

How to organize your pictures for a Celebration of life video



It may be an overwhelming task to think about organizing the pictures for the video of your loved one. You want to do them justice, but how do you go about it, where do you start?

Creating an outline

Your first step is to create the story outline. If you were to sit down and tell someone the story of your loved ones life, what would you say? You would probably start with their childhood; tell about their parents, their siblings, maybe where they grew up. You would continue talking about maybe their school years, their interest. Then it would go to finding the love of their life, their children, and grandchildren. You would also want to include their interest, achievements, and talents. Well telling this story would be the same in the video, but with pictures and titles.

When creating the outline, it is good to create subtopics. An example:

- Growing up-Family
- School Years
- Work
- Love
- Children
- Grandchildren
- Interest
- Friends

The last section should be highlights or a few of your favorite pictures of them. If these pictures go in other sections to, make a list of these pictures on a page as you go through the pictures and what sections they are in. The last picture should be the one you want to capture in your memory forever.

Organizing your pictures

Once you have the outline, use this as your sections to collect pictures. Take large zip lock bags and label them on outside with a sharpie with the section name. Now get out your albums or boxes of pictures. Begin going through the pictures and put the pictures into the bags that go with the subject.

What if your pictures are digital? You do the same thing, but on a computer screen. You create a file named after your loved one. Then you create sub files for each category. Now you copy and paste the picture files into each section.

If your pictures are in books, like yearbooks, you can put a sticky in the book, and then take index cards and write a description of the picture and where it is located and stick it in the bag.

Now it is time to organize your pictures within the bag. If you want them to go in some order, number them with post it's in the order you would like them to appear. But what if some are digital and some are actual pictures. Work with your actual pictures first and number them like this 01, 02, 03...now for the digital picture put an index card and say see file "Growing up" digital picture 04, then go on and number the pictures. The digital file names should correspond with the names on the bag. The pictures files should be renamed to go with the order you want the pictures to be placed in with the pictures you have yet to scan. Once all the pictures are scanned the pictures in the bags and in the digital files will then blend together.

Creating Titles

Titles are an important aspect of telling your story. After you have all the pictures organized, then go through the sections again and decide where titles need to be

placed. The beginning title should be their name, their birthday, and the day of death. You could also include something like “Celebrating the Life of...”

Other titles could include quotes or labels to introduce each section. You may want to include labels on certain pictures to help your audience know why you’re sharing this picture and also years or events that may be important to the pictures being presented.

Here are some other titles you might want to include.

- Quotes or sayings your loved one was known for.
- Quotes from family members or friends about what the person meant to them.
- Adjectives that describe your loved ones life and personality can be placed over the best pictures at the end of the video.

Selecting the music

Once you have the pictures organized and the titles created, your next step is choosing the music. The music is an important ingredient to tie all the pictures together. You should have at least one song for each section, or more if there are a number of pictures. When choosing music, it is important to pick artist or types of music your loved one would have liked. But also important is to make sure the music goes with the flow of the pictures and that the words convey the message you are trying to get across in your story.

Most songs can be played in the entirety on youtube.com. Just go there and put in the song title and artist and see if it comes up. If you go to google.com and put in the song title and lyrics you will be taken to a site that gives you the words of the song. Make sure the words work with what you are sharing in the pictures. If there is a just one line that is a little off, music can be edited to take that line out. But if the whole song does not seem to say what you want to convey, it’s best to choose another song.

Adding video clips

A great way to bring more “wow” to your video is to add video clips. If you have home movies, or video of your loved one taken over the years, add a minute or two choice video clips in among the pictures really brings personality to the video. After losing a loved one, hearing their voice is such a comfort. If you have a few clips of them talking to the camera, adding that in can bring a special moment to your video, perhaps toward the end.

If you are planning in advance with a terminally ill loved one to create a memorial video, try to take video camera, a digital camera that takes video or even a smart phone and videotape an interview with them. Ask them questions like what were they like as a child, or what was it like growing up? Ask them key questions about different aspects of their life and use these interviewed video clips throughout the video combined with pictures. This is what you call a biography video, and it is an excellent way to honor your loved one.

Something else you may want to add into the video are clips of family or friends telling stories they remember about your loved one. For instance, you may have a sibling tell a story of times spent together as a child, and that can be placed in the midst of pictures of them as a child. A mate could tell a story of how they met, and it could be placed among pictures of their courtship and marriage. This too can be a way of telling or piecing the story together in a type of biography told by the ones that know them.

Showing the video

There is a variety of ways to show a Celebration of life video. Some make the video the main presentation. If you are doing this, you may even check out old movie theaters in your area. Many will rent them out for private parties. You could even make your “Celebration of Life” with a movie theme, even putting your loved ones name on the Marquee.

Others have a short version or a portion of the video played as part of the ceremony and a longer version to play on a television throughout the evening. Others don’t have it as part of the celebration presentation, but save it

for the after reception. What will work for you will be determined by what you have planned for the entire celebration of life.

Free online video link

As part of our “Celebration of Life” packages we include an online page where we post the video for friends and family to watch after the celebration is over. On this page a link is included if family members or friends would like to purchase their own copies. A link to the memorial website is also placed on this page as well as a download PDF of the program. For family or friends who are far away, this is an excellent way for them to feel a part of the celebration.

For an extra cost we can add the “Celebration of life” ceremony with pictures of the celebration. We can also include a link to a video stream of the ceremony on this page.

The video is one of the most important ingredients in the Celebration of Life memorial. It will help bring your loved one back to life in your mind and hearts. It will piece together all the aspects of the life you are celebrating. It will also be a comfort to family and friends to watch years after