

## FIND WAYS TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONE DURING THE HOLIDAYS



*What feels comforting is just as unique as grief  
so choose the ones that feel right to you and your family*

- ✓ Light a “celebration of life” or memorial candle. You may want to consider their favorite color or scent when choosing a candle.
- ✓ Go to the cemetery with holiday balloons, flowers or notes
- ✓ Give someone an unexpected special gift in memory of your loved one
- ✓ Plant a memorial tree or flower bed
- ✓ Volunteer to help a charity in their memory
- ✓ Create your own memorial service
- ✓ Memory stocking, memory box or other special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure.
- ✓ Write memories at Thanksgiving, wrap them in a box and read them at Christmas
- ✓ Play their favorite game
- ✓ Adopt a family in memory of your loved one
- ✓ Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them
- ✓ Make a memorial ornament, wreath or other decoration in honor of your loved one
- ✓ Play your loved one’s favorite holiday music
- ✓ Pull out old photo albums or family movies and watch on the holiday
- ✓ Make a dish they used to make or make a meal with all their favorite dishes. Food can be a great spark for talking about memories and stories.
- ✓ Leave an empty seat at the table and set a place setting. Decorate it with a single flower, poem, card or memento.

- ✓ On strips of paper, write memories that family members have of the person who died or special gifts that person left with you. Loop the strips to create a chain.
- ✓ Share an important lesson you learned from the loved one
- ✓ Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity
- ✓ Make a large family photo collage, including pictures with the deceased loved one. Display the collage along with holiday decorations in a special place, perhaps by the tree or the dinner table.
- ✓ Make a toast at dinner in honor of their memory. As you make the toast, give everyone at the table a chance to say something, or perhaps share what they miss about not having them there for the holiday. If you want to, make the toast as if you are directly speaking to the person. For example, “Merry Christmas, honey. We sure miss you. You always made the best pumpkin pie...”
- ✓ Light a special candle and place it on the dinner table. After everyone sits down, acknowledge that the candle is being lit to honor the life of your deceased loved one. You may want to add a sentiment such as: “His/Her love will burn brightly in our hearts forever.” Perhaps you would like to say a special prayer.
- ✓ A few days before the holiday, set up a small table. This will be a “memory table.” On the table are placed various remembrances of the deceased: a photo, a card from the deceased, or perhaps a gift or memento received from the loved one. These memory tables are great because contributors to the table do not have to say much. The objects speak for themselves, but can also stimulate warm conversations about the person.
- ✓ Write or draw about past holidays. Create stories about past holiday memories.
- ✓ Write a poem about the person. Share these stories, pictures, poems, and memories over hot chocolate or eggnog on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, or Christmas morning.