to spread rap-

idly, thus both the phone and the doorbell start ringing. You will need to be aware that this is going to happen. When friends ask what they can do to help, one thing they can do is to act as host or hostess, intercepting the phone calls and/or answering the door for you.

Things to remember . . . - We do provide a booklet to assist you in recording the many visitors to your home. It also allows space to **record the gifts of food and flowers that are brought to your home** as a sign of their love and support. There is also space to make a permanent record of the many phone calls to your home, as well as calls the family needs to make.

Grief Ribbons . . . - It is generally said that in times past, the community was smaller and more supportive. We agree with the part about being smaller; however, we feel that people are as supportive and caring as always. Unfortunately one of the problems of a larger community is communication. People that do not know of your loss (outside of the "grapevine") are not responsive. Even in the smaller communities of old, there were traditions of wearing black clothing or armbands to be an outward symbol to the public that there had been a loss and to treat the bereaved gently. We, at Bissler & Sons Funeral Home, have started making a small ribbon, similar to the ribbons seen day in and day out for such causes as cancer and AIDS, that can be worn to signify to the community that you are grieving. Please feel free to stop and get one even if you did not feel the need at the time of the death. Sometimes, the hurt intensifies and therefore the need for the ribbon may be greater a week or two later.

Other concerns - We are also aware that seating can be at a premium in many homes at time like this. We have wooden **folding chairs you may borrow**, as needed. Since we store them off premises, please call and we can set up a time for your designee to come and pick them up (and to return them).

Aftercare

Our continuing commitment to serving you - Over the years, we have come to understand that our major role in funeral service is not only to function as caretakers of the dead, but as compassionate supporters of the bereaved. As we supported the families through the funeral process, we also become acutely aware that most of the bereavement work is done after the conclusion of the services. In 1989, we began an active program of support for our families that provides more support during this time; including **education and the highest quality grief support both individually and through support groups**. We also offer a **Holiday Remembrance Service** on the first Saturday of December to assist families dealing with the "empty" chair at the holidays.

Checklist:

Please call the funeral home to tell us what you will need, so we may have it ready.

Easels _____

Tables _____

Folding Chairs needed at home _____

Pictures, posters and other memorabilia need to be set up by _____ so that we may place the flowers appropriately.

Visitation:

from _____

to _____

on _____

We request the family to be here one half-hour before the beginning of the visitation so they have time to adjust to the environment and the situation.

Services will be held

_____ AM/PM

on _____

at _____ Bissler and Sons Funeral Home

or _____

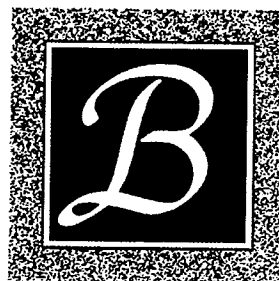
Committal will be held

_____ Immediately following services

or _____ AM/PM

on _____

at _____



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