

Ways to Memorialize and Honor Your Loved One at Home

The following list contains ideas of memorials, rituals, and projects that you can do at home. These rituals can be done in place of a memorial, to honor a birthday or anniversary, or any time you want to connect with your loved one.

Nature:

Plant a tree-

Plant a tree somewhere you can go to watch it grow. Trees are a sign of life and death, and a gentle reminder that life goes on. The tree's roots grow deep into the earth, the branches extend towards the sky, leaves fall off and shed and new ones grow. This also serves as a space to honor and remember your loved one. This can also be done with a special flower or plant.

"The tree of life is growing where the spirit never dies, and the bright light of salvation shines in dark and empty skies." Bob Dylan



Create a rock garden- Choose a space to make a rock garden. When you think of memories of your loved one, you can write them on a rock (sharpies or paint markers work well). You can also draw a small picture, or write short quotes, words, or phrases. This will be a special, visual way to honor and remember your loved one. Others can add their own rocks or it can be somewhere private and all your own.

Create something decorative for your garden or yard- Paint or build a birdhouse, make a wind chime, or paint a large stone and put it in your garden or yard. Use your loved one's favorite colors or sayings, make the birdhouse for their favorite bird, or in their favorite spot of the yard, there are so many possibilities.

Inside the home:

Candle- Buy a candle and light it on special occasions, such as your loved one's birthday, anniversaries, holidays, or just when you are thinking of them. You can also order one online with a saying or quote on it. You can even get creative and add photos or special memorabilia near the candle.

"There are some that bring a light so great to the world that even after they are gone their light remains ."
Unknown

Marble in a jar- Put a jar or small vase in a common area of your home. When you think of your loved one place a marble in the jar. When the jar is full, do an activity that your loved one enjoyed. When the jar is full you can keep it as a decorative reminder of your loved one, or you can empty it and start all over again.

Create an altar to honor your loved one- Find a small table or a space on a shelf. Put reminders of your loved one on it, such as photos, memorabilia, items they enjoyed, funeral programs, poems, anything that reminds you of them. This can be a permanent or temporary fixture in your home. You can go to it to pray, talk to your loved one, or to look at it throughout the day.

**This is an altar created by Lisa Stewart in honor of her husband Al who passed away in 2008. It sits in her living room as a gentle reminder of the person she loves.*



Art:

Create a memory book- This can be made in a scrapbook or notebook. Include items such as the person's birth certificate, funeral program, photos, menus from their favorite restaurants, sympathy cards, images of things they liked to do, and anything else that was important to them. You can do one memory book as a family or you can complete it on your own.

Broken bowl activity- Kintsugi is the Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with gold- built on the idea that in embracing flaws and imperfections, you can create an even stronger, more beautiful piece of art. In grief work, Kintsugi can represent the love we have for the person who has passed and how they will live on in a different way. This serves as a beautiful, honorary piece to remember your loved one.



To do this activity you will need a ceramic or porcelain bowl, cup, or small vase (do not use glass or clay as they shatter into small pieces), a hot glue gun for a clear look **or** epoxy resin and gold mica powder (found in craft stores or on Amazon), small paintbrush (optional), paint/paint markers/sharpie (optional) *Note you can also find kits with all supplies needed on Etsy.

To create the bowl: Break the bowl with a hammer or by throwing it down in a safe area. Gather the pieces. You can write memories, words, or phrases on the pieces (permanent marker or paint markers work well), or leave the pieces as they are. Combine the epoxy resin and gold mica powder as per the instructions and use a paintbrush to apply and glue the bowl, or use a hot glue gun to glue the pieces back together. Let dry and enjoy your beautiful memorial piece of art.

**note- use caution, do this in a safe space away from children and pets.*

**Here is a helpful link that shows how to do this: <https://www.invaluable.com/blog/kintsugi/>*

Sew something special- There are many different ways to use your loved ones' materials to create something new. You can sew a memory quilt or blanket, a simple rectangular pillowcase, or a teddy bear. You can create your own pattern or find a pattern online or in craft stores. Use your loved one's favorite shirts, pajamas, or blankets and make the item as unique as your loved one!



**The photo shows bears made at the Our Lady of Peace Hospice Teddy Bear Workshop. Volunteers work with loved ones to create a bear out of persons' clothing/materials.*

Journaling:

Create a quiet space to remember and write letters to your loved one- Find a quiet space in your home and put out a comfortable chair or some blankets and pillows. Have some envelopes, paper, and pens, or a journal nearby. Use this space to write letters, notes, or memories of your loved one. You can keep the letters and notes in a basket, put them in a "mailbox to heaven" (a space where you put your letters to your loved one) or throw them away. You can also keep the memories in a journal. This private space will be dedicated to remembering your loved one. You can even schedule times to go there and remember.

Start a grief diary- Get a nice notebook or journal and write down your memories, thoughts, and feelings. This diary can be kept private or you can share it with a trusted loved one. If you wish, you may also find guided grief diaries online.

"A personal journal is an ideal environment to 'become.' It is a perfect place for you to think, feel, discover, expand, remember and dream." Brad Wilcox

Donations in your loved ones honor

Special gift- On holidays or birthdays, buy or make your loved one a gift and donate it to a local charity or hospital. For example, you could crochet some hats that your loved one would have liked and donate them to a local homeless shelter, or you could buy a gift to give to Toys for Tots.

Monetary gifts- Make a monetary donation to a charity in your loved one's honor. You can choose a charity or organization that was important to them.