

TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

The Grieving of Martha and Mary

Some features to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the circumstances are similar to your own:

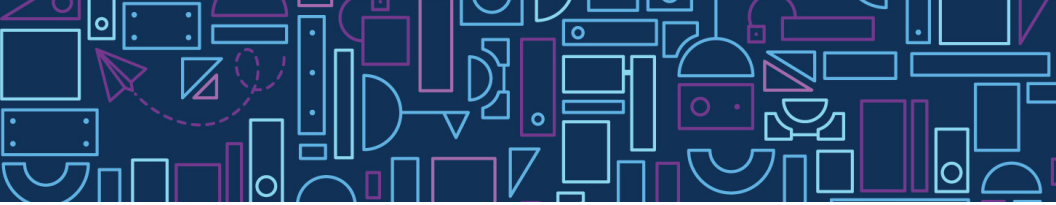
- Unexpected illness
- Inability to find treatments
- Unexpected death of sibling/friend
- Absence of visitors
- Attacks against family members

Some feelings to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the emotions are similar to your own:

- Sadness
- Frustration
- Rejection
- Loss
- Confusion
- Helplessness
- Neglect

A summary about what happened.

When their brother, Lazarus, was sick, Mary and Martha informed Jesus about it, but Jesus did not come immediately. Even though Jesus loved the family, there were rulers who wanted to kill anyone connected with Jesus. Thus Jesus remained where he was in order to spare the family the conflict. Four days after Lazarus died, Jesus arrived in their town and was met by Martha, who reminded Jesus that her brother would still be alive if Jesus had come earlier. Martha also declared her faith that her brother would rise on the last day during the resurrection of the dead. Mary, who was with a group of mourners, heard that Jesus had come and left with the group. She fell at the feet of Jesus, and reminded Jesus that her brother would still be alive if Jesus had come earlier. Mary wept, and others wept with her, including Jesus. Others noticed the weeping and said that truly Lazarus was loved dearly. Together they went to the gravesite.

A decorative header featuring a dense pattern of various geometric shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles) in white and light blue outlines on a dark blue background.

Some of the actions of Mary and Martha that you can **TRY ON** to see if any fit you well:

- **Tell others what is happening** - Send a message to those who can help the situation or those who could grieve with you. If it is helpful, ask others to pass along the message on your behalf, or ask others to inform the ones who may not know
- **Cry or Weep** - If tears surface in your eyes, let them fall. Sit with sadness and do not feel like you must distract yourself from the feelings that come.
- **Tell those who are absent** - Absence during difficult times can be hurtful. If individuals or groups are absent and you want them with you, let them know. Ask them why they aren't there for you. Tell them why you want them near.
- **Talk about what comes next** - Discuss what happens next for those who are no longer alive. Talk with others about what you believe.
- **Tell God about your feelings** - Both Martha and Mary express their feelings to Jesus because he wasn't with them to help them how they wanted. Use words, journal, or other fitting ways to tell God what you think God should have done and what you wanted God to do. This can include expressing intense emotions or beliefs.
- **Envision** - Like Martha envisioning Lazarus rising again in the last days, envision the healing and resurrection of your situation. What would that day be like? What sights, smells, sounds, or experiences do you imagine?



Some of the phrases of Mary and Martha that you can *TRY ON* to see if any feel right for you:

- Lord, the one you love is sick.
- Our loved one is asleep.
- Our loved one has died.
- If you had done something my loved one would not have died.
- I know my loved one will be resurrected in the future.
- God, you could have stopped this from happening.
- I still believe.
- Could not God have intervened?
- This one was loved greatly.

Some ideas you can *TRY ON* with a child:

- **Inform others** - Ask your child who the child wants to tell about what is going on. Decide together how you can inform these people.
- **Share with God** - Invite your child to share feelings with God either alone or with you. You could ask guiding questions like, "Since God is with you, what would you like to tell God right now?" or "If you were to tell God how you are feeling, what would you say?" or "What would you like to hear from God?" or "What would you like God to do for you right now?"
- **Stay with sadness** - If your child is feeling sad or is crying, give space for your child to stay in the sadness however long the child wants. Hold your child, give your child time to grieve, and let your child feel sad rather than trying to comfort your child, distract your child, or cut off expressions of sadness. Validate the shift of emotions that the child may have whether after a few

minutes or a long, sustained period of time or re-engaging with sadness at intermittent periods.

- **Imagine what it will be like** - Read scriptures about life after death (like John 14 or Revelation 21-22). Create artwork together depicting what your child imagines it will be like to be in a place like this.
- **Pray together** - Verbalize or record prayers where you and your child express feelings to God and what you want God to do for you and those around you.

A summary of what happens next:

When she was told that her brother would rise again, Martha expressed her belief in the resurrection of the dead on the last day. Jesus then mentioned that one who believes will live; Jesus proceeded to ask Martha if she believed this, and she said that she did. With Mary they went to the gravesite. When Jesus requested the stone to be moved, Martha expressed her fear about the strong smell, and Jesus encouraged her to trust what God wanted to do. Jesus prayed, thanked the Father for hearing prayer and helping others to believe. When Jesus loudly told Lazarus to come out, he came out in burial cloths, and Jesus told them to unwrap him. When others who hated Jesus found out what happened, they wanted to kill Lazarus too. Eventually Lazarus, Mary, and Martha became witnesses about the resurrection of Jesus. According to various traditions each of them died peacefully, and each was honored in anticipation of the resurrection from the dead.

Where to find the *Grieving of Martha and Mary*:

John 11