

GRIEF TIPS FOR KIDS AND TEENS

Here is a list of ideas to help you when you are grieving the death of a loved one. You may find some of these suggestions helpful, and you may think of even better ideas on your own. There are many ways to move toward healing and to remember your loved one.

Talk with a Friend

Consider talking with a friend, sharing your thoughts and feelings about your loved one's death, as well as memories of this special person. Choose someone you can trust to respect your feelings and who will not tell others what you have said. You may find it hard to open up with another person, but it eventually can help you feel better.

Carry or Wear a Linking Object

Carry something special that reminds you of the one who has died. It could be jewelry or another small object. Choose something that will fit in your pocket or school bag.

Create a Memory Book

Gather pictures of your loved one and other keepsakes, such as artwork or an event program. Glue these to pieces of paper to make a scrapbook. You can be creative in the type of paper you choose and the way you bind the pages together. You may then look through this keepsake by yourself and with others.

Remember Your Dreams

After a loved one has died, you might dream about that person. Some dreams may be weird or scary; others may be happy and fun. No matter which type of dream you have, it can be helpful to talk about it with someone you trust.

Tell Others What Helps You and What Doesn't

It may be hard to tell others what you need, but it is important. After all, others cannot read your mind. So, tell a trusted adult friend or family member what makes you sad and what makes you feel better. Also find out what helps others who are grieving, because it is different for each person.

Plant Something as a Memorial

Consider planting a tree or flowers in memory of your loved one—something special that you take care of and enjoy. You may want to plant it near your home, so that you can watch it grow and change.

Spend Time in your Loved One's Space

You may find it comforting to sit in your loved one's favorite chair or to stand in his or her room for a short time. Only do this if and when it feels OK (but remember, feeling OK can include letting out healing tears).

Read Bible Verses That Remind You of Who God Is

The better we know God from the Bible, the easier it is to trust Him when life is hard and unfair. Scripture reminds you of how much He loves you, will comfort you and provide for you. Talk to Him anytime and often! (Pray!)

Sleep with Something Soft

No one is ever too old to cuddle with a soft toy or pillow. You might find one that in some way reminds you of your loved one. You may even have a toy or pillow that belonged to the person who died. Another idea is to sleep in one of your loved one's shirts.

Write Your Loved One a Letter

Write a letter or other messages to your loved one. Include your thoughts and feelings. You also can write about activities that you used to do together. Write it on your computer or handwrite it on special paper. Keep these letters or throw them away—you get to decide what you do with them.

Light a Candle

Consider lighting a battery candle in memory of your loved one. This can be especially meaningful with a group of people. As you light the candle, say your loved one's name or something special about him or her. **ONLY LIGHT "real" CANDLES WHEN YOU ARE SUPERVISED BY AN ADULT.** You can use a battery candle to safely leave a "love light" burning.

Use Your Hands

Actively using your hands can help you feel better. This may include putting together puzzles, painting, working with clay, or even helping others with chores or cleaning. Create something that would make your decedent smile.

Listen to Music

Sometimes music can remind you of your loved one and you may feel sad, especially when you hear a certain song. Music can help you cry when you need to cry. You also can choose music that makes you feel good. You may want to start your day by listening to a favorite song.

Remember, it is OK to Laugh

Funny things can happen to you, just like they did before your loved one died. Take time to listen to or tell a funny joke. It's OK to laugh. It can make you feel better, just like crying does.

Remember, it is OK to Cry

Sometimes when you miss your loved one a lot you might start to cry. During this time, you may want to be alone or you may want to be with others. Do what is best for you.

Help Someone Else

You may meet other kids who have also had a loved one die. You can reach out and be a good friend to them by listening or inviting them to play. You also may be able to do practical things for them, like help them with homework or a chore that they don't have energy to do. Another way to help others is by doing fundraising or other activities to help people who are grieving a loss.

Find a Kids' Grief Support Group

It really helps to process your grief with other kids who "get it." Ask your parent to look for (or request) a "Kid Talk" group by talking to your pastor or school counselor. Visit <https://kidtalkgrief.com> to learn how to start and conduct a group.