



If you or a loved one is grieving,
please contact the parish office to
see what resources are available to you.

*The child who is understood and loved
can himself give understanding and
love now and throughout life.*

-Earl A. Grollman

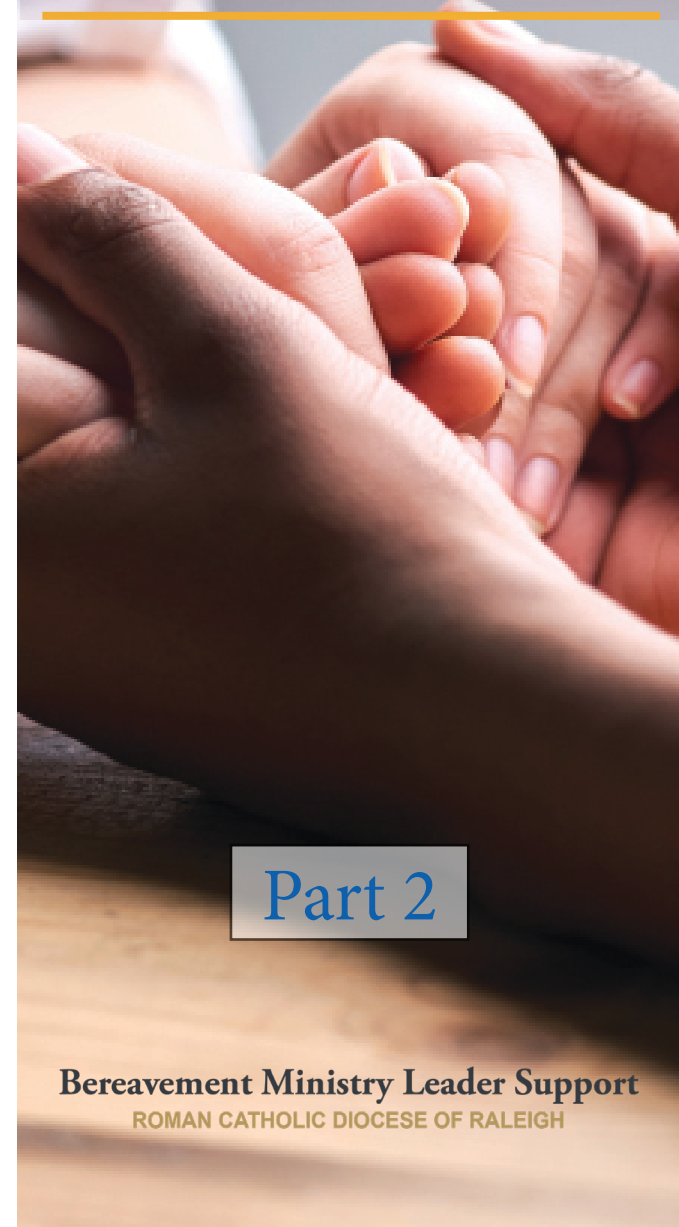
Adapted from materials of the
National Catholic
Bereavement Ministry



CATHOLIC
DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH

Helping Children Understand Death, Loss and Grief

CATHOLIC GRIEF SUPPORT SERIES



Part 2

Bereavement Ministry Leader Support
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

Grief in Children, Part 2

Grief in Children

When children lose a parent, a brother or sister, or a close friend, they need help to understand death and to cope with the grief they feel and see in others. Below is a continued list of specific actions that parents and other adults can take that will help children who are grieving.

9. Keep your life as much like it used to be as possible. Continue with day-to-day activities — school, church, sports, etc. Try to eat meals on a regular schedule. Maintain a bedtime routine. Children feel more secure when there is some predictability and routine in their lives. A familiar schedule helps them to understand that life will continue for them and for their families.
10. Encourage the child to engage in play and expressive activities such as drawing, storytelling, music, puppetry and writing. Children often lack the verbal skills for expressing feelings, but they can be often successful at expressing those feelings in ways other than talking. By creating opportunities for such expression, you will help the child express feelings in appropriate ways rather than through inappropriate behavior.
11. Sometimes children are comforted by writing a letter to the person who has died, particularly if the death was sudden. Ask, "If there had been time to say goodbye, what would you like to have said?" You can assist with writing the letter. Sometimes children may want to show the letter to other family members as an expression of caring for the person who died.
12. Encourage the child to talk about memories and "special times" with the person who died. Making a memory book or memory box can be a healing activity. Memories are an important



Key points to remember:

- **Try to keep your daily routine with the child.**
- **Encourage the child to write a letter to the loved one.**
- **Always make time for talking about memories.**
- **Children grief support groups can be helpful.**
- **Let the child know that you are always available to listen.**

“And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.”

– Mark 10: 16

part of healing. Talking about memories helps children to know that they can and will always remember the person who died.

13. Sometimes children get reassurance and comfort from other children who have experienced a loss. Children’s support groups help to remove the feeling of isolation and build a feeling of community with other bereaved children.
14. Provide books on grief and loss as helpful resources for your child. Good resource books are available for every age group.
15. Talk about healthy ways of coping with angry feelings. Show the child how you cope with your own angry feelings in appropriate ways by hitting a pillow, writing in a journal, getting vigorous physical exercise, etc. Explain that acting angrily towards other people, either with disrespectful words or actions, will only get the child in trouble and make him or her feel worse.
16. Let the child know that you are always available to listen. Remember to be flexible. Listen to the way the child feels. Do not try to tell the child how to feel.
17. Be patient and understanding in the face of repeated questions. Children need to hear the same “story” over and over again. They will often ask the same questions repeatedly.
18. If you are concerned about your child’s way of coping, seek professional help. Children who have experienced numerous losses, traumatic or violent deaths can be overwhelmed and benefit greatly from one-on-one professional help. Your Parish or the Diocese of Raleigh can make referrals if you need assistance.