

# “HELP! I DON’T WANT TO FORGET!”

Just moments after my twin sons were born prematurely and I realized they were too young to live; I was overwhelmed by thoughts of how to preserve their memory in my heart and mind forever. I began frantically running through a myriad of ideas and although it may seem it was overwhelming, it was ultimately what helped me most in my journey to healing.

I immediately asked the nurse to take pictures of the boys. And then I began running through many other ideas of things I would want to do to remember them and the precious 24 weeks I had been blessed to have them within me. It is because of my own experience that I thought sharing some of my ideas as well as some great ones that I heard about would be helpful to you. Just remember that no matter what you choose to do, if it helps you to heal and honor your precious little one/s, it is perfect!

Ways to remember:

- **Hold your baby.** Take time to open the blanket and look at your precious little one. If you miscarry at home, look over your baby to affirm he/she is real. Spend as much time as you desire with your baby. Do not allow anyone to rush you. There will never be enough time, but at least spend the time you desire.
- **Name your baby.** If you are unsure of whether it is a boy or girl, pick a name that could go either way. Or go with your heart and pick the name you believe it should be. Talk with your baby and share your love with him/her. I sang to my twins after they died. I held them both in my arms and lay in my bed with them beside me. I quoted scripture to them, prayed over them and thanked God for my 24 weeks with them and sang several songs to them as I cried. I would not trade that time for anything in the world.
- **Take tons of pictures after the birth.** Have someone take them for you so you can be in them. Be sure to get shots of the baby/ies with your family members, siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents, and your dearest friends. Get pictures of them being dressed, when they are being examined or measured, wrapped in a blanket, etc. Even if you do not look at the pictures for a while after the death, you will at some point most likely want to have them so you can remember what the baby/ies looked like.
- **Get a baby book.** Record all you can remember from your pregnancy, include ultrasound pictures and other neat things such as cards sent to you, records of gifts given, etc. Take the time to fill it all out. You may find it to be very healing to remember the time you were given and look at it as a blessing. NOTE: I covered some of the pages (like dental records and vaccination, the pages with the years of Christmas or years of school, etc) with cardstock and placed pictures and sympathy cards on them. I recorded meals that were brought and Bibles that were donated in their memory. I also wrote special verses that were shared with me and other words of encouragement I had been given. I then placed my book in a glass memory box case that had a hinged door. It hangs on my wall so that we can look at it when we want but it will not get dirty or messed up in the meantime.
- **Plan a service.** A graveside service or memorial service may seem hard to bear, but will be a blessing if you plan it the way you desire. We had our pastor come and preach an encouraging message. We had a dear friend who had walked the road himself with his wife a few years earlier sing a perfect song. We had purchased twin Boyd’s bears that had our sons names and birth/death date embroidered on their bibs. We sat them in front of the casket and then had the funeral director give them to us during the ceremony as something for us to keep. The funeral director also gave a single long stem yellow rose to each of us at the end of the funeral so we did not leave empty handed. We let 50 blue and silver balloons go at the end of the service so that we would all leave looking up toward Heaven (that was so amazing!) We also had our favorite scripture read (the one I had been praying for the long weeks while on bed rest) and sang the most amazing rendition of “How Great Thou Art” that I had ever heard. I left our service overjoyed and filled with hope—knowing my sons were in Heaven with my Savior; and, my Savior was here in my heart and present in my life offering me peace and the strength that I needed to go on. You may want someone special to sing a song, or you may have a special poem you want read. Just take the time to plan it so you will remember the day and so that it will be blessing to all those who attend on your behalf.
- **Have your Pastor and his wife come to visit.** They will pray with you and encourage you more than you could imagine!
- **Get as many keepsakes as you can.** I kept every item used on my twins as the pediatricians tried to save them. I also got lengths, weights, birth certificates with hand and footprints, as well as their death certificates. We had a register book from the funeral service, which records those people who attended our service.



- **Make a shadow box.** Sometimes hospitals will give you items or a tiny keepsake box for you to hold your mementos within. I wanted something that others could see. You may not want to put pictures out, but you may want other things displayed. I wanted to preserve the blankets I was making for my twins. I also wanted to display the little outfits I had purchased for them as soon as I found out we were carrying twin boys. I wanted to display their little shirts and hats, which they wore after their birth. I wanted their measuring tapes, their cord clamps, and their nasal aspirators—everything that was used on them after they were born. This shadow box could house a myriad of things such as those mentioned above, or you could add pictures, a Bible, a birth certificate, a bookmark with the baby's name printed, etc.



If you cannot display it right away, you can always keep it in a closet until you are able to hang it up.

- **Get a keepsake box.** If you feel you will never want the keepsakes displayed outwardly, a special wooden box with your baby's name engraved on the top may be appropriate. You can house cards from friends and family, pictures, keepsakes from the baby, etc. You can then decide if you want to allow others to look at it or not.
- **Talk about them.** Every time you share about your precious baby/ies they become real to yet another person. Show the mementos, show your pictures, share your baby book, etc. I also wanted people to come and see them before we took them to the funeral home. It is so hard for people to understand how real your loss is, especially if they have never experienced anything like it. My sisters said over and over again how helpful it was for them to have seen our boys because it helped to make it real for them—and in turn, it helped me to know they saw how precious and priceless they were and truly strengthened my bond with them beyond imagine as a result. Although it may be hard at first, keep talking. The more you share, the more you let others in on the precious life/lives you had within you, the more you are able to heal and grow to accept this trial and maturing that God has entrusted to you.
- **Write a poem**—some are very gifted in the art of poetry or prose. Write your thoughts about your loss and then get it published. At the very least share it with others because you never know whom it may help in the process, while it is also helping you.
- **Wear a jewelry memorial.** I was given two different items and both are wonderful.

- Birthstone jewelry for the birth month is another nice memorial to them. My husband gave me a gorgeous ring. It has two rubies that are the birthstones of our twin boys, and 10 diamonds that signify each of us in the family—my husband, our 8 living children, and myself, surround those rubies. It is so perfect because we are surrounding our twins in love!



- Special charms for a necklace or bracelet or charm pin would be a great way to have a memorial for your baby/ies. Some friends gave me a charm bracelet. They also bought initial charms for each of my 8 living children, and then purchased two J's for my twin sons that died. My sisters went together and bought a heart shaped charm that had infants feet engraved on it and two rubies dangling from it. So this charm hangs between the two J's that stand for my twins.



- **Have one of the pictures enhanced by a portrait specialist.** I saw a gorgeous picture of my cousin's baby that had been enhanced and done in a soft-washed black and white effect. She had it enlarged and has it on her mantle with the pictures of her other children.
- **Donate Bibles in memory of your baby/ies.** We did this and it feels wonderful to know that many will read the gospel as a result of our twin sons. Have people who desire to give you money, donate it to a special charity or your church nursery.
- **Plant a tree or special flower in memory of your baby/ies.** It will be something you can watch grow and that you can nurture over time as well.

- **Have a sun catcher or stained glass window made** in memory of your baby and display it in your home. My cousin had two very special sun catchers made just for our boys and they are displayed in the entryway windows on either side of our front door.

There are so many wonderful ideas to help you in your journey through this great trial. Whatever you decide works for you, follow it with all your heart. Remember that each day your grief will grow easier to bear as you rest upon the fact that God's grace is sufficient—His strength is made perfect in your weakness. (II Cor. 12:9)

