

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

God, may _____ know you are their comfort and hope. I pray they find rest in you for their mind, body, and spirit. May they see you as a God who has a easy yoke and willing to partner with us in every season of our lives. Comfort them, lead them, and remind them that they are never alone. Amen.

RESOURCES...

> Web

Focus on the Family: Parenting in the Midst of Tragedy pdf

Focus on the Family: Understanding and Coping with Trauma

Focus on the Family: Talking to Teen About Suicide of Friend or Acquaintance

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



PARENTING
resources

PARENTING MATTERS: LOSS

— HIGH SCHOOL —

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

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

YOU PARENT THEM WELL WHEN YOU...

KNOW:

You're going to mess up and say the wrong thing. Grief and loss is not a linear process, so prepare for ups and downs. Everyone affected by this loss will be experiencing grief in different ways and at different times. Know you will need to be patient with one another as everyone deals with grief in their own way.

EXPECT:

While their lives may feel like they are falling apart, it's important to keep familiar boundaries and expectations. Teens will be faced with new emotions they may have never felt before and it may lead to poor choices. By enforcing expectations, parents are able to help remind them that life will one day return to normal. You may need to recalibrate the consequence for a misbehavior due to the circumstance, but don't ignore the consequences all together. Doing this helps maintain familiar boundaries and creates security in a world that may feel anything but secure.

PREPARE:

Your teen will fight for control. Teenagers' social lives will either accelerate or decelerate significantly. Going to familiar places and seeing old friends can help them find a sense of normalcy and control in an abnormal situation. They might try risk-taking behaviors to help them feel like they are back in control. This might look like pushing relational limits, driving recklessly, or even the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Prepare to have grace when your teen tries to maintain control and seek professional help if behaviors become abusive.

TALK:

Discuss with your students who might be safe people to talk with about the situation. This might be a friend, coach, mentor, or professional. High schoolers are testing out their autonomy. They might be afraid to express grief with loved ones who are already grieving because they feel like a burden to them. Help might be rejected at first, but be consistent in letting them know that you are a safe person in their lives if they want to talk.

YOUR NEXT STEPS ARE...

Understanding the Grief Stages

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

- **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 occur simultaneously or independently of one another.

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 experience 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 hope and comforter, refuge in times of trouble, and our helper.