

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Psalm 27:13-14

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Dear God, may _____ know of the confidence we can have in waiting on You Lord. Grant them the strength and courage to take heart when times feel tough and they feel alone. Give them the confidence in your goodness, knowing it both celebrates the joys of the day and remembers the good times of the past. May they take heart in You O Lord. Amen.

RESOURCES...

> Web

The Grieving Process: Coping with Death

Chicago Tribune: Helping your child comfort a grieving friend

Focus on the Family: Suicide and Loss Books and Referrals Resources List



PARENTING
resources

PARENTING MATTERS:

LOSS

— MIDDLE SCHOOL —

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Loss is difficult. It could look like the loss of a loved one, pet, or home. Grief can feel like an undertow that affects every part of a person's life for a season. Parents get the privilege to walk with their children in sensitivity and grace as they navigate the grieving process.

YOU PARENT THEM WELL WHEN YOU...

KNOW:

As a teen enters the grieving process, they may be feeling intense anger for the first time in their lives. Some teens may not be able to vocalize what they are angry about, others might let out a tirade, and still others might be paralyzed in fear because of their feelings. This anger might result in challenging behavior at home, school, or with friends. Let your teenager know that it is natural to be angry, but work with them on expressing it in a way that is safe for themselves and others.

EXPECT:

Your child feels like they are being forced to grow up overnight. They now suddenly feel like they must take on adult responsibilities in order for everyday life to function. Resentment and bitterness might creep in during this stage. If the feelings of resentment or bitterness don't dissipate over time, adding professional help to aid in your teen's navigation of loss might be helpful. With time, resentment and bitterness will temper as their new roles will become more defined and accepted.

PREPARE:

Your child might struggle talking to you about their grief. It might feel hurtful to know that they are talking with friends or other adults when you are trying your best to help support them. Teenagers tend to be protective of families, especially when bigger emotions are involved. They are trying to avoid causing you added stress. You should prepare to chauffeur them to places where they are able to talk with friends, mentors, or coaches about what is happening and encourage them to seek out safe people in their social circles to talk with.

TALK:

Friends might shift as your child walks through the grieving process. Friends are likely going to find themselves ill-equipped in this time and won't know what to say or do. Your child may feel like their friends don't understand and might lash out at them. They also may isolate from friends as a coping mechanism. Talk with your child about how to handle conversations when a well-meaning friend seems insensitive. Share that some friends might be withdrawing because they don't know what to say about the situation or reminds them of their own losses. Let them know that, in time, these friends may come back around.

YOUR NEXT STEPS ARE...

Understanding the Grief Stages

Grief is a healthy manifestation of loss and trauma. It can come in many forms like...

- **Acute loss** - Grief brought about from an immediate incident.
- **Anticipatory grief** - A diagnosis or knowledge of moving to a new place.
- **Delayed Grief** - Grief that manifests itself at a later time when multiple losses happen in a short span of time.

Your child may experience denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance. These stages of grief can be occurring simultaneously or independently of one another. Below are some ways it might look like in your child's life:

DENIAL

- Becomes extremely busy or over-committed with friends or extracurriculars.
- Fears larger scale emotions they might be feeling for the first time.

ANGER

- Lashes out at those closest to them who are trying to help.
- Irritable.

DEPRESSION

- Might not want to get out of bed all day.
- Hostility towards friends who may have something that they lost.

BARGAINING

- Repeated conversations about "what if's."
- Reaching out to others to find support or meaning via social media.

ACCEPTANCE

- Finding new people or things to fill the void they've lost.
- Found a new way to cope with their new realities.

God has uniquely equipped you to be their parent. He has given you a church community to partner with you in areas where you fall short. You may not know all the reasons why your child or family have to undergo loss, trauma or pain, but God knows exactly what it feels like to watch His own child struggle, grieve, and deal with loss. He is our comforter, refuge in times of trouble, and our helper.