



A Time to Remember™

Story, Information, and Reflection Questions

An Ebook by Arbor Memorial Inc.

**VERSION 6C
FOR FINAL PROOFING**



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A Time to Remember™

Arbor's Time to Remember™ events put your story at the forefront

You know you want a non-traditional funeral.

Traditional funerals, conventional religious services, memorials and even funeral receptions feel too long and structured. However, you think it'd be nice for people to have a place to come together to share their memories and begin their healing journeys.

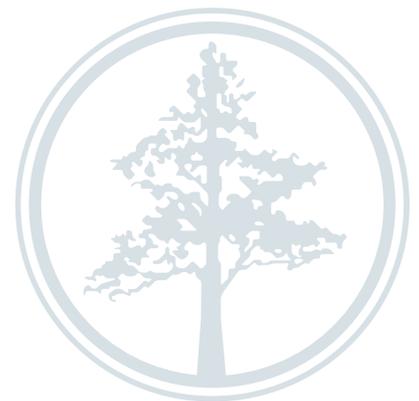
That's why Arbor offers Time to Remember events as a fully customizable, modern alternative.

Our experienced funeral directors are also qualified event planners which means they bring an innovative, creative approach to the event and can flexibly personalize it so it's an extension of you and your family's values. We're here to help you reflect on your story and make sense of the event style that best reflects you and your loved ones.

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to do a Time to Remember.

Rather than a set structure, there are generally 3 main elements:

The Send -off, Cuisine and Memento.





The 3 main elements of the event:

1. The Send-off

For a Time to Remember, our funeral homes can be transformed into any space: sports bars, bingo halls, bakeries, and even discos. The options are truly endless. Guests will arrive to a themed ambiance that reflects what you loved during your lifetime.

Perhaps your favourite songs play in the background and all your sports memorabilia are shared with people gathering together. Friends may be invited to make a speech or share a story if they feel moved to share, and there's plenty of natural tears and laughter. Finally, they make a toast with your favourite beverage.

A send-off can also include spiritual elements, a family-only visitation, or private burial or interment. Every aspect, from the overall theme to the details, is up to you.

2. Cuisine

Food is often at the core of a Time to Remember and what sets it apart from other traditional types of events. The quality is top-notch and can be as fun and reflective of your personality as a professional outdoor barbecue. Especially for themes that revolve around a person's love of cooking, there are often food-related activities involved, like personalizing a pizza. Guests really relax and come together around the food.

3. Memento

Traditional funerals tend to send guests home with a card. Time to Remember mementos are often more creative, including ideas like sending everyone home with a baseball glove in hopes that they'll pick up the sport you loved so much, a chili recipe attached to a wooden cooking spoon, or a USB with all your favourite travel photos. These more personal, tangible mementos bring a lot of comfort to loved ones who feel you staying close.

The conversation around Time to Remember

In preparation for this Ebook, we spoke with Samantha Stokotelny, a funeral director and event planner who is extremely passionate about the power of Time to Remember events. Here are some of her own words on the subject:

“We want people living and thinking about how we each want to be remembered. Our story and how we want it to be told. It’s important for the people who are left behind. It’s okay to celebrate their life and to have that person’s blessing. My ability and privilege to have that conversation is a gift.”

We hope this sample of the conversations Samantha has with families every day will help you feel comfortable with the collaborative planning process for a Time to Remember and inspire you to consider one of these creative events. Additionally, we offer questions for reflection on page 10 and 11 where you can explore the question: **how do I want my story to be told?**

or:

how would my loved one want to be remembered?



Time to Remember Planning: A story based on real conversations



She'd never wanted a fussy funeral or to leave all the decisions up to them.

This was the time to get it all settled...

“Ann?”

The woman looked up from her freshly poured coffee. She and her daughter Min had been greeted by a very cheerful receptionist and settled into the sitting room only a few moments ago. “Is it time already?”

“Yes, I didn’t want to keep you waiting long,” said the tall, smiling woman. “My name’s Jennifer, we spoke on the phone this Thursday.”

“Yes, nice to meet you in person.”

Ann reached out. They shook hands, then Jennifer shook with Min as well, saying, “I’m a funeral director and event planner here at Arbor. Here, let me carry your coffee and cookies into the room for you, ladies. We can talk privately there.”

Ann’s daughter supported her elbow as she rose slowly from her nook in the couch. Min might think she was helping her, but Ann had really planned this meeting to give her children peace of mind. She’d never wanted a fussy funeral or to leave all the decisions up to them. This was the time to get it all settled right in place. When it was time for her to go, she wanted her children to be taken care of and to focus on their healing.

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“You matter so much to everyone.

People will want to talk and have some kind of closure.”



In the private room, Jennifer set down the coffee and pulled out a chair.

“Please, take a seat.”

“Thank you dear,” said Ann. She got comfortably in place. “As I mentioned on the phone, I want this to be as quick a process as possible. I already have some clear decisions made.”

“I understand that, Ann. Let’s start there. What do you envision?”

“The most important thing is what I don’t want. I don’t want any long and drawn out funeral service like my own parents had. My mother’s lasted 3 days. I’d just like for you to manage my burial and that’s all.”

“Mom we’ve talked about this,” said Min, leaning on the table and nearly crushing a cookie. “That’s not enough. You matter so much to everyone. People will want to talk and have some kind of closure.”

“Well, I’ve already agreed that people can meet at a restaurant if they’d like.”

Jennifer put a hand on her chin. “So, let me share some of my experience with you Ann. I hear you when you say you want your final arrangements to be simple. If that’s your priority, it’s important to remember that with a restaurant, someone will still need to make decisions about invitations and RSVPs, food, the pricing, and the reservation.”

“That’s true,” Ann nodded.

“While our location is a funeral home, it’s also an event space, so we could actually host a reunion like that here but make all those plans in advance so no one is making decisions on the spot.”

“Dear, wouldn’t that just be a funeral reception?”

“That’s a good question - it can actually be completely different,” smiled Jennifer. “We offer a type of event here called a Time to Remember which is fully customizable, unlike a reception. It’s a great non-traditional option for get-togethers after someone passes away. It can even be as short as a restaurant reunion, like a 2-hour window.”

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Jennifer handed a booklet to Min who opened it up so both mother and daughter could see.

“There’s still a send off, but it can actually be symbolic. For example, Min might make a toast right on the hour. There’s also plenty of good food, and special mementos. So, for example, what’s your favourite hobby, Ann?”

An image of the morning’s carrot cake came to mind. “I like baking.”

“Lovely! So, here’s some possibilities that might get you imagining. We could set the event after dinnertime, from 7 to 9, so that everyone comes for dessert. We could make our event space look like a bakery, and have freshly baked cookies, cakes, and your favourite type of coffee ready when guests arrive. Actually, we could even set up a cupcake station so people would choose their favourite flavour of cupcake and decorate them with frosting and sprinkles. Any kids would love that.”

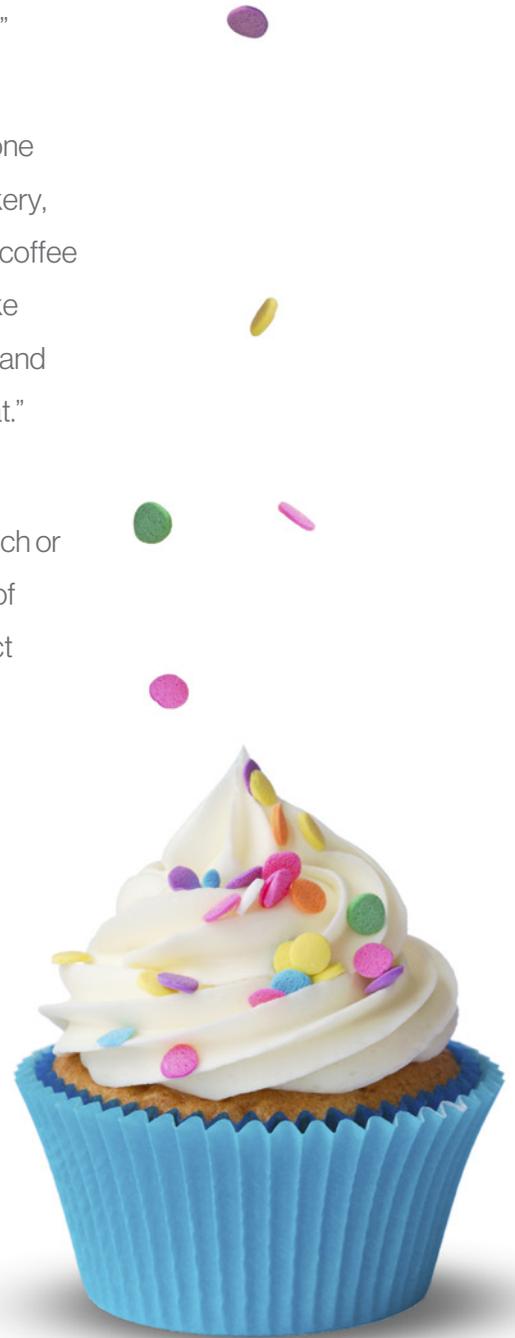
“My daughter definitely does,” nodded Min.

“Then,” continued Jennifer, “Guests could be invited to give a speech or share their favourite stories. And around the room, there’d be lots of photos, and some of your favourite cookbooks for people to reflect on. As a memento, each guest could be sent home with your signature dessert on a recipe card.”

“Maybe the Snickerdoodles,” Min said, smiling at her mom.

Ann considered the idea. She blinked back a little water from her eyes at the idea of her recipe going home with her grandkids to keep close. “That might be nice. But could guests do something more than just a speech though? My grandson’s a really good singer and I’d love for him to share a song, when the time comes.”

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***“We’d share the story
of your life and how you
want to be remembered...”***

***It’d be my honour to
help you plan this.”***

“Absolutely. We even have a full sound system,” said Jennifer. “Actually, something that I personally find incredibly touching about a Time to Remember is that tributes tend to be very organic. In a traditional service, there’s usually a planned reading or eulogy. A Time to Remember can have those too, but the floor’s open so that loved ones can share organically, and it invites people into a sort of therapeutic storytelling process. The amount of laughter that comes out of some anecdotes is so healing.”

Ann took a sip of her coffee, smiling a little. She could imagine which story Tenzin, her best friend, would tell.

“Mom, I think that’d be much better than trying to organize something at a restaurant on our own. They have the space meant for it here.”

“Yes, I like the sound of it,” Ann agreed. “It still sounds like a short little party.”

Jennifer nodded, “It absolutely can be.”

“I just thought it couldn’t be done in a funeral home,” said Ann.

“That’s why I love my job. We really get to be creative with these kinds of events. There’s lots of families, from many backgrounds by the way, who don’t really want a traditional funeral. Here, I get to offer people both options.”

Min reached her hand out, a finger raised. “I have a question. Could there still be a visitation?”

“Definitely, the family can have a private visitation, and a burial or interment. That’s another benefit to holding the Time to Remember and doing everything on-site, in one place. I can work alongside you both to make sure the event really reflects your wishes,” she said and looked gently at Ann. “We’d share the story of your life and how you want to be remembered. It’d be my honour to help you plan this.”

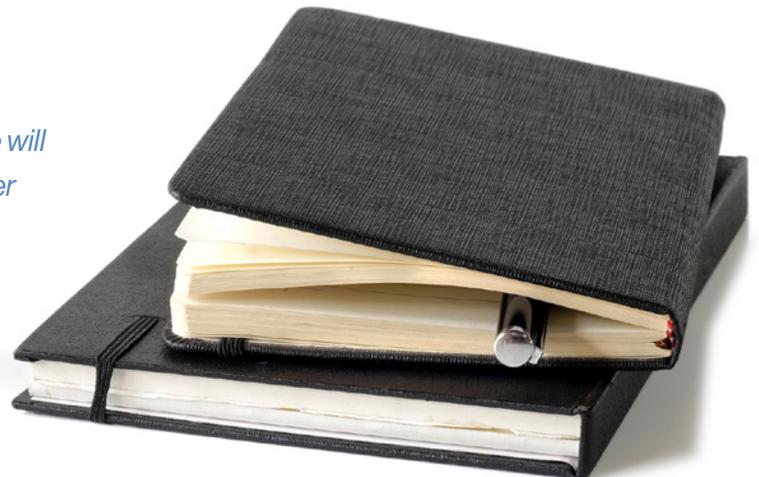
“Okay,” Ann took a long sip and set down her empty cup. “I want to hear more about the food options because that’s most important to me. But before anything else, could I have another coffee?”

All three ladies smiled. “Sure thing.” ■

What's my story? How do I want to be remembered?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who inspires me?
2. What do I really value?
How do I spend most of my time? Am I okay with spending most of my time there?
4. What's my favourite food?
5. Who would I love to chat with more often?
6. Do I have a meaningful or fun hobby?
a) What hobby did I love as a child? Consider – what it would be like to explore it again?
7. Are my childhood dreams still my dreams today?
8. What would I do if money and time were no object?
9. What makes me stressed?
10. What's my most prized possession?
11. What calms me down?
12. Maya Angelou has a quote:
"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
How do I want people to feel when they think about me?



How would they want to be remembered?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who inspired them?
2. What did they really value?
3. How did they spend most of their time?
4. What was their favourite food?
5. Who did they love to chat with?
6. Did they have a meaningful or fun hobby?
7. What was their most prized possession?
8. What made them feel calm? Connected?
9. What was the biggest lesson they taught you by living their life?
10. Maya Angelou has a quote:

*"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how
you made them feel."*

How did they make you feel when you were together?



A Time to Remember™

A Time to Remember: Get in touch



The possibilities for a Time to Remember are endless. Each event is as unique as your personal story. The Arbor family across Canada is prepared to answer your questions and help you plan a fulfilling Time to Remember event.

**You can find the Arbor branch nearest you
at our online Location Finder:**

arbormemorial.ca/en/locations



Learn more by visiting our website at:

timetoremember.ca



Or call us at 1-888-700-7766

