

# **Model Interfaith Caregiving Service**

The National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) is a not-for-profit membership organization striving to improve the overall quality of life of America's family caregivers, those individuals who provide care for a loved one who is chronically ill or disabled.

Because the faith community has a special role to play in helping and supporting caregiving families, NFCA is launching an effort to raise awareness within the faith community about the needs of family caregivers. The program has two components: a religious service to honor caregivers within the congregation/parish setting and a pamphlet of ideas (from easy/no cost to more comprehensive) that your faith community can implement to support the caregivers in your midst.

This booklet contains a guide and time line for putting on an Interfaith Caregiving Service and the bulletin for a model service. These materials can be used as a template for putting on your own Interfaith Caregiving Service or as a starting point for personalizing the service for your community.

The model service was used as the first National Family Caregiving Association Interfaith Family Caregiving Service on November 16, 1998 at St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC.

The service was prepared for that occasion by an interfaith planning group consisting of: a Presbyterian minister, a Rabbi, a Priest, and several lay representatives. Materials for the service were drawn from a number of readings and meditations. Participants in the service included the planning group, the co-founders of the NFCA acting as hosts, a Baptist minister, several family caregivers, a representative of a foundation involved in end of life projects, and a barbershop quartet.

The congregation consisted of representatives of sponsoring organizations, family caregivers, people involved with family caregivers, representatives of local congregations, and the general public.

**Service Bulletin**  
**An Interfaith Service**  
**in Honor of Family Caregivers**

Music As We Gather

Welcome

*Host*

Call To Be Together

*Service Leader*

Why are we here?

... to praise the Holy One for life;  
... to affirm the presence of the Sacred in our daily caring;  
... to pray for what we need to fulfill our roles as caregivers and support persons to caregivers;  
... to gather strength from the community of persons of faith assembled here and around the country.

Hymn "God Who Art the Great Creator"

Tune: Austria  
Words: Schwerdtfeger

God, Who art the great Creator  
and Sustainer of all life,  
Be Thou ever near to aid us,  
Lest we weary in the strife.  
When our steps begin to falter  
May we feel thy guiding hand,  
Go before and gently lead us,  
'Till we reach the promised land.  
Lifting Burdens

When our energy's diminished,  
Give us eyes of faith to see  
That the pathway we are treading  
Leads us nearer unto Thee  
Though we cannot do sufficiently  
All we seek to give and care,  
May we hear Thy voice more clearly  
Saying, "Lo, you know that I am there."

*Host*

Leader: There is much that burdens us, weighs us down.

People: IT IS TIME TO GIVE IT UP.

Leader: Let us name our fears and our guilt, our longings and our pain.

People: PERHAPS, THEN WE CAN SET IT ALL ASIDE, AT LEAST FOR A MOMENT, AND BE FULLY PRESENT IN THIS TIME WITH ONE ANOTHER.

Leader: Let us pray, trusting in the power of the mysterious "I Am" to receive and accept and transform our confession.

People: O SPIRIT OF COMPASSION AND CARE,  
THERE ARE SO MANY TIMES WHEN I FEEL INADEQUATE TO THE JOB OF CARING,  
SO OVERWHELMED WITH THE ENORMITY OF THE TASKS INVOLVED.

IT IS PARTICULARLY IN THOSE MOMENTS THAT I FEEL I'VE BEEN ABANDONED,  
FORGOTTEN, TESTED IN SOME ULTIMATE WAY, NOT EQUAL TO THE REALITY THAT  
STARES ME IN THE FACE.  
THERE ARE OTHER TIMES WHEN I AM SURE THAT I AM BEING TAKEN FOR  
GRANTED, UNAPPRECIATED, PERHAPS NOT EVEN NOTICED.

I HAVE MOMENTS WHEN I KNOW THAT I AM FAILING TO DO ENOUGH AND AM  
INCAPABLE OF DOING ANYTHING RIGHT.

PATIENCE IS SHORT, ANGER IS AT THE SURFACE. TIRED, ANXIOUS,  
DISCOURAGED I LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF YOUR PRESENCE. WHERE ARE YOU?  
WILL YOU RESCUE ME? LET IT BE SO, I PRAY, AS ONE WHO SEARCHES FOR YOUR  
REFRESHING BREATH AND LISTENS FOR YOUR STILL, SMALL VOICE. AMEN

Assurance of the Presence of the Holy

Leader: Friends, hear and believe that you are not alone.  
There is a great community of caregivers who share your guilt, fear and pain. And, there is that still, small voice that resides in each one of us, that assures us that we are forgiven, understood, affirmed in our humanness, loved unconditionally.

People: YES, WE HEAR THAT VOICE DEEP WITHIN OUR INTERIOR AND ECHOED THROUGH THE CANYON WALLS OF OUR NETWORK OF SUPPORT. FOR NOW, WE SET ALL THIS ASIDE, FREE, EVEN MOMENTARILY, OF THE WEIGHT THAT WE CARRY. THANKS BE TO THE HOLY ONE!

Leader: Gather new energy in this freedom.  
Get in touch with a sense of lightness and buoyancy.  
Marvel in the slate being wiped clean.

People: FAITH PROMISES SUCH MYSTERIOUS ACTION.  
MAY IT BE SO!

Singing with Thanksgiving

Tune: Old Hundredth(Doxology)

Words: Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above eternally,  
O Spirit God, you set us free!

Readings/Prayer/Response

What follows is a series of readings from the diversity of faith traditions in our global village that focus on important elements in family caregiving. Each reading is followed by a prayer that is spoken by a leader and then a response by all in the congregation.

**A READING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY CAREGIVING**

“To Face Sacred Moments”  
Read by *Reader 1*

by Rabbi Abraham Heschel

“The higher goal of spiritual living is not to amass a wealth of information, but to face sacred moments.” Rabbi Abraham Heschel

When God and Moses met on Mt. Sinai, the focus was on what it was that human beings needed in the way of boundaries in order that life could be lived in a purposeful, meaningful way. One of the ten commandments that resulted is this:

“Honor thy father and thy mother so that you may live a long time in the land that I, the Lord God am giving to you.”

It has been known from the beginning of time that when we all take care of those within our own family circles who need our care, we are showing them respect and honor. Even more, we are opening ourselves, as Rabbi Heschel reminds us, to the experience of sacred moments. When someone in our family is weak, disabled, fragile, vulnerable, sick, aging, dying - the presence of the Holy One is often mediated through the family’s care, and conversely, in giving care. May you be blessed as you are a blessing!

Prayer: Set in families to support and nurture, care and love, we pause to name the one for whom we care:

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Gracious Spirit God, we acknowledge the privilege of having a family through which to care. Make us mindful of this gift as we give and receive in our families.

People: GRANT US THE UNDERSTANDING THAT WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO IS A PART OF YOUR PLAN FOR ALL CREATION TO BE THE RECIPIENT OF CARE, CONCERN, SUPPORT AND LOVE.

**A READING ABOUT THE NEED FOR SUSTAINING ENERGY**

“There is No Place Where God is Not” and Psalm 121

Read by ***Reader 2***

It has been said that,

“The same life force that grows an oak from an acorn,  
a mountain from the earth’s molten core,  
a stream from the spring thaw,  
a child from an egg and a sperm,  
an idea from the mind of a human being -  
That same life force is present in all things,  
All thoughts and experiences.  
There is no place where God is not.”

It is the life force that sustains us when our energy for caring seems to drain away.

The psalmist wrote,

“I look to the hills,  
From whence does my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
God will not let us fall. God, our protector, is always awake.  
God neither slumbers, nor sleeps.  
God will guard you. God is by your side to protect you.  
The sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon during the night.  
God will protect you from all danger, keeping you safe.  
God will protect you as you come and go, now and forever”

There is no place where God is not.  
Let it be so!

Prayer: Our energy runs low; our batteries need recharging. Our fuel tank says empty.

People: GRANT US YOUR SUSTAINING ENERGY THAT HOLDS US UP, THAT ALLOWS US TO BE FILLED WITH UNIMAGINABLE DETERMINATION.

**A READING ABOUT GRACE IN TIMES OF HELPLESSNESS**

“A Word from Paul” - (Galatians 6, 9-10)

Read by ***Reader 3***

The apostle, Paul, wrote to an early gathering of Christians in the Roman Province of Galatia, the following encouraging words:

“Let us not grow tired in doing good,  
for in due time we shall reap our harvest,  
if we do not give up.  
So then, while we have the opportunity,  
let us do good to all,  
but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.”

It is possible, then, that grace comes to us when we simply and lovingly extend ourselves in giving care -

Care to the one who is giving care  
Care to the one who is receiving care

Care to the core of ourselves that moves us outside ourselves in order to know the fullness of life.

May it be so, through the grace of the Holy One.

Prayer: A brick wall, a red light, a no trespassing sign...  
A grim diagnosis, a spat of bad days, a reaction to drugs...  
Increasing dependency, incontinency, loss of memory....

People: WHEN IT SEEMS THAT THERE IS NOTHING LEFT THAT WE CAN DO, SEND SOME SIGN OF GRACE THAT THERE IS A POWER BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING THAT RULES THIS UNIVERSE WITH LOVE.

**A READING ABOUT COURAGE WHEN CHOICES ARE CHALLENGING**

“The Matter of Open and Closed Doors”  
Read by the *Reader 4*

by Joyce Hifler

Joyce Hifler has written;

“We have often heard it said that God never closes one door unless God opens another. It is a great comfort to know we never really lose when we believe, for any defeat can be turned to good if we will absorb the lesson in it. And yet, how often we refuse to go through that door that has been opened for us. It is so much easier to stand back and wail about the closed one. There seems to be a certain amount of glorification in defeat. Sometimes a door will close for us because that particular one would have caused us more unhappiness, but it never closes for punishment, God is love - and love does not punish, nor does it have any power but to give what is right and good for us.

With this knowledge, we walk with grace through those doors that open to us.”

Prayer: How shall we discern sacred will? What resources are there when hard decisions must be made? Can we truly trust in the Spirit’s direction and rest in the assurance of the leading of the Divine?

People: MAY THE MOVING SPIRIT WITHIN US GIVE US COURAGE TO FACE THE HARD DECISIONS AND WORK THROUGH CHALLENGING CHOICES.

**A READING ABOUT OPENNESS TO RECEIVING SUPPORT AND HELP FROM OTHERS**

“The Secret of Happiness”  
Read by the *Service Leader*

by Joan Borysenko

A word from Joan Borysenko:

“A man who had a near-death experience following a heart attack returned to his body, and the first thing he saw in his hospital room was a rose. He experienced seeing a rose for the first time, realizing that he was intimately connected to that flower. Now, when he walks through the forest, he feels as though he is one with the trees. He has realized directly his participation in the web of life. The secret of happiness, he says, is two fold:

To realize that all things are interconnected  
And to send love along those connections.”

If we are all part of a web of life that has intricate interconnections, then it is critical that we open our lives to the power of that connection and allow others to fulfill their purpose in being connected to us and to those for whom we care. It is then that the secret of happiness can be experienced in its complete circle.

May it be so!

Prayer: We don’t have to go it alone! Friends and neighbors, faith kin and community organizations consider it a privilege to be able to contribute to our caregiving. Can we let them in?

People: IT IS SO HARD TO ALLOW OTHERS INTO OUR PRIVATE WORLD. STIR UP IN US, O GRACIOUS SPIRIT, AN ATTITUDE OF OPENNESS TO THE SINCERE OFFERS OF OTHERS, RECOGNIZING THAT EVERYONE WILL BENEFIT AND BE ENRICHED. DRAW US INTO CARING CONGREGATIONS THAT RESPECT AND EMPOWER US TO BE THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE.

**A READING ABOUT THE ABILITY TO DO SELF-CARE**

“Infinite Respect”

Read by ***Reader 5***

by Theophane the Monk

“Did you ever hear a sermon begin with the words, ‘When I was in heaven?’ That’s how the old monk began his rap with us, ‘When I was in heaven...’

‘When I was in heaven, they gave me a torch with which I could see everything, EVERYTHING! Do you believe me?’ ”

So begins a small parable by Theophane the Monk. The most important thing that the speaker could see was his own interior world. He became intimately familiar with his needs and wants. But, even more, he opened himself to a message from God that said, “Infinite Respect” - respect for others, and, respect for oneself.

Whenever we find ourselves on overload,

overwhelmed with all that we have to do,

Crushed by the tasks that pile up in front of us,

It is important, even critical, to hear the whisper of “Infinite Respect” -

and, stop and pay attention to rest, exercise, nutrition, intellectual stimulation, emotional release, and whatever else will indicate that we know how to respect ourselves in order to prostrate before the Holy in the others who are in our lives.

Prayer: When we get appropriate rest, exercise, nutrition, intellectual stimulation, emotional release - we know that we are better able to give care to others.

People: KEEP US MINDFUL OF OUR OWN NEED AS CAREGIVERS TO BE BALANCED, CENTERED, FED AND CONNECTED IN BODY/MIND/SOUL/HEART. WE OFFER THIS PRAYER TRUSTING IN THE POWER OF A MIGHTY SPIRIT THAT IS AT WORK IN THIS UNIVERSE FOR HEALTH AND WHOLENESS, FOR INTEGRITY AND WORTH. LET IT BE SO!

Special Music

Special Message

Recognition of Caring Congregations

***Host***

Offering:

***Service Leader***

This is intended not to be an offering FROM the congregation but, rather TO the congregation. Each will receive a polished rock, along with an explanation of its significance for caregiving.

Caregivers need “rock solid support systems. Caring Congregations might say “we want to be those rock solid persons you can depend upon.”

Closing Hymn

Share the Caring©

Tune: W Zlobie Lezy (A Polish Christmas Carol)

Words: Margee Iddings

***All:*** Share the caring, share responding  
To the needs both great and small

With a neighbor, with a colleague  
And with family - sound the call!  
Running errands, giving transport, sitting listening, fixing meals -  
Help us all to stand up tall.

**All:** Share the caring, share the burden  
That cannot be faced alone.  
Sustained giving, constant attention,  
Leaves one weary to the bone.  
Others long to just be able to give bread and not a stone,  
If the needs are only known.

**Family:** Share the caring, share the blessing  
That becomes a precious gift -  
When a loved one needs our presence,  
Understanding, time and wit.  
When disability or an illness leave one challenged to exist  
Needs enormous then persist.

**Caregivers:** Share the caring, share your loved one,  
Don't hold on to treasured gold.  
Let the circle that surrounds you with their  
Love your lives enfold.  
Don't let feelings of self-sufficiency, unworthiness or pride,  
Make you run away and hide.

**Friends, Members of Congregations, Neighbors, Colleagues:**  
Share the caring, share the privilege  
that unfolds at levels rare  
When vulnerability of being at the core  
Is what we dare.  
Holy places, sacred moments, thoughts so precious to be shared -  
All results of shared care.

**All:** So share the caring, share the privilege  
That's how life was meant to be -  
Not lived alone, in isolation,  
rather in community.  
Mutual kindness, received and given;  
open hearts poured out so free -  
Circle of humanity

Candle lighting: -

**Service Leader**

Candle lighting is a symbolic act that reminds us that we gather energy from the Holy Light. Let it remind us of the joy and power there is in the privilege of giving care. May the light be a source of hope when the darkness threatens to overwhelm.

**Reader 2 & Reader 3**

We light this candle to give caregivers the determination to take charge of their lives, to allow caregiving to be a part of it, but not all of it. We light this candle to remind them that there is power in the ability to make choices and by making choices they celebrate their personhood.

We light this candle to let caregivers know they are honored and highly valued, to celebrate the extraordinary efforts that they make. We light this candle as a symbol of the love that they give to others and of the love they need to shower on themselves.

We light this candle as a beacon to lead the way toward the sharing of care that needs to be asked for by caregivers and needs to be acknowledged and offered by others. We light this candle as just one among many to be a source of help for family caregivers.

We light this candle as a tribute to family caregivers who give so much of themselves to loved ones and to our nation, and We light this candle in the hope that on this day and on all days hence America's family caregivers will stand tall and proud and empowered.

Benediction

*Reader 1*

We must often revive the gladness of gratitude  
And retrain our lips to utter words of thanks.

God's gifts often go unnoticed in our haste;  
And disappointments may blind us to our blessings.

We render thanks for life itself  
For sight, hearing, smell and touch.

We give thanks for the beauty of nature and its gifts,  
And pray that we may share as richly as we have received.

We stand in wonder before the birth of children,  
The miracle of their growth, their love, and laughter.

We are grateful for love and the opening of hearts  
Between man and wife, parents and children.

We give thanks for family, knowing that at times it can be frail,  
And recognize our obligation to nurture and protect it.

We are grateful for the blessings of caregivers,  
And know that our needs can be great, and difficult to achieve.

We give thanks to God who shares with us  
A small spark of glory and wisdom,

Involving us in the drama which is both God's and ours --  
The partnership of completing the work of creation.

# Family Caregivers Interfaith Service

## Timeline Based on a mid November Service

- Six months prior to Service***                      ***May 15 - June 15, XXXX***  
Commit to having service  
Identify project coordinator
- Five months prior to Service***                      ***June 15 - August 15, XXXX***  
Identify and inspect potential service and reception sites
- Four months prior to Service***                      ***July 15 - August 15, XXXX***  
Identify planning committee  
Have initial planning meeting  
    Select Service Date  
    Select Service Site  
    Review Model Service  
        Identify any adaptations to be made  
Identify Participants  
Decide whether to have a reception  
Assign follow-up activities
- Three months prior to Service***                      ***August 15 - September 15, XXXX***  
Contract for service and reception space  
Confirm Participants  
    Readers  
    Special Message  
    Music  
    Special Music  
Prepare Invitation list and invitations
- Two months prior to Service***                      ***September 15 - October 15, XXXX***  
Mail Invitations  
Arrange for preparation of service bulletin  
Arrange for publicity  
Begin plans for reception
- Month of Service***                                      ***October 15 - November 15, XXXX***  
Finalize Service  
    Final planning committee meeting  
    Site Visit  
        Verify logistics for:  
            Music  
            Candle Lighting  
            Flowers  
            Offering  
    Arrange for Service Support Personnel  
        Ushers  
        Candle Lighters  
Follow-up on publicity
- Week of Service***                                      ***November 8 - 15, XXXX***  
Finalize Bulletin and Insert  
Reconfirm all Participants  
Schedule Pre Service Walk-through  
Confirm Materials



# Detailed Planning Guide

## For an Interfaith Family Caregiving Service

The following is a step by step guide to holding an interfaith service in support of family caregivers in your community. Planning an interfaith service can take a lot of time particularly if there is no ongoing interfaith group to work with. However, the rewards of working together on a service of this nature make the effort expended worth while.

### Detailed Time Line

#### Six months prior to service:

Commit to having a family caregiver service

Identify a project coordinator

This may be either a lay person or a member of the clergy, but it is essential that the coordinator have access to contacts in the faith community. Attending to the needs of members of a congregation consumes considerable amounts of time so pastors, priests, and rabbis are reluctant to add another cause to their agenda or that of their faith community without a direct referral. If this is to be a multi congregational service, the project coordinator should plan to devote several hours a week to coordinating the planning process.

#### Five months prior to service:

Identify and inspect potential service and reception sites.

The specific site should be determined by proximity to the potential attendees (If the service is to be at the end of the work day, a downtown location might be chosen. However, if it is an evening or weekend service, a suburban location might be best.) Accessibility of the facility to the target audience, the availability of the space and space for a following reception must be considered. Are there code or policy limitations that would restrict any part of the service? You will also want to consider the level of interest in the sponsoring organization - does the facility have staff (sexton, music director, organist, or clergy) who will assist with the logistics of the service? Will they donate flowers, candles, etc. to the service? Does the congregation have a strong interest in the issue of family caregiving and will they support the service? Selecting a site that is central, accessible, and welcoming will contribute to the success of the service.

#### Four months prior to service:

Identify planning committee participants

The committee will need to meet once to get the project underway and once just before the service. However, most other communication can and should be done by phone, mail, or E-mail. A committee of four - six clergy or their representatives in addition to the project coordinator is the right size for this working group. Although the service is already written, the planning committee is needed to broaden community awareness of the service, increase participation, and increase the public exposure of the event and support for facing the challenges of family caregiving. Including representatives of as many faith communities as possible in the planning process as well as the service will make this truly an interfaith service. The breadth of the committee and its contacts can also authenticate the relevance of the activity to the community as a whole. It is also beneficial to have participants on the planning committee who have experience with family caregiving.

Hold the initial planning committee meeting:

Select date for service

We suggest a date in November to honor caregivers during National Family Caregiving Month.

Select site of the service

Review the site inspection report and select one.

Review the model service and identify any adaptations needed for your community

The model service can be distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting and their suggestions for modifications can be discussed while the committee is together.

Decide whether a reception is appropriate given the timing and site of the service.

Holding a reception following the service allows participants from all parts of the faith community to unite around the issue of support of family caregiving. It can provide time for the participants to meet each other and form connections that might become a network around the issue of family caregiving. It also provides a convenient time for media to speak with

participants and attendees. Although holding a reception can add to the preparation and expense of the event, in many cases the benefits will outweigh the costs.

Make assignments for follow-up activities

Depending on the community and the resources available to the project coordinator, the committee members may simply serve as figureheads and be participants in the service or they may actively participate in promoting the service and the cause of family caregivers within the faith community.

### Three months prior to service:

Make commitments for space for service and reception.

Confirm participants

#### ***Readers***

In some cases the members of the planning committee will want to participate in the service. The project coordinator must encourage and facilitate as much committee involvement in the service as possible.

Leading the readings for specific sections is a good way to involve them.

#### ***Special Message***

A family caregiver would be ideal. Pairing a caregiver and someone from their faith community who provides support in their caregiving efforts is another possibility.

Another possibility for a special message is a local celebrity who has experience with family caregiving. There are more of them out there than you might expect. Following local media stories closely will yield additional sources of participants.

#### ***Music***

Most churches and synagogues have directors of music or other “staff musicians” who provide music for services held in the facility. It is a matter of policy whether the facility allows an outside musician to play the instruments (organ). If the site of the service has such a policy, you will have to decide whether to use the resident musician for all or some of the service.

#### ***Special Music***

Either vocal or instrumental music, independent of congregational singing, will add to the impact of the service and provide additional interest. The selection of the particular piece of music will be important.

Lyrics that compliment the theme of the service can stay with participants long after the service is over.

#### ***Children’s Choir***

Possible sources of children’s choirs are participating churches or synagogues, local schools, or groups supported by recreation departments.

#### ***Soloist***

Any of the participating faith communities will have access to soloists who may be tapped to participate in the service

#### ***Ensemble***

Many communities have choruses or chorals that would be happy to provide a small group to sing an appropriate song at the service.

#### ***Instrumental***

Either a single instrument or an ensemble can often be arranged through the choir or music director of the host facility. Other sources of instrumental performers are local schools, music teachers, or music organizations.

Prepare invitation list and invitations for participants in the service

Sources of invited attendees include members/representatives of local faith communities, local family caregivers, community leaders, media representatives, etc. The presence of political leaders may bring the complications of ensuring that all “players” are included and all protocols are observed, but it may be worth the challenges if it helps promote legislative, executive, or media recognition. If you are holding a reception, you will need RSVPs in time to finalize plans for the reception.

Begin plans for reception

### Two months prior to the service:

Arrange for preparation of the service bulletin.

The attached service format is available on floppy disk in Word Perfect 6.1 or Microsoft Word format.

Use it as a template and insert the specifics of your service. One of the participating congregations may be able to support the service by preparing the bulletin.

Arrange for community wide announcements of the service

Announcements of the service through the publications or regular mailings of area wide denominational groups or groups supportive of family caregivers, such as individual illness support groups, hospital support groups, etc. can greatly increase the participation in the service

Many newspapers have sections that cover religious activities. Any coverage of the service that you can arrange will probably be printed after the event, so inserting an announcement of the service in the calendar of events will be important.

#### Mail invitations

Set the RSVP date in plenty of time to complete any final reception or service planning.

### One month prior to the service

#### Finalize Service

##### Planning committee

Hold final meeting. This can be either a live or paper meeting depending on how your committee has agreed to work, but it is necessary to touch base at this point to follow-up on assignments and ensure that all participants are in agreement about the final form of the service.

##### Final Site visit

Meet with the representative of the service site to walk through the logistics of the service

##### *Music*

Work with the music director to select prelude and other interval music. Be sure that they are prepared for any hymns you intend to include in the service and make them aware of the timing and type of any special music planned for the service.

##### *Candle Lighting*

Check on arrangements for candles if you are using the candle lighting portion of the service. Is there an existing \_\_\_\_\_ candle that can be used for the source of lighting or will you have to make arrangements for one? Will the congregation donate individual candles for the lighting? How will the light be passed among members of the congregation?

##### *Flowers*

Most service sites will have space allocated at the front for bouquets of flowers. Some congregations have members who organize arrangements of flowers for all activities in the facility, if they are participating, finalize arrangements with them. If they are not assisting, a local florist may be willing to donate arrangements for the service in exchange for an acknowledgment in the service bulletin and in other materials about the service.

##### *Offering*

The offering in the model service is designed to give the participants a token for them to carry away from the service as a reminder about the concerns of family caregivers. Polished river stones signifying the bedrock of support given and needed by family caregivers are a possibility. Other possibilities for this type of offering are pins such as the "I Am Loved" pins, flowers, etc. Whatever the specifics of the offering, you will have to plan the logistics of carrying it out with a representative of the site.

#### Service support personnel

##### Ushers

You will need ushers to distribute bulletins and assist congregants in finding seats at the beginning of the service. The same people can assist in the offering portion of the service. Most sites will have a set pattern for receiving an offering and it will be possible to use that pattern for distributing an offering to the congregation.

##### Candle lighters

Depending on the size of the congregation and the logistics of the site, you may need 4 or 6 candle lighters for your service. The service is enhanced if it is possible to have candle lighters who are connected in some way to family caregiving.

#### Follow-up with publicity contacts

As the service draws closer, and participants are finalized, you will have more material for publicity. Keep in touch with all the writers or editors you have contacted giving them up to date information on participants and other interesting tidbits about the service. This will increase the likelihood of coverage.

### Week of the service

#### Bulletin

Prepare an insert for the bulletin listing participants and one or two sentence biographies for each principal participant. Include all ushers, candle-lighter, and musicians in this insert. This is also the

appropriate place for acknowledgment of any organization or businesses such as a sponsoring congregation or club, printers, florists, caterers, etc. that have helped with the project.  
Finalize contents of the bulletin and arrange for enough copies for the expected congregation.

Reconfirm all participants

Schedule a pre service walk-through 45 minutes before service to bring all participants up to date on any site specific issues or last minute changes.

Materials

Verify the RSVP numbers for service

Verify that the appropriate number of individual candles are in hand

Verify that appropriate number of offering items are in hand

Confirm flower order and delivery time

Confirm final count for reception

#### Day of service

Prior to service

Arrive 1 \_ hours before the service

Confirm arrival of all materials

Conduct final briefing

Confirm that all preparations for the reception are complete

After service

Clear all material from service site

Attend reception

After reception

Confirm number of reception attendees

Confirm consumption at reception (particularly if the cost depends on consumption)

#### Week after the service

Send thank you notes to participants

Complete verification of costs and approve payments as needed

Share your experience with NFCA use the convenient enclosed form.