
✠ Explore 4 ✠

VISIT A CATHOLIC CEMETERY

Goal: As a family, pray for the dead on the consecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery.

“Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.”

— St. John Chrysostom

WHY WE VISIT CEMETERIES

Those who die in God’s grace but are not yet perfectly purified undergo a final purification—called Purgatory—before entering the joy of heaven. These souls are assured of salvation, but they benefit from our prayers, sacrifices, and good works offered on their behalf.

Visiting a grave is a work of mercy, an expression of love.

These visits also remind us of our own mortality and our call to live in readiness for the Lord’s coming. Far from being morbid, this awareness deepens gratitude for the gift of life and strengthens our hope in the Resurrection. Death is not the end!

WHERE AND WHEN?

The Archdiocese of Seattle operates 4 cemeteries:

1. [Gethsemane Cemetery](#), Federal Way (closest Catholic Cemetery to St. Barbara’s Church)
2. [St. Patrick Cemetery](#), Kent
3. [Calvary Cemetery](#), Seattle
4. [Holyrood Cemetery](#), Shoreline

Catholic Cemeteries are consecrated ground. Walk the grounds, look for statues of Saints, images of the Rosary, and Catholic iconography. Pray for the dead!

Talk with your kids beforehand about expectations: speaking softly and respecting the gravesites.

<https://www.stbarbarachurch.org/explore-4>

Submit your
Explore 4
reflection here.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR VISITING AND PRAYING AT A CEMETERY WITH KIDS

- ◆ Explain beforehand that the cemetery is a holy place where we come to pray for people (an act of love because we care for people even after they die) and to remember that Jesus promises us eternal life
- ◆ Consider bringing flowers for children to place on graves. Giving kids a role can add meaning.
- ◆ Share stories about deceased family members (even if those members are not buried at the specific cemetery that you are visiting).
- ◆ Pray as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross and incorporating the Eternal Rest Prayer: “Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.” You can also pray a decade of the Rosary, read Psalm 23 together, etc.
- ◆ Keep the tone hopeful—emphasize the Resurrection and the belief that we will see our loved ones again in heaven. Death is not the end!
- ◆ Write and submit a reflection about your family’s experience visiting and praying at a cemetery.

MORE RESOURCES

- ◆ [Brother Francis: All Souls Day](#) — For kids! A 5-min video on Formed (login available): Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and why we pray for the dead.
- ◆ [Why Do Catholics Pray for the Dead?](#) — A 3 minute video on Formed (login available for parishioners)
- ◆ [Hope to Die: The Christian Meaning of Death and the Resurrection of the Body](#) —Book by theologian Scott Hahn