

CHRISTMAS CANDLE CEREMONY FOR A RECENT LOSS

This is a Christmas candle-lighting ceremony for those who have recently lost a loved one. This ceremony acknowledging your loss may help you deal with your grief by giving expression to it. It may help you feel more emotionally free to participate in some of your usual holiday activities, or you may choose to curtail your usual activities. It involves the lighting of five different candles, symbolizing love, memories, grief, courage, and hope.

Arrange five candles and place a “lighting candle” nearby. Light the “lighting candle” and use it to light the others during the ceremony. One person may read while one other person or several other persons light the candles at the appropriate times. Or the script may be divided up, with different persons lighting a candle and also telling what it represents. You may wish to customize the script and make it your own.

“We cannot celebrate this Christmas without remembering someone so special to us that we have lost. So we will light these five candles as a glowing remembrance of our loved one.”

Candle #1: *“The first candle represents our love. We are remembering that there is a special place in our hearts that is reserved for the one we have lost. That special place will be there not just at Christmas, but every day of the year.”*

Candle #2: *“The second candle represents the lasting gift of our memories— the laughter, the hard times, the angry times, the silly little things, and the joy that was brought by the love of the one we have lost.”*

Candle #3: *“The third candle represents our grief. The pain of the loss of our loved one is difficult, but it makes us realize the depth of our relationship.”*

Candle #4: *“The fourth candle represents our courage—courage to face our own personal sorrow, courage to comfort each other in the midst of our own sorrow, and courage to make the changes in our lives that are needed because of this loss.”*

Candle #5: *“The fifth candle represents hope. Christmas is a time of hope when we remember that the birth of God’s Son brought the hope of salvation. Although life on this earth brings the sorrow of death, through faith in Christ we have the wonderful hope of a life after death that has no sorrows.”*

(Adapted from “Holiday Memorial” © 2002 by Sherry L. Williams, in *Holiday Help: A Guide for Holidays and Special Days.*)

