

Single Parent Networker

Ascension, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit,
Corpus Christi, St. Anne, St. Mary, St. Joseph,
Christ the King, and Spirit of Life

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Helping Your Child Deal With Death

When a loved one dies, it can be difficult to know how to help kids cope with the loss, particularly as you work through your own grief. How much kids can understand about death depends largely on their age, life experiences, and personality. But there are a few important points to remember in all cases.

Explaining Death in a Child's Terms

Be honest with kids and encourage questions. This can be hard because you may not have all of the answers. But it's important to create an atmosphere of comfort and openness, and send the message that there's no one right or wrong way to feel. You might also share your spiritual beliefs about death. A child's capacity to understand death - and your approach to discussing it will vary according to the child's age. Each child is unique, but here are some guidelines to keep in mind.

Until kids are about 5 or 6 years old, their view of the world is very literal. So explain the death in basic and concrete terms. If the loved one was ill or elderly, for example, you might explain that the person's body wasn't working anymore and the doctors couldn't fix it. If someone dies suddenly, like in an accident, you might explain what happened - that because of this very sad event, the person's body stopped

working. You may have to explain that "dying" or "dead" means that the body stopped working.

Kids this young often have a hard time understanding that all people and living things eventually die, and that it's final and they won't come back. So even after you've explained this, kids may continue to ask where the loved one is or when the person is returning. As frustrating as this can be, continue to calmly reiterate that the person has died and can't come back.

Avoid using euphemisms, such as telling the kids that the loved one "went away" or "went to sleep" or even that your family "lost" the person. Because young kids think so literally, such phrases might inadvertently make them afraid to go to sleep or fearful whenever someone goes away.

Also remember that kids' questions may sound much deeper than they actually are. For example, a 5-year-old who asks where someone who died is now probably isn't asking whether there's an afterlife. Rather, kids might be satisfied hearing that someone who died is now in the cemetery. This is a great time to share your beliefs about heaven.

Kids from the ages of about 6 to 10 start to grasp the finality of death, even if they don't understand that it will happen to every living thing one day. A 9 year old might think, for example, that by behaving or making a wish, grandma won't die. Often, kids this age personify death

and think of it as the "boogeyman" or a ghost or a skeleton. They deal best with death when given accurate, simple, clear, and honest explanations about what happened.

As kids mature into teens, they start to understand that every human being eventually dies, regardless of grades, behavior, wishes or anything they try to do.

As your teen's understanding about death evolves, questions may naturally come about mortality and vulnerability. For example, if your 16 year olds friend dies in a car accident, your teen might be reluctant to get to get behind the wheel or even ride in a car for a while. The best way to respond is to empathize about how frightening and sad this accident was. It's also a good time to remind your teen about ways to stay safe and healthy, like never getting in a car with a driver who has been drinking and always wearing a seatbelt.

Teens also tend to search more for meaning in the death of someone close to them. They also sometimes experience some guilt, particularly if one of their peers died. What ever your teen is experiencing, the best

thing you can do is to encourage the expression and sharing of grief.

And if you need help, many resources - from books to counselors to community organizations can provide guidance. Your efforts will go a long way in helping your child get through this difficult time and through the inevitable losses and tough times that come later in life.

Mourning the Loss

Is it right to take kids to funerals? It's up to you and your child. It's appropriate to let kids take part in any mourning ritual if they want to. First explain what happens at a funeral or memorial and give kids the choice of whether to go.


What do you tell a young child about the funeral? You may want to explain that the body of the person who died is going to be in a casket, and that the person won't be able to talk or see or hear anything. Explain that others may speak about the person who died and that some mourners may be crying.

Again, share any spiritual beliefs you have about death and explain the meaning of the mourning ritual that you and your family observe.

If you think your own grief might prevent you from helping your child at this difficult time, ask a friend or family member to care for and focus on your child during the service. Choose someone you both like and trust who won't mind leaving the funeral if your child wants to go. Many parents worry about letting their kids witness their own grief, pain, and tears about a death. Don't - allowing your child to see your pain shows that crying is a natural reaction to emotional pain and loss. And it can make kids more comfortable sharing their feelings. But it's also important to convey that no matter how sad you may feel, you'll still be able to care for

your family and make your child feel safe. And it can make kids more comfortable sharing their feelings. Parents can't always shield kids from sadness and losses. But helping them learn to cope with them builds emotional resources they can rely on throughout life.

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Feast of the
Guardian
Angels—
October 2

A PARENT'S
PRAYER TO
THE
GUARDIAN
ANGELS OF
THEIR
CHILDREN

I humbly salute
you, O you faithful, heavenly
friends of my children! I give you
heartfelt thanks for all the love and
goodness you show them.

At some future day I shall, with
thanks more worthy than I can now
give, repay your care for them, and
before the whole heavenly court
acknowledge their indebtedness to
your guidance and protection.

Continue to watch over them.
Provide for all their needs of body
and soul.

Pray, likewise, for me and my
whole family, that we may all one
day rejoice in your blessed
company.
Amen.



Parenting Pointers

592. Oct. 3: Respect Life Month. It's easy to pray for our own children. Their needs are so apparent to us. Pray today, not only for your own children, but for all children in our world, both born and unborn.

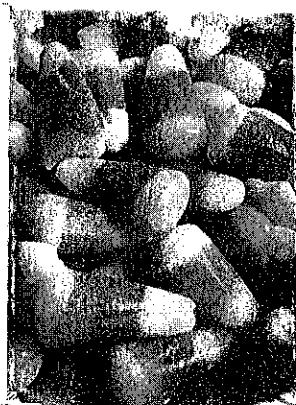
593. Oct. 10: If your child has a problem and wants your input, but you are caught off guard, try saying "Tell me more about that." or "What do you think you should do?" Responses like this can buy you time and clarify the situation. Works with spouses too.

594. Oct. 17: (Respect Life Month) Consider all lives that are threatened or suffering in our society today, no matter the age. What life issue is dearest to your heart? (Abortion, Capital Punishment, Gun Control, Supporting single mothers, Poverty...) Tell your child why. Can you take one action together such as read up on it, donate, write letters, take political action, pray...?

595. Oct. 24: "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. (Ex 22:20) Your child may be too young to understand the politics of the current immigration issue, but you can talk about what it means to be an outsider and different, i.e. an alien. Tell them the story of the Exodus. Welcome a stranger into your home for dinner. Local resettlement services (like [Catholic Charities](http://catholiccharitiesusa.org/find-help/) <http://catholiccharitiesusa.org/find-help/>) can offer ideas on how to reach out and help.

596. Oct. 31: (Halloween) Parenting is a hard and serious business, but sometimes we conscientious parents need to loosen up. Amid the hectic search for costumes and treats, take time to enjoy this playful holiday with your younger kids. Yes, check their candy, but it's not a sin to eat something less than nutritious once a year.

Used with permission by Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net



Easy Halloween Recipe for Parents & Kids

Halloween Popcorn

2 bags microwave popcorn, popped
1 bag candy corn
1 16-ounce package white chocolate bark*...
Halloween sprinkles
wax paper

Place the popped popcorn and candy corn in a very large bowl (you need plenty of room to stir the popcorn). Melt the white chocolate bark in the microwave in 30 second increments, stirring after each time, until melted. Drizzle over the popcorn and candy corn and stir to coat each piece of popcorn. Pour the mixture over wax paper and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with Halloween sprinkles and allow to cool for at least 15-30 minutes. Break into pieces. Serves 6-8.



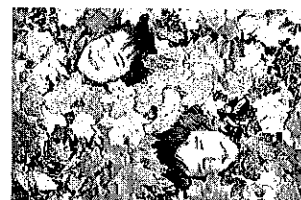
The month of October has been specially selected as the "Month of the Rosary" in honor of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Here are some suggestions for praying the Rosary in your home:

- ✦ Take turns among family members leading the rosary.
- ✦ Join with another family or group to pray the Rosary for a special concern.
- ✦ Keep the Rosary by your bed.

Forgiving is love's toughest work, and love's biggest risk. If you twist it into something it was never meant to be, it can make you a doormat or an insufferable manipulator. Forgiving seems almost unnatural. Our sense of fairness tells us people should pay for the wrong they do. But forgiving is love's power to break nature's rule.

- Lewis B. Smedes



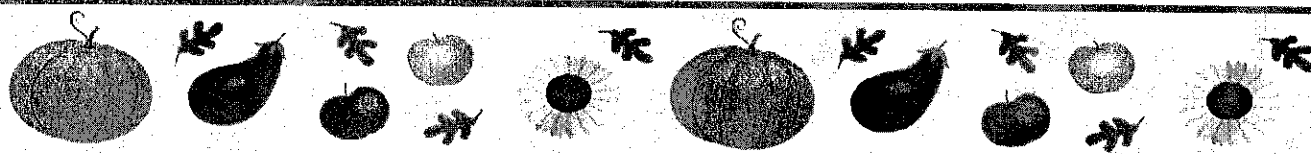
Fall Activities for Families

1. Have the kids shut off all the electronics and then as a family go outside and show them how they can begin to enjoy the beauty of the fall weather by taking a hike, raking leaves, or just exploring the beauty of the day.
2. Pick pinecones and take them home to decorate. All you need is pinecones, different art and crafts supplies such as ribbons, glitter, colorful little pom-poms balls and don't forget the glue.
3. Go apple picking and as a family choose what you would like to make using your apples. Encourage everyone to help.
4. Decorate the front porch for the upcoming seasons.
5. Go on a hayrack ride and end the day with one final trip to the farmers market.
6. Carve and then toast your pumpkin seeds.

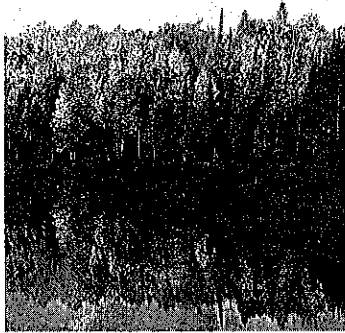


When you have brought up kids, there are memories you store directly in your tear ducts.

- Robert Brault



ONE OF THE COLORS OF FALL REMINDS US OF GOD



Orange has no rhyming word in the English language, so the word is unique, just as God is unique.

Orange is made up of two colors, red and yellow. Red stands for the fire of the Holy Spirit and yellow stands for the Light of Christ. These two colors come together and form a third color. Thus, orange is a mystery, like the mystery of our God as the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Science has discovered that orange is the only color that does not disappear nor fade into the atmosphere. Therefore, it is always with us, just as God is with us always. So this Fall take notice of the presence of orange all around you as you come and go in God's world.

Source: Unknown

Beginning Experience:

Separated, Divorced, Widow
Tara at 701-426-8303

Level I—Charity Lutheran

Level II—Faith Lutheran

Level III—Good Shepherd

Each level is 10 weeks. All levels run concurrently. See website below.

Children's Beginning Experience:

Susan at 1-701-258-3152

Free Preschool for 3&4 year olds for eligible families, contact BECEP at 701-323-4400 for school year.

Caring for Children Program—health coverage to uninsured children. 1-800-342-4718. www.ndcaring.org

Single File Newsletter

For information

www.bismarcksinglefile.com

Parish Information:

Cathedral—222-2259

St. Anne—223-1549

Ascension—223-3606

St. Mary- 223-5562

Corpus Christi—255-4600

Spirit of Life-663-1660

Christ the King -663-8842

St. Joseph -663-9562

Office of Family Ministry—Diocese of Bismarck—

Joyce McDowall 701-204-7209

Toll Free 1-877-405-7435

www.bismarckdiocese.com

jmcdowall@bismarckdiocese.com

If you would like your name removed from the mailing list, please call your parish coordinator

Parents Forever-Education for Families in divorce Transition, call NDSU Parent Resource Center, 667-3342 or 667-3340

WEBSITES THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST:

- www.celebratesimply.com
- www.bereavementmag.com
- www.beginningexperienceofwesternnorthdakota.org
- www.vibrantfaithathome.org
- www.usccb.org

www.fambooks.com/moms.htm

www.singleparents.about.com

www.bridgetobenefits.org