

Sample Order of Service for Green Burial Procession and Burial

This ceremony will be outside, so keep in mind weather and sound. If there is a large group, a portable sound system for all to be able to hear is recommended

Each person is considered an integral part of the service. Because the burial will be outdoors in a natural setting, dress accordingly. The grave will be about 3.5 deep instead of 6 feet, to stay within the aerobic soil zone. The body may be in a pine box or even shrouded. Find out all the details and more in [On the Way to the Green Burial Cemetery: A Guide for Families.](#)

Think about how the deceased will be conveyed to the graveside, and make this a part of the ceremony. Some ideas are a wagon pulled by people or a horse, or the casket or shrouded body (on a board) carried by pallbearers.

Gathering prayer before processional to gravesite

Make the walk to the grave location fully honor <name's> final journey.

After everyone gathers with the casket or shroud, pass out flowers and herbs. Then invite everyone to close their eyes and reflect on <name's> memory, before all set out to walk <him/her> home.

Walk to gravesite

Depending on the style of the burial and the people there, you could sing as a group as you walk.

At the gravesite

Welcome

Acknowledge why you are all here today. To say goodbye to <name> and return <his/her> body to the earth.

Bless the grave

Here you can lay flowers in the grave, or sprinkle oils and herbs. Save some to put on top of the casket or shroud afterward.

Blessing

Here in this peaceful place, at the opening to this natural grave, we prepare to give <name> back to the earth so that <he/she> may become a part of it all.

We return <him/her> to the nature <he/she> loved, to the trees, the grasses, the little creatures and the elements of Mother Earth.

Song or reading

You could bring a song on your mobile phone to play here. This is also a good spot to read a poem or prayer. Find some here.

Eulogy

Here is where someone may have written the story of his/her life.

Poem

Here is where you can insert a poem, prayer or reading. You might take a look at suggestions in [‘At the Commemorative Event.’](#)

Remembrance

This could be a time to go around the circle with a short memory. You could prompt folks with the question, “What did <name> teach you?”

Blessing

I lay my head to rest and, in doing so,

I lay at your feet

the faces I have seen,

the voices I have heard,

the words I have spoken,

the hands I have touched,

the joys I have shared.

I lay them at your feet

and, in doing so,

I lay my head to rest.

(A Cornish blessing)

Lower the casket or shroud in the grave

Now is the time to lower <name> into the earth.

<Name>,

go onward from this world

carried gently by the greater

hands who made you

We stand here hearts torn open in love and loss

As we let you go now, borne into a deeper understanding

Just as the dark earth, opened now beneath the sky,

Will soon close its safe arms around you

And you will become part of a greater embrace

Everything pulled apart now will be brought back together

Everything aching and hurt will be comforted and soothed

Everything in chaos will find beauty and rest

All shall be healed

All shall be healed.

Invitation to close the grave

Have people lay their flowers and herbs on top of the casket or shroud. Then invite whomever would like to close the grave. They may just want to put a shovel full of earth on it, and the cemetery workers will finish the job.

Blessing or Prayer

Goodbye <name>.

You are now set free in our hearts and memories

and we give thanks for all that <you> gave.'

Final thoughts

We've come together to say goodbye to <name>, to return <him/her> to the Earth.

Thank you all for coming.

Let us proceed in peace and yield to The Mother that which we must yield.

Recessional to home

All leave.