



How can we make our time meaningful?

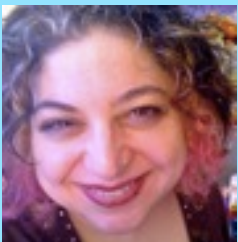
Information and resources for bereaved parents about the option to bring your stillborn or deceased baby home.

Though it can be hard to fully comprehend the long term reality at first, these few days we have with baby after he or she has died, can be a precious time for creating tangible memories. It is understandable that in some modern society settings, we don't know what we would do with this time. Maybe we've never cared for our dead at home before, and in some cases, no one in our family ever remembers having this kind of ceremonial time. So while it can seem an odd opportunity at first, these can be precious moments and there are many options for how you can spend this time together. The following are just a few ideas, but we hope it gives you some ideas, along with some permission to create your own list of activity and rituals that you'd like to do with your baby. You have permission to make this time, at home, with baby, as special, sacred, and unique to your family as you wish!

- It might be a natural response that people will want to come visit, or you may have to really invite others to let them know it is okay for them to come have time at home with you and baby. Whatever the case, if visitors are coming, consider having a guest book for visitors to sign and leave little notes on the way in and out of the house.
- Invite your visitors to bring photos of their own beloved dead to display in a special area in your house for the day or to be placed around the baby during a memorial gathering time. Invite people to share the stories of their family tree that include these beloved dead and invite them to begin to include baby in the family tree now, too.
- Singing lullabies or any other special songs with family and friends surrounding baby can be a meaningful bonding time for all. You can also just sing while you hold baby in your nursery space. Take the time to rock in that special chair with baby and to sing to him or her. You'd been planning to do that all along, so there is no reason to not create that memory together now anyway.
- Give each visitor a chance to tell their perspective or version of baby's story. Invite them to express their love and loss, their way of seeing baby as part of the story of your family or friendship.
- Do any spiritual rituals you'd like to do: prayer, chant, meditation, lighting candles or burning cedar or sage, offer blessings. You can have lots of small votive candles available with sharpie markers for visitors. They can write a message on the candle container and light a candle for baby.
- If you had a belly cast done while pregnant, take time to photo baby laying in the belly hollow of the cast. Maybe take time to paint different symbols on the back part of the cast around baby. The paintings on the front being baby's life story... the paintings on the hollow side being baby's death story.
- If you have yard or garden space for tree planting, invite others over for a ceremony around the planting. Have baby with you as others are doing the planting. Maybe make part of the ceremony, that you clip a small bit of baby's hair to plant with the root ball of the tree.
- Spend time with baby in the nursery, in the rocking chair, in the sun room or garden. Take time in all the places where you want to make physical, tangible time and memories with baby.

- Host the memorial service at home. Open an invitation for each family member and friend attending to hold baby. This is the last time friends and family have, too, to physically interact with baby.
- Open an invitation to parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends to read books out loud with someone holding baby. The books that were specially bought when we thought baby would be home alive are so meaningful to some. This is the time to have physical presence of baby while sharing the book.
- Invite visitors to write notes for baby. Either save the notes for the baby book or pin the notes to baby blanket that will wrap baby when buried or cremated.
- Ask for help and company. If there is a particular caregiver who has been wonderful to you and your family during your pregnancy, life, and death of your child, ask them if they have ideas and would be willing to spend time with you at home with baby. This might be a hypno-birthing therapist, a pre-natal yoga instructor, a doula, a midwife, a friend or relative who has been there for you all along the way.

Please make this time at home with baby as special as you need and want it to be. There can never be enough memory making, so make the most of each precious moment.



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For more answers to your questions about bringing stillborn and deceased babies home, go to <http://whenyourbabydies.com/q/>