

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

KIDS, TEENS, SPIRITUALITY AND GRIEF

Grief can have a significant impact on spiritual development, as kids and teens begin to ask and address questions they may not have had before. Consider the following when talking about God and grief.

- **Think about development**

Depending on the age of your child or teen, they may have a very concrete understanding of God, death, good and evil, and other abstract concepts. Preschoolers may be content with 1-2 sentence explanations, while teens are wrestling with complex questions that adults often struggle to understand as well. Be mindful of your child's attention span, ability to think abstractly, and typical understanding of faith as you discuss how faith intersects with grief

- **Provide comfort and reassurance**

Children and teens are often fearful about whether or not they will be cared for after a death, whether others will die, and what will happen next. Emphasize God's power to care for them and comfort them. Talk with them about ways that they have noticed God's presence and provision, whether that is through the care of others or more directly in their own time with God.

- **Expect and allow for questions**

Depending on their age, kids and teens may have a variety of questions about God's will, power, and ability or desire to intervene in daily life. At the same time,

they are learning basic truths about life, death, and theology. You might feel very confident about some answers, such as “where is our person now?” and not at all confident about others, such as “why did God allow this to happen?”. It’s okay to say that you don’t understand some of this either. It may be helpful to focus on the emotion behind the questions, or to simply reflect back what your child or teen is saying. Remind them that God is big enough to handle our emotions, questions and confusion.