

Obituary Writing Worksheet

A Gift to Your Family

Writing an obituary in advance can be a gift to your family. It allows you to provide accurate information, identify the people and things that matter most to you, and relieve your loved ones of having to make these decisions while grieving.

This worksheet is intended to help your family prepare an obituary. You do not need to answer every question, and you may write as much or as little as you wish.

1. Basic Information

Full legal name:

Date and place of birth: _____

Date of death: _____

Place of death:

Age at death: _____

Where did you live at the time of death?

2. Family of Origin

Father's name:

Mother's name (with maiden):

Parents' place of residence or origin, if significant:

Brothers and sisters:

Are any parents, brothers, or sisters deceased?

3. Marriage and Family

Spouse's name:

Date and place of marriage:

Previous spouse(s), if appropriate:

Children:

Grandchildren:

Great-grandchildren:

Other family members or loved ones you would especially like mentioned:

4. Education and Work

Schools attended:

Degrees, certifications, or special training:

Occupation(s):

Employers/businesses:

Years or approximate period of employment:

Military service:

5. Faith and Church Life

Church/parish affiliation:

When did you become a member of the parish?

Church ministries, organizations, or activities:

Other ways your Catholic faith has been important in your life:

Are there particular Catholic organizations, saints, devotions, or ministries that you would like mentioned?

6. Community and Service

What organizations, groups, or causes have been important to you?

Community service or volunteer activities:

Civic organizations:

Professional organizations:

Fraternal or charitable organizations:

7. The Things That Made Your Life Yours

An obituary should be more than a list of dates and accomplishments.

What were your hobbies and interests?

What did you enjoy doing with family and friends?

Favorite places, activities, or traditions:

What would you most like people to remember about you?

What are you most grateful for in your life?

8. A Few Words in Your Own Voice

If you could leave your family and friends with a few words, what would you want them to know?

Is there a Scripture verse, prayer, quotation, or saying that has been especially meaningful to you?

9. Catholic Language for the Obituary

If desired, consider including language such as:

“[Name], a member of [Parish], died peacefully on [date] at the age of [age].”

“A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at [time] on [date] at [church].”

“A visitation will be held at [location]...”

“Interment will follow at [cemetery].”

If appropriate, the obituary may also mention the person's sacramental and parish life, such as:

- Baptized Catholic
- Member of a particular parish
- Longtime parishioner
- Eucharistic minister
- Religious education teacher
- Knights of Columbus member

- Catholic school graduate
- Member of a parish ministry
- Other service to the Church

The obituary does not need to list every parish activity. Choose those that best tell the story of the person's life.

10. Those Who Preceded Me in Death

Family members or loved ones whom you would like identified as having preceded you in death:

11. Those Who Survive Me

Family members and loved ones whom you would like identified as surviving you:

Are there other people or groups who should be acknowledged?

12. Memorials

If you would like people to make memorial gifts, where should they be directed?

Organization and Reason for choosing this organization:

Alternative: “In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to...”

A Final Thought

An obituary is not merely a notice that someone has died. It is a brief account of a life that was given, received, shared, and ultimately entrusted back to God.

You may wish to write your own obituary—or at least provide your family with the information from which they can write it. Doing so can spare them difficult questions during a time of grief and ensure that the story they tell is an accurate reflection of the life you have lived.

“I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live.”

— John 11:25