O God, exalted and full of compassion, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering Presence, among the holy and pure, to the soul of ____, who has gone to his/her eternal home. Master of mercy, we beseech You, remember all the worthy and righteous deed that he/she performed in the land of the living. May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life. The Lord is his/her portion. May he/she rest in peace. And let us say, “Amen.”

What is Yizkor?
Yizkor means “Remember” in Hebrew and is a special memorial prayer for the departed. Yizkor is the first word of the prayer; but it also represents the overall theme.

We ask God to remember the souls of our relatives and friends as we recall and strengthen our connection with them, thus bringing merit to the departed souls and spiritually elevating them as well as ourselves.

When Do We Say Yizkor?
Jews recite Yizkor in the synagogue four times a year, following the Torah reading on the last day of Passover, on the second day of Shavuot, on Shemini Atzeret and on Yom Kippur.

How Do We Commenmorate Yizkor?
In addition to the prayer itself, the main component of Yizkor is our private pledge to give charity in honor of the deceased following the holy day.

By giving charity, we perform a positive physical deed in this world, something that the departed can no longer do. According to tradition, the soul gains additional merit if the memory of its good deeds spurs their loved ones to improve their ways.

It is also customary, like the yahrzeit, to kindle a 24-hour Yizkor candle (before the holy day).

May God remember the soul of my ____ (mention relationship), _____ (mention Hebrew name and that of his/her mother) who has gone to his/her eternal home.

In loving testimony to his/her life I pledge charity to help perpetuate ideals important to him/her.

In this merit, may his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life with the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and with the other righteous men and women who abide in the Garden of Eden; and let us say, “Amen.”

For More Information:
Rabbi Geoffrey Haber,
Director of Spiritual Care
416-785-2500 ext. 3743
ghaber@baycrest.org
3560 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario M6A 2E1
416-785-2500
Visit us online at www.baycrest.org

Contains sacred texts, please do not discard as trash but dispose through burial in a geniza by contacting your local rabbi or synagogue.
What is a Yahrzeit?

Yahrzeit means "Time (of) Year" in Yiddish and refers to the anniversary of the day of death of a relative. In Jewish tradition, mourners ritually grieve for a year and then return to a fully normal life when the year of mourning is over.

The Shulhan Arukh, the 16th-century code of Jewish Law, notes: "One should not grieve too much for the dead." However, there are several occasions each year when Jews memorialize the dead. The most significant of these is yahrzeit, the anniversary of the death according to the Hebrew calendar.

How Do We Observe Yahrzeit?

As is the case in all Jewish holy days, yahrzeit observance begins at night. Those observing a yahrzeit light a 24-hour candle and, through our act of remembrance, "the spirit of the dead person fills the room again for 24 hours." Jewish Law permits the use of electric candles when fire safety is a concern as at Baycrest.

One attends synagogue for the evening, morning, and afternoon services and recites the Kaddish, the mourner’s prayer.

If it is not possible to attend services and say Kaddish, the Maleh Rahamim ("God, full of mercy") prayer may be recited in the absence of a minyan (quorum needed for public prayer). One should not go to a celebration or party on the day of yahrzeit, and some people fast on that day.

Text of the Kaddish

Yitgadal v’yitkadash sh’mei raba b’alma d’v’ya chirutei, v’yamlich malchut b’chayeichon uvyomeichon uvychayei d’cholbeit ... l’alam ul’almeialmaya. Yitbarach v’yishtabach, v’yitpa’ar v’yitromam v’yitnaseh, v’yithadar v’yit’aleh v’yit’halal

For a Man

Y’hei sh’mei raba m’varach l’alam ul’almei almah.

Yibitarach v’yishtabach, v’yitpa’ar v’yitromam v’yitnaseh, v’yithadar v’yit’aleh v’yit’halal

For a Women