

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

PRESCHOOL, SPIRITUALITY AND GRIEF

Young children are literal thinkers, and understand things best when they can see, hear, and touch them. This can make talking about God and beliefs about life after death complicated with this age group. Here are some things to consider:

Keep it short It's tempting to give complicated explanations for questions that kids ask, especially related to God, the afterlife, and death. Remember that young children tend to focus on their own experience and the impact on them, rather than understanding the complex or intense nature of the questions they are asking. One to two sentence answers are best. If a young child has more questions, they will typically feel free to ask.

Keep it concrete Give kids information they can understand, connecting with terms they already know. Avoid using complex vocabulary with young children. You could say things like "Jesus is taking care of our person and keeping them safe. He will take care of us too." "God knows and cares about how we feel. We can talk to God about that." Sometimes it helps to use children's books about death, to connect pictures with your words and have the same words that children can return to over and over.



Keep it reassuring Young children are often fearful about whether 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. Try to avoid statements that might confuse concrete thinkers, such as saying that God needed the person with Him. Some preschoolers are also confused by statements about "going to Heaven" or similar phrasing, as people can come back from other places they go. Instead, try saying that their person is with God and cannot come back, or that God is caring for that person now. Point out ways that God is caring for them in their day-to-day life as they grieve.

