



### OUR CELEBRANTS

Our funeral celebrants are ready to give guidance as needed and are able to prepare, conduct and take charge of an appropriately dignified public occasion. Coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, they share an ability to empathise with the bereaved and are considerate and attentive listeners, sensitive to the family's wishes.

All Humanist Ceremonies celebrants are trained, accredited, insured, and quality assured by Humanists UK and abide by our code of practice.

### FINDING A CELEBRANT

It's important to get in touch with the celebrant as early as possible to confirm availability on your chosen date and time.

Most funeral directors have worked with our celebrants and will be able to contact one on your behalf – but do check they provide an accredited Humanists UK celebrant to ensure you benefit from our training, expertise, and quality assurance.

Alternatively, you can contact a celebrant directly. Our website [humanistceremonies.org.uk/funerals](http://humanistceremonies.org.uk/funerals) lists all those who provide funerals in your area or you can phone Humanists UK for advice.

If you are planning your own funeral, please ensure that whoever is likely to be organising it knows your wishes; it is often not enough to request it in your will as this may not be read in time to make the arrangements.

"My grandchild's death was appalling – his funeral was touching and healing, professional and caring."

"The most personal ceremony I've ever attended."

# Humanist Ceremonies

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

**Humanists** are people who shape their own lives in the here and now, because we believe it's the only life we have. We make sense of the world through logic, reason, and evidence, and always seek to treat those around us with warmth, understanding, and respect.

**Humanists UK** advances free thinking and promotes humanism to create a tolerant society where rational thinking and kindness prevail. Our work brings non-religious people together to develop their own views, helping people be happier and more fulfilled in the one life we have. For over 120 years, we've been the leading provider of meaningful, personalised, non-religious ceremonies.

**Humanist Ceremonies™** is the network of non-religious celebrants trained, accredited, insured, and quality-assured by Humanists UK.

We are the UK's longest standing provider of non-religious ceremonies and provide individually-prepared ceremonies to mark important occasions in life such as the arrival of a child, weddings and funerals. 98% of feedback received awards us 5/5.

*Meaningful non-religious ceremonies just for you*

 Humanists UK

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[humanistceremonies.org.uk](http://humanistceremonies.org.uk)



Registered Charity No. 285987

Sep 2017

# Humanist Ceremonies

## FUNERALS

### BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO SAY

*goodbye*

### AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE LIVED

Find out more at  
[humanistceremonies.org.uk/funerals](http://humanistceremonies.org.uk/funerals)

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## Humanist funerals offer an appropriate and fitting way to honour a life with warmth, sensitivity and meaning.

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A funeral or memorial ceremony is an important time for family and friends to focus their thoughts on the person who has died. But for those who aren't religious, a church or other religious service can feel inappropriate.

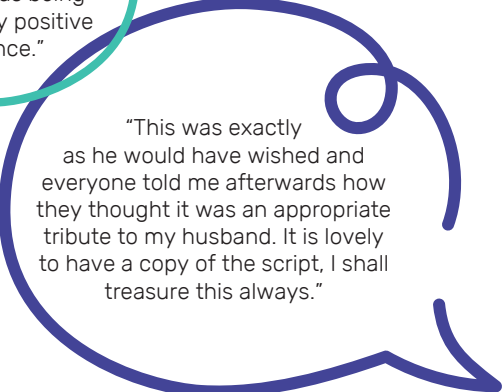
A humanist funeral brings people together to express and share sadness but also to celebrate the life lived in a way that is simple and sincere.

Non-religious funerals have the same status in law as religious ones. Our humanist celebrants conduct many thousands each year and they are rapidly growing in popularity as people discover they provide such a welcome and fitting alternative.

Friends and family greatly appreciate that each humanist funeral is individually written, giving you the flexibility to create an occasion that best fits who your loved one really was and what they meant to those around them.



"The funeral is still talked of amongst my family and friends as being a wonderfully positive experience."



"This was exactly as he would have wished and everyone told me afterwards how they thought it was an appropriate tribute to my husband. It is lovely to have a copy of the script, I shall treasure this always."

### CHOOSING A HUMANIST FUNERAL

The type of funeral or memorial ceremony you choose must be right for the person who has died and for their close family. It can be a great comfort to have provided the type of ceremony that the person who has died would have wanted and to have remembered them as the unique individual they truly were.



We recognise that some people may be concerned at the prospect of a non-religious ceremony and our funerals are carefully written to ensure they are inclusive of all present. They usually include a short period for quiet reflection that can give anyone who wants it an opportunity for silent prayer, but which everyone can use to think about the person who has died. People often say afterwards how moving, sincere, and fitting they found the ceremony and how much they appreciated its authenticity.

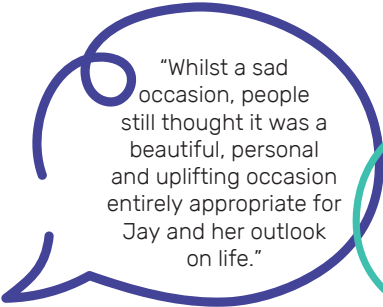
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### EXAMPLE ORDER OF CEREMONY

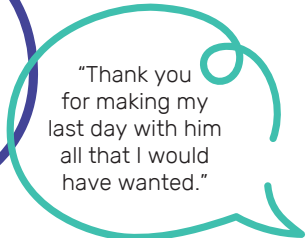
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Though every humanist funeral is unique, a typical ceremony might be structured as follows:

- Introductory music
- Words of welcome
- Thoughts on life and death from a non-religious perspective
- The tribute – an outline of the life and personality of the person who has died
- Readings of poetry and prose
- Reflection – a few moments for private thoughts about the person who has died, either in silence or accompanied by music
- The committal – when the curtains are closed or coffin lowered
- Closing words – including thanks on your behalf
- Final music



"Whilst a sad occasion, people still thought it was a beautiful, personal and uplifting occasion entirely appropriate for Jay and her outlook on life."



"Thank you for making my last day with him all that I would have wanted."

### PLANNING THE CEREMONY

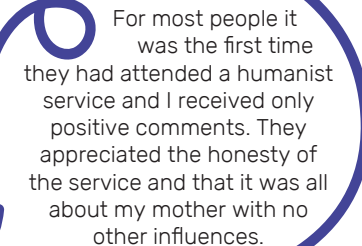
It is helpful for the celebrant to get to know as much as possible about the person who has died and so they will want to meet with you and perhaps others closely affected by the death. Together you can plan a suitable way to remember your loved one.

Each ceremony is unique even if the format it is built upon may seem quite simple. Members of the family or friends can participate with a reading, or poem or with their own tribute. This all helps make the occasion more personal. Music can be both poignant and comforting and is another way of reflecting the personality of the individual who has died.

Most venues have facilities for playing music and the celebrant can always suggest what may be appropriate. Your celebrant will then prepare an individual ceremony that draws all these elements together. After the funeral you will be given a printed copy of the final script.

### FEES

The funeral director will normally handle the celebrant's payment and include it on the bill as one of the 'disbursements'. If no funeral director is being used, arrangements can be made with the celebrant directly.



For most people it was the first time they had attended a humanist service and I received only positive comments. They appreciated the honesty of the service and that it was all about my mother with no other influences.

You may also like to buy a copy of Humanists UK's book, *Funerals Without God*. This is available from our website and includes practical advice on music and readings and a selection of sample ceremonies.

