



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS,  
MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED-FOR OF THE VIETNAM WAR**

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## **CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY GUIDE**

Commemorative Candlelight Ceremonies honoring American POWs and MIAs should be dignified and simple, involving POW/MIA families, returned POWs and appropriate active-duty personnel (particularly on military installations), veterans, civic leaders and other concerned Americans. The Secretary of Defense regularly issues directives to the Service Secretaries suggesting military support for and participation in such ceremonies as part of responsible public awareness on the POW/MIA issue.

Invitations should be sent to state and local dignitaries, veteran leaders in the area and all POW/MIA and KIA/BNR family members for whom addresses are available. If the service is being held on a military installation, the base and/or wing commander, executive officer and chaplain should be invited to participate, and all base personnel should be invited to attend.

**Programs:** Simple, printed programs should be provided. Blank church bulletins are available at religious bookstores. The program can be typed on a single sheet of 8 ½ x 11 standard paper and folded, for printing at any quick-copy establishment. Military bases, posts and stations, local businesses or area veterans and civic groups are often willing, if asked, to co-sponsor the event, print the program and assist with publicity prior to the service. The League's logo, or a tasteful drawing and calligraphic message depicting faith and determination, can be reproduced to form the program's cover.

**Special Music:** Some suggested hymns and patriotic music are: *"Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art," "Bring Him Home"* (from the musical *"Les Miserables"*), *"Let My People Go," "America," "The Star Spangled Banner," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"* and *"God Bless America."* As music may vary according to region, discretion is requested in selecting music that reflects positively on the issue and the League's position that the possibility that Americans may still be alive in Southeast Asia is not precluded, i.e. no funeral dirges. Sheet music should be available from local retailers or online.

**Candles:** Candles with drip guards should be provided to each attendee upon entering. Contact a candle distributor and request the candles and drip guards be donated, sold at cost or seek a contribution for this purpose. If such assistance is provided, be sure to mention the company or contributor as a note in the printed program. Candles may be collected following the ceremony or attendees may be requested to relight the candle during their Sunday meal, again remembering our POW/MIA and KIA/BNR personnel and others still missing from our nation's past wars and conflicts in prayer.

**SAMPLE PROGRAM  
COMMEMORATIVE CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY**

PRELUDE	Organist/Pianist/Other
INVOCATION	Chaplain/Minister
NATIONAL ANTHEM/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Soloist/Chorus/Choir
SCRIPTURE*	POW/MIA relative, returned POW, veteran/civic leader
SPECIAL MUSIC	Soloist/Chorus/Choir
SPEAKER/MESSAGE	Chaplain/Minister, returned POW, military or another special guest
LIGHTING OF CANDLES (Include roll call of state's POW/MIAs)	
SPECIAL MUSIC	Soloist/Pianist/Other
PRAYER (May be followed by silent prayer)	Chaplain/Minister
SPECIAL MUSIC	Soloist/Chorus/Choir
BENEDICTION	Chaplain/Minister
POSTLUDE	Organist/Pianist/Other

\*The text of Jeremiah 31: 16-17 is particularly meaningful to POW/MIA families and is most often used in commemorative services:

*“Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping and  
thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded  
saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land  
of the enemy, And there is hope in thine end, saith the  
Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.”*

NOTE: Of special significance is the “Missing Man Table & Honors Ceremony” which incorporates the official covers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard, plus a civilian cap, placed prominently to symbolize those who were or are POW, MIA or KIABNR, missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War and our nation’s wars and conflicts further past.