

TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

The Grieving of the Apostles

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

- Death by suicide
- Inability to bury a body
- Loss of a companion
- Vacancy in a leadership position
- Death of a minister
- Betrayal by a friend

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

- Confusion
- Wistfulness
- Pressure
- Transition
- Betrayal

A summary about what happened.

Jesus had chosen twelve leaders, one for each of the tribes of Israel. Among the twelve chosen was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the group by guiding the enemies of Jesus to where they could arrest him. Regretting what he did, Judas took his own life. News of Judas' death and how his body had been scattered in the field he purchased shook the other leaders. The group gathered with a hundred and twenty others to pray, remember Judas, and decide how to proceed. They met repeatedly, looked at scripture, and listened to one of the twelve named Peter, who shared how he viewed the situation. Peter retold Judas' story, reflected on scripture, and urged the group to honor Judas' life. They also recognized the need to find another leader to continue the ministry that Judas had been doing.



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

- **Gather repeatedly** - Like the disciples, seek support from a church or community group. Grieve together, listen to the insights of leaders, and find strength in the number of supporters. Be sure to meet multiple times in order to maintain support while grieving.
- **Pray together** - Even without clear answers, praying together can unify you to a group who shares your grief. Group prayers can give voice to your grief.
- **Invite leaders to retell the story** - With traumatic deaths or suicides, it can be difficult to retell the story of what happened. Balancing sensitivity to the dead and the living while speaking the truth can be difficult. Hearing a trusted leader share what happened can provide clarity, sensitivity, and space for collective healing and discernment for how to move forward.
- **Read scripture together** - Like Peter's use of the psalms, scripture can offer perspective and language for your grief. Ask a trusted leader to provide some scriptures that would connect to the situation. Keep verses that fit the situation rather than forcing positivity.
- **Discuss next steps** - Grieving doesn't require making decisions alone. Share the burden of planning by having a group talk about next steps with you. The process of moving forward can be shared with trusted friends and leaders.

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

- We are in this together like a family.
- This is what happened...
- The one who died was one of us.
- What everyone heard was...
- It is written in the Scriptures...
- Some decisions are necessary right now.
- Lord, you know everyone's heart.
- Lord, show us what you want.

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

- **Gather with others** - Invite your child to visit a church or community gathering. Prepare your child for what the child will experience and encourage meeting with leaders.
- **Discuss the death** - Often talking about a death, especially for death by suicide or violence, may be uncomfortable or avoided. However this can make a child feel that bringing up important details is forbidden. Frequently gaps in knowledge will be filled with a child's imagination or fears. Share age-appropriate details to prevent confusion and to help you and your child be on the same page.
- **Engage Scripture together** - Help your child to listen to parts of the Bible that might resonate, like Lamentations or Psalms. Ask your child to share if any words stood out.
- **Be honest** - You may have a desire to shield your child from the harsh realities that can be part of someone's death. It may be common to honor the dead, but give space for honest reflection and the ways others remember the person who died. Talk with your child directly about what happened and process together the emotions that come.

- **Decide together what to do next** - Involve your child in decisions about what to do next. If there are roles or responsibilities that need to be filled, ask your child for input. If you need to change a routine, ask your child to suggest what might be good steps moving forward.

A summary of what happens next:

The group listened to Peter and agreed to follow his advice for what should happen next. The group offered names of people who would honor Judas by continuing the ministry that he started. The group prayed that God would direct them to the right candidate who would make sure that the ministry would continue, and then they followed the priestly practice of casting lots to determine who it would be. They added a disciple named Matthias to the group and allowed him to carry on the ministry so that what Judas started would not end.

Where to find the *Grieving of the Apostles*:

Acts 1