

## A service to mark a miscarriage

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### **P** reparations

*Set a time and place for the service, and invite participants: mother, father, family and friends who were supportive to the parents during the pregnancy and loss. Invite parents and others to bring mementos, such as ultrasound pictures and baby clothes.*

*Invite all participants to bring a symbol of the lost pregnancy, something they may wish to bury. Line a basket with a cloth or small blanket to collect symbols.*

*Select something to plant: a flowering plant, a shrub, a tree. Gather planting supplies: a shovel, water, fertilizer. Decide where the plant will grow and dig a hole big enough for the symbols and the plant.*

*Have plenty of tissues on hand.*

*Arrange for music (live or recorded) to play quietly as people gather.*

*If you plan to conclude with a meal, ask participants to bring soup and bread to share.*

### **Music for gathering**

#### **Welcome**

#### **Opening prayer**

*The pastor prays.*

*“Loving Mother/Father God, we ask that your presence embrace us today. We come with heavy hearts as we gather with [names of parents], to mourn the loss of their child, [name of child]. The new life you gave brought promise and joy to them, and they had already begun to plan for the ways this child would change them. Suddenly that life ended and they are left with an empty space in their homes and their hearts. We share their confusion, their sadness, and their anger that such a fragile life with so much possibility was taken so suddenly. We are helpless to know how to find answers to our questions. Be with us as we lay this young life and its possibilities to rest. Amen.”*

## **Song**

*The group sings one of these songs, or another of the parents' choosing.*  
My shepherd will supply my need  
Children of the heavenly Father

## **Scripture**

*A reader reads one or more of these texts, or others of the parent's choosing.*

Psalm 139:1–6, 13–16

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

John 14:1–4

## **Naming the Loss**

*If parents have indicated in advance that they would like to speak, invite them to talk about their experiences with this child, about their hopes and feelings about the pregnancy and the miscarriage, and about the mementos they have gathered. If they prefer not to speak, observe a time of silence, or have someone read a statement that the parents have written or that in some way conveys their feelings.*

*The parents place in the basket the symbols they plan to bury.*

*Others may speak briefly, offering their memories and expressions of sympathy.*

*Participants place in the basket the symbols they plan to bury.*

*The pastor prays.*

*“We name this loss in your presence, loving Lifegiver. We looked forward to having this child in our midst, and we thank you for the joy this brief life brought to us. We now ask for your strength and healing in our time of sorrow. Amen.”*

## **Burial**

*The group moves outdoors, taking the memorial plant and the symbols wrapped in the cloth or blanket. The pastor says:*

*“We bury these symbols to acknowledge that we have been touched by this young life, we have loved and been loved in our hope. We give this life back to God, recalling that Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has overcome death.”*

*The symbols in their blanket are placed in the hole where the tree will be planted.*

## **Planting**

*The pastor says:*

“We plant this tree in memory of the child who came to [parents’ names], and as a symbol of the new life we hope for and ask God to give them.”

*The tree is planted.*

## **Prayer**

*Participants link hands in a circle around the tree. The pastor prays.*

“As we encircle this memory tree, we know we are encircled by your love, gracious God. Help [parents’ names] release this little life back to your care. May the tree that we plant today grow strong and bear fruit and be a symbol of the new life that you provide to each one of us, especially to [parents’ names]. Amen.”

## **Song**

*The group sings one of these songs, with appropriate verses.*

Kum ba yah (someone’s crying, singing, praying)

God is so good (God heals our pain, God brings us life)

## **Affirmation of life**

*The group shares a simple meal of soup and bread, or participants give parents a hug or words of sympathy and affirmation before departing.*