

PUBLICITY



Publicize your program as much as possible, stressing that all families who have experienced the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild are welcome, as are friends. Because the terms Worldwide Candle Lighting® and The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting® are registered trademarks, all organizations and groups holding a candle lighting that are not TCF Chapters, are asked to publicize that the service is held “In Conjunction with The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting®.” Whether or not they are affiliated with TCF, those holding a formal candle lighting are asked to fill out an online submission form on The Compassionate Friends website, www.compassionatefriends.org, to provide information so that it can be posted prominently with all other known candle lightings. This allows those who visit TCF’s national website and wish to attend a candle lighting in your area to know of your event.

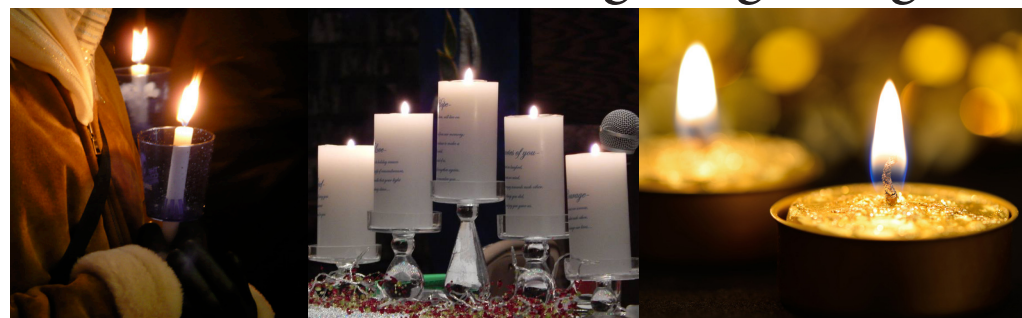
Contact interested local groups, churches, and funeral homes and ask those that publish a newsletter to include information on your event. Contact a variety of media including newspapers, television, and local talk show radio. Some stations may broadcast a public service announcement about your service at no charge. Call the station to ask for details and format requirements. Include information on your website if you have one.

Stress in your publicity materials that this is a remembrance program rather than a Christmas or holiday program.

Invite the media to attend, but establish ground rules. Do not permit the media to move about and attempt to interview participants during the vigil itself, or be otherwise disruptive. Designate a volunteer to greet and work with media who arrive. You may wish to have a simple press packet available. Respect the wishes of any participants who may ask not to be photographed.



Suggestions to Help Plan a Worldwide Candle Lighting® Program



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting® is held the second Sunday in December at 7:00 p.m. for one hour local time around the globe. It commemorates and honors children, siblings, and grandchildren of all ages who have died from any cause and transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is TCF's gift to the bereavement community. By holding an organized candle lighting service, allied organizations and all caring groups show unity by joining with TCF and its many chapters in remembering the lives of the precious children of this world who are no longer with us.

This brochure is designed to help you plan an organized memorial service with the knowledge that it can be as simple or as involved as you wish. It can last fifteen minutes or an hour and accommodate twenty people or two thousand. We do this to honor our children, "that their light may always shine®."

PLANNING A PROGRAM



Choose a Worldwide Candle Lighting® (WCL) memorial service chairperson who will organize the candle lighting program. First, seek as many volunteers as possible to help carry out the details of the event. Planning should start as early in the fall as possible.

Make a simple planning timeline:

September—Assemble a committee, finalize location, order candles and safety holders, create a detailed checklist.

October—Plan program with committee and select readings, poems, and presenters; arrange for music (whether recorded, live, or both); determine and arrange sound system needs; prepare flyer for communication with the public including a map to the program location.

November—Write and deliver, e-mail, or fax press releases to local media; send invitations to all persons who may be interested in attending.

December—Re-confirm location, sound system, music, and presenters and print program.

Determining a location:

For organizations and formal groups, a Worldwide Candle Lighting service can be held at the normal meeting location (if large enough), a church, or another location with public meeting facilities. In areas where climate allows, an appropriate outside public area such as a park, commons, or town square often draws more people than an inside venue. Permission to use a park or other location should be requested and reservation made early in the year to ensure availability. Consider event liability insurance, which is relatively inexpensive. For TCF Chapters, please contact the National Office to request event liability insurance, which is provided free of charge.

Determine if the facility will allow the use of lit candles. The use of battery operated candles has become very popular and may be an idea to consider. This is also a good alternative option for young children or for those who are a little unsteady.

IDEAS TO INCLUDE



Ask all those who are involved in planning to meet at the program location one to two hours ahead of time, so all preparations will be completed before the first guests arrive. A calm and quiet atmosphere will enhance the focus of the service on the children.

Music, whether live or recorded, played softly as people gather and wait for the program to begin is always a nice touch. If live music is desired, make sure to arrange for it well in advance as many musicians get booked very fast during the holiday season.

Distribute candles with safety holders and a program as people arrive. If the service is held inside, tables may be set up where pictures or mementos of each child can be displayed.

Plan a program of readings and poetry combined with appropriate music. If you include in the printed program song lyrics or poems, make sure to obtain permission from the copyright holder.

Light a single larger pillar candle, or several smaller candles, at 7:00 p.m. to represent the uniting of your service with candle lightings around the world. Your committee should begin to assist in the lighting of the audience candles, this will vary according to the attendance of the program.

At this point in the program, the names of all children being remembered by those present are read. Depending on the size of the audience, consider the following options:

- Create a slideshow presentation with pictures of the children, siblings, and grandchildren.
- Go around the room and have a parent or family member speak the name of each child the family is remembering.

Mention in general terms that the Worldwide Candle Lighting is held to remember all children, siblings, and grandchildren who have died.

Plan a time for socializing after the program, as people often need to calm their emotions and share their thoughts. Have plans in place to provide light refreshments, including coffee, punch, and/or soft drinks, as well as cookies and snack-type items.

At some candle lightings, small remembrance gifts which may include the year and name of the event are given to all who attend.

Should an emergency arise during the evening, have a cell phone handy to call 911, as well as a fire extinguisher.

