

TIPS FOR Helping your Child Grieve

KEEP WORDS SIMPLE

Stay calm and speak directly. Be clear, such as “I have some sad news to share with you, grandma has died.” Using phrases like “went to sleep” or “passed away” may not be understood or may cause children to fear going to sleep. Don’t feel the need to share every detail as this could overwhelm.



GIVE TIME AND LISTEN

Pause, and give your child time to react. Children may not react the way you would expect. Some seem not to react at all, some may ask a lot of questions, some may cry. Just be present. P.S. It’s okay for them to see you cry or feel sad.



NAME YOUR FEELINGS

Model naming some of your feelings, and invite them to do the same. A “feelings wheel” can be helpful as a child identifies the mixed emotions they probably feel. This will also help you to know where they are at as they process the loss.



REMEMBER TOGETHER

Say the person’s name. Share happy memories when they come to mind. Taking some ownership is vital to healing, so suggest that your child keep a journal, make art, or put together a photo album to reflect on happy times together. It may also help if they write a letter to the spouse or family of the lost loved one.



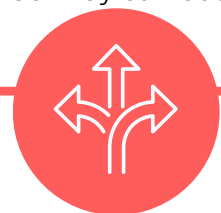
COMFORT AND HELP

Be available for the moments they need comforting and a listening ear. Help them to not stay “stuck” and spiral to a place of depression by guiding them through their feelings. It’s important that they don’t isolate themselves, so encourage them to spend time with friends and family. There are many places to get connected to more support!



BE FLEXIBLE (BUT KEEP ROUTINE!)

God made each person unique, and each person will grieve differently. It can come in waves, and sometimes at odd times. Your child may regress in behaviors, struggle to concentrate, lose some sleep, or even express anger. Expect the unexpected, but maintain family activities and routines so they can count on that stability.



You know your child best. If you sense they need professional guidance, we can help! Call our Southeast Christian Church Care Ministry at 502-253-8400

the Feel Wheel

ages 5-12

