

Lighting a Memorial Candle

Before we leave for synagogue and before we light the Holiday candles, it is customary to light a yizkor candle, a memorial candle, which will burn through the next day for immediate family members whom we remember now. Some light one candle for each person in the family who has died.

There is no traditional b'rakhah for this candlelighting—it is a moment of private meditation, however, upon lighting a memorial candle, the following may be recited:

“A light from God is a human soul” (Proverbs 20:27). At this moment of solemn reflection, I call to mind memories of _____.
May _____’s soul enjoy eternal life, together with the souls of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and all righteous women and men. May I be inspired to acts of justice and kindness in _____’s memory.

Amen.

The following kavannah may also be recited:

A new year beginning, and I can't call you to say,
“I'm bursting with wonderful news!”
Your arms won't encircle me when I grieve, when I mourn,
you'll never know now the unexpected achievements, the abiding sorrows.
And yet, as I stand here with this candle, I allow myself some quiet moments,
until, once again, your face shines in my memory,
until, once again, I feel you blessing me.

—Merle Feld