

Straight answers for young people
during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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NOBODY WANTS TO BE GIVEN THIS BOOKLET

The fact you are reading it probably means someone you love has died, or is very seriously ill, or maybe someone you care for is in that situation. When someone we love dies it is often scary, painful and heart breaking. There is no point pretending everything is okay – Grief hurts like no other pain!

These pages try to tell the truth about what happens when someone dies and how we can understand our feelings. It answers questions you might have and offers some ways of learning to live with the pain of saying goodbye.

Grief: Intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death.

In an ideal world you wouldn't be reading this, but would be sat talking, maybe looking at some photos of the person who died, and remembering them with someone. We would laugh and share tears over memories, and thank God for their life. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus means that can't happen. Lots of the ways people normally cope with grief are not options at the moment. This booklet aims to help.

We know that more people than usual will die in the next few months. The virus, and the changes it is currently bringing to how we live, will affect everyone, even if your loved one died of another cause. Death is always hard to deal with, but it might feel harder right now. Your normal routine is already disrupted, you can't get a hug from a friend and don't have the normal opportunity to talk to a teacher or youth worker if you want to. It is hard, but you are still not alone.

Bereaved/bereavement: The feeling of loss when someone you love dies. Also used to describe people who have had some die. (The bereaved)

Although death is horrible, this booklet is written in the belief that death is not the end of the story. However terrible we feel today, there is hope because Jesus promises to be with us through life and through death. I pray that by the end of this booklet you might have faith to believe that although you are grieving today there is still hope.

Here are some tips about this booklet...

- Don't try to read it all at once. Take your time. It is not a race to get to the end.
- Read the bits that are helpful and ignore the bits that do not interest you. You could always come back later.
- Careful where you leave this...if you have younger family members they might not be mature enough for parts of the booklet. Keep it safe.
- Be kind to yourself. Each of us grieves in our own way. Some things that you read about will feel like your experience and others will not. That is okay!

I JUST FEEL SO FULL OF...



When someone dies there are no set feelings that we should have. We all react in different ways.

At different points you might find you experience any of these feelings...

Numbness

Feeling frozen, detached from your emotions.

Worry

What will change, what about other grieving family members, what will happen next?

Disbelief

Feeling that the death is not real, that someone will wake you up from a dream.

Confusion

Having lots of questions and not knowing what to do.

Loneliness

Missing the person and feeling cut off from others.

Fear

Scared of being alone, of someone else getting ill or just fearful.

Anger

Frustrated and irritable, maybe wanting to lash out or blame others.

Guilt

Feeling in some way to blame, or that you could have done something to prevent the death.

Regret

Wishing you had done something, said something or acted differently.

Responsibility

Feeling you have to look after or protect other grieving people.

Jealousy

Because other people still have their loved ones.

Relief

Knowing your loved one is no longer suffering.

Despair

Everything feeling is bleak and pointless.

Overwhelmed

Feeling all of these emotions are too much to carry.

Your feelings will not stay the same all the time. They can be like waves that come and go, sometimes gentle and sometimes feeling they could wash you away. Try to remember that however bad a particular moment feels, it will pass. Grief changes as you go through it.

Grieving can also have physical effects on us. These effects might include some of the following...

- Being tearful – including crying over things that seem totally unrelated to the death
- Changes in appetite – some people don't feel like eating at all, other people want to eat everything in sight
- Changes to sleep - either finding it really hard to sleep or wanting to sleep a lot more
- Feeling tired
- Losing the ability to stay focused
- Feeling sick
- Feeling tired
- Feeling cold
- A headache

Although you might not feel like eating or sleeping the way you normally do it is helpful to try to keep to your normal pattern if you can. Also, please don't try to hide any of these physical reactions to grief from your family. More about coping with families on the next page...

The feelings and physical reactions on these pages are very common. We even see them in the Bible. In John's Gospel, in the New Testament, we read the story of Jesus at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Mary, the brother of Lazarus, is angry and blames Jesus for Lazarus' death. 'If you had been here' she says, 'My brother would not have died.'

What does Jesus do? The first thing he does is cry. Jesus feels the pain of grief and knows how much it hurts. After weeping Jesus brings Lazarus back to life and the resurrected man walks out of the grave. For Christians this is a sign that although death is part of life, death is not the end. There is hope because Jesus has defeated death. There is more about this in the 'Big Questions' section.

I wonder if you can imagine Jesus crying with grief? One title the Bible gives to Jesus is the 'Man of Sorrows'. This does not mean he was always miserable but that he understood and experienced the pain of the world. Christians believe that Jesus knows how we feel because he has been there too.



GRIEF IN FAMILIES

We know that everybody grieves in different ways. Try not to judge how other people feel because of how they are acting. They are probably really hurting, even if they are trying not to show it.

Younger children

You might have a younger brother or sister at home. Don't expect them to react in the same way as you. Babies and younger toddlers obviously have no understanding of death but might pick up on the emotions around them and be unsettled. Between 3 and 10 children move from not understanding death to realising it is a permanent reality. Don't be surprised if younger siblings ask again and again when the dead person will come back, or where they are, or even if they still eat. They might bring the death into their play and will probably jump quickly from times of being upset to times of being very normal. They might also ask questions when you are not ready for it. All of this is to be expected. They are not being unkind or not caring. They are just dealing with the news of the death in a way they can understand. Try to not be frustrated or upset at them even if what they say or do sounds hurtful.

10 to Teenagers

Being a teenager can mean a lot of change at the best of times. Like you, your siblings will have a whole mix of feelings...but they might not have the same feelings as you at the same time. Try to be sensitive to their needs as well as yours. Maybe you could use some of the pages of this booklet to share how you are both doing? Being shut in together will add tension as it will be harder to have your own space. There will almost certainly be times when you fall out. Try not to hold on to hurtful words and try not to use them. If you do say something you regret be brave enough to ask for forgiveness when things have calmed down. We are all going to make mistakes and upset each other at some point while we are locked down. The Bible says 'Be angry, yet do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger' (Ephesians chapter 4 verse 26). You will feel angry. You will probably do or say some wrong things. Try to put things right before the end of the day, even if you don't feel you should back down first. It will help everyone let go and sleep better. It will also let you have a fresh start the next day.

Parents and carers

This is probably the hardest part. If you are grieving because someone you love has died those who look after you are probably hurting too. They will also have all the feelings you have, both emotional and physical. They may also have things to organise because of the death. At the same time they will also feel responsible for looking after you will want to help as much as they can, maybe even too much.

You may find some adults try to hide their feelings from you because they think being 'normal' will help you feel secure. In one way they are right. It can be very upsetting to see your carers upset, especially if you have never seen them cry before. At the same time children can be tempted to put on a brave face and pretend everything is fine as well. You might feel adults around you already have enough to deal with without you being upset or that you need to be strong for them.

The problem is that you and your adults can end up putting a lot of energy into being strong for each other and never really communicate how you are. This pretending is understandable, but not very helpful. In normal times some people try to be okay at home and let their feelings out when with friends or at school. Sometimes adults do the same thing and seem fine around you but let their feelings out when you are not around. This means families can end up avoiding really talking about how they are feeling together. The trouble is, even if you want to pretend, Corona means you don't have that space in the same way. Pretending takes a lot of emotional energy and often when we try to hide our feelings they come out in unhelpful ways. It is much better to be honest if you can.

You may have to pick the right time, especially if you have younger siblings, but don't be afraid of asking for time to talk about how you are feeling. You might find doing one of the activities in this pack with an adult is helpful. Often it's easier to talk about important things while doing something else. You will probably find that your carers are relieved you have asked. No one has been in a situation quite like this before and your adults are probably not feeling sure how best to help you. Both you and they won't get everything right, but if you help your family share how you are all feeling the bonds between you will become stronger.

What about friends?

We all need friends. Hopefully, despite the lockdown, you are still able to contact your friends. Here are 4 tips to remember about friends right now...

1. They will react in different ways. Some will be happy to talk to you, others might be embarrassed and disappear for a while. This might be because they don't want to say the wrong thing, or maybe they have had a bereavement themselves. Don't think being dropped by a friend is unusual or because you have done something wrong.
2. Think about how you want friends to know. Do you want to tell each of your friends or do you want another friend to tell them so you don't have to? However they find out, trying to keep the death a secret is not a good idea.
3. Think about where you speak to your friends. You might not want younger siblings of theirs or yours around if you want to speak honestly.
4. It is okay to speak to friends about other things and to laugh with them. Some people feel they should be sad all the time and feel guilty about enjoying themselves. Don't fall into that trap! You are not letting the dead person down by still enjoying things. Try not to feel guilty about it.

What happens when someone dies? Bodies, funerals and changes for Corona

At some point you will have some practical questions. The Coronavirus has meant some changes to how arrangements are made after someone has died. These changes have been made to make it harder for the virus to spread, but they can make the process of grieving more difficult. If you have never been to a funeral the difference won't be as obvious for you, but it may make the adults in your family feel very frustrated and disappointed. Once you have read this you will understand why they might feel like this.

In normal times, when someone dies their body is taken to be looked after by the funeral director. They sort out the practical arrangements for a funeral according to the traditions and faith of the person who died. Sometimes members of the family visit to see the body for a final time and say goodbye. In some cultures the family prepare the body to be buried and in others the funeral director makes the body ready for their service. Often the person is dressed in their best clothing for their funeral. The person leading the funeral service will make sure it reflects the life and faith of the person. The family often chooses music and readings that were significant to the person who died. Depending on the religion and culture of the deceased, the service will sometimes be soon after the death and sometimes a while later. Funerals can be large or small and at their best remember the good, as well as letting people share their sadness. Sometimes there is a service or event in the person's place of worship before a second event at the cemetery or crematorium.

What has changed?

If someone has died of Coronavirus some of the usual preparations may not be allowed to take place. To cut the risk of infection the body of the dead person may not be dressed and prepared in the usual way, and often cannot be seen by relatives. No funerals can currently happen in church or other places of worship and very few people are allowed to go to the funeral service. In addition, service leaders cannot meet with the family of the dead person in the same way as normal and funerals will be shorter and might be less personal. All of this can leave people feeling they have not been able to say goodbye in the way they wanted to. This will make some people feel sad, angry or even guilty, because they will think they have let the dead person down. Some funerals will be able to be streamed, but that won't let people meet together. For many going to the funeral is an important part of the grieving process so not being able to meet and share their sadness will feel very hard.

Some people will decide to hold a service once the crisis is over, so family and friends can get together. Another idea is to hold your own memorial service at home. This is a chance for your family to come together in a special way to remember the person who has died and thank God for them. You will find some ideas and an outline service in the Christian tradition in the next few pages. You may never have done anything like this at home before, but it might help even if the idea seems a bit odd. Have a look at the outline included and chat with the other people at home about whether this might help.



What helps with grief?

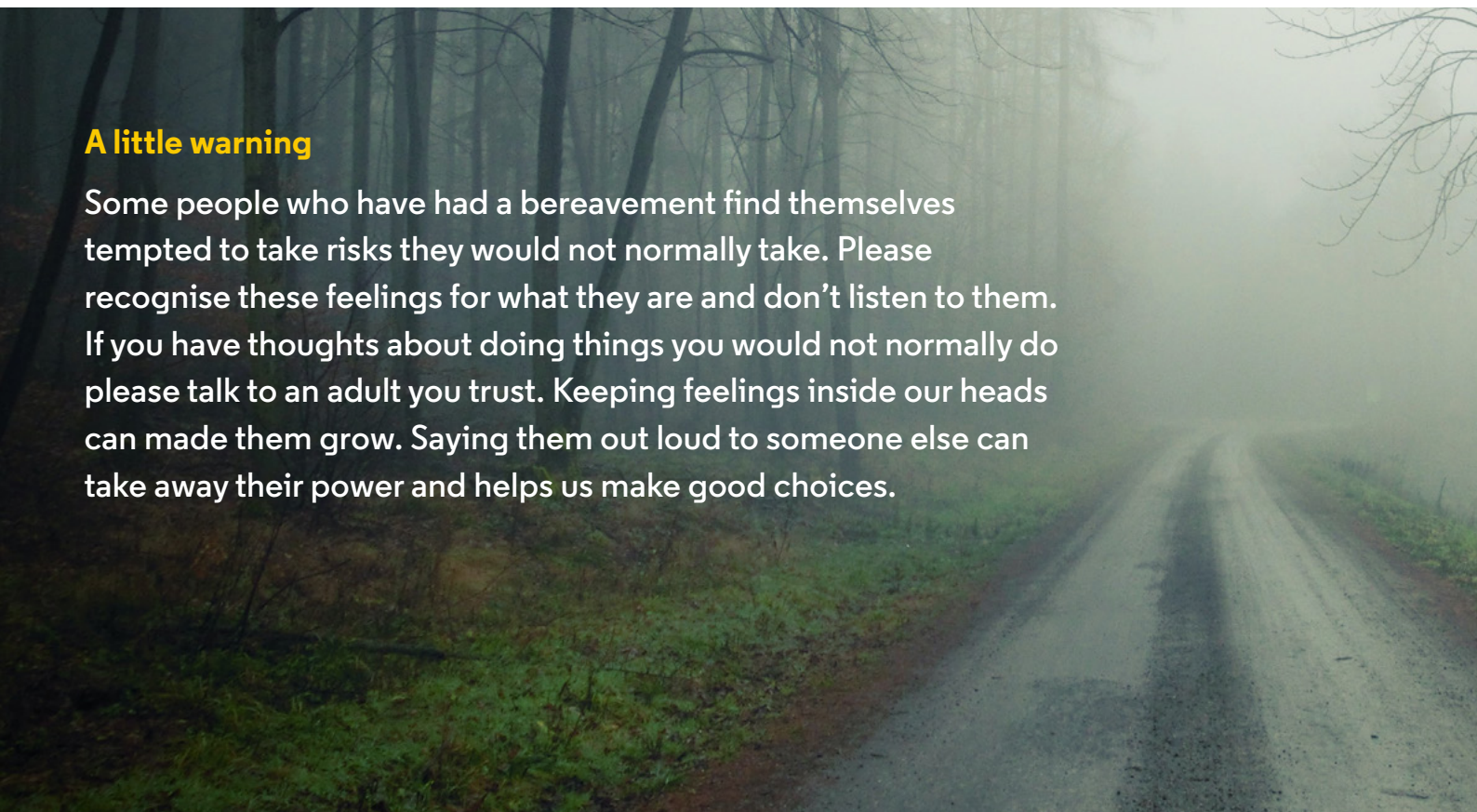
Grief is not something that you can fix by doing an activity and you cannot rush through so it ends more quickly. A bit like when you have a bruise, to begin with it really hurts, but over time the pain does reduce, even if that is hard to believe now.

So what helps?

- **Talking** – letting people know how you feel, even if you are not sure you have the right words to describe it.
- **Writing or drawing** – a picture, letter to the person who died, a poem or even a song might help you express your feelings.
- **Friends** – you can't be with other people in person right now, but use the resources you have to keep in touch: social media, apps like Zoom, phone calls, even letters.
- **Space** – take some time for you. Don't be tempted to fill every moment so you can't think but have some quiet to reflect.
- **Prayer** – you can tell God how you feel, however good or bad, and ask for His strength for you and the people you love.
- **Memories** – Thinking back to good times or finding pictures of happy memories is a good thing to do, even if remembering also makes you cry.
- **Knowing you will have good days and bad days** – or to begin with good minutes and bad minutes. This is normal.
- **Celebrate** – there will be things to be grateful for. In time you will be able to enjoy the memory again.
- **Exercise** – this can be difficult because of the lockdown, but physical activity helps. Even climbing the stairs a few times (if you have some) can make a difference. You could also try an online fitness programmes.
- **Understand what is happening** – if you can recognise what is happening in you or those around you it can be easier to be kind to them and yourself.
- **Know you are not the first to feel grief** – almost every adult you know has known someone who has died. They have been where you are. They have found that in time and with support they can enjoy life without forgetting their loved one.

A little warning

Some people who have had a bereavement find themselves tempted to take risks they would not normally take. Please recognise these feelings for what they are and don't listen to them. If you have thoughts about doing things you would not normally do please talk to an adult you trust. Keeping feelings inside our heads can made them grow. Saying them out loud to someone else can take away their power and helps us make good choices.



WAYS OF REMEMBERING

Here are some practical ways you could remember in a positive way. You could do some of them on your own but others are better with other people. Don't push anyone else to do any of these right away. Some people might need a little time before they are ready to remember or take part.

Collage, mobile or picture frame

You could create a collage of things the person who died liked or enjoyed. You can include anything from wrappers of their favourite chocolate bar to pictures of holiday locations. Maybe you have a favourite picture and you could create a picture frame to go around it using things that have positive memories like a flower they liked or bits of a map of where they lived. Be as creative as you like but don't use anything precious without permission!

Family Feast

Is there a particular meal or recipe the person loved or used? Why don't you work with your family to cook that meal. Let's be honest, if it is your Gran's amazing pie yours may not taste as good but that isn't the point. A meal is a good way to work together and share a memory.

Christians remember the last meal Jesus had with his friends before he died and believe that when they celebrate that meal they know God's presence with them in a special way. Your meal can be a great way of remembering your special person.

Seeds of hope

You might have space to plant a tree, or maybe some flowers. If you don't have space inside you might even be able to plant some flowers inside. Seeds remind us of new life.

The Bible uses the image of a seed for the hope of heaven. Christians are reminded that death looks like the end, just like the seed going into the ground is invisible. But we plant because we know new life will come from the seed. In the same way Christians believe that just as Jesus was buried and yet rose again, they too will be with God beyond death.

Memory Sheet

The next page is a guided way of remembering what has happened and why the person is important. You could do it alone or with other family members. You could also complete it separately and then come together to share your thoughts and memories. Don't worry about filling it all in at once. You can come back to it.

Home Service

After the memory sheet you will find instructions for holding a short service at home to give thanks for the life of the person who died. If no one from your house can go to the funeral you might want to hold this service that day. If someone is able to go you probably want to use the service when you are all together.



I am remembering:

They were born in:

They died in:

This person was my:

Date of birth:

Date of death:

How/why they died:

One great memory is:

Things they enjoyed:

Some changes will be:

What I will learn from them:

I will miss them most when:

I still have these questions:

I would like to say to them:

I think they would want me to know:

A SERVICE TO REMEMBER AT HOME

Not everyone is currently able to go to a funeral, but remembering at the same time as the service is a way to feel connected. If a member of your family can attend, you could hold your service to remember in advance. Anything you write during that time can then be taken to the funeral to represent you and your thoughts.

Holy Space

In the Bible Jesus often took ordinary things, like 5 loaves and 2 fish from child's picnic, and made them something amazing (a feast for more than 5,000 people). Today your ordinary space is to become a Holy space where you can remember.

A picture

Prepare your space. If you would like to, place a photograph of the person you are remembering where you can see it, or if you don't have a picture you could use a child's drawing or an object that reminds you them.

Bible

Place a Bible next to the picture. A children's Bible or any version of the Bible is fine. If you don't have a Bible then any device that you can use to find an online Bible will also be fine.





Light a candle

...and be quiet together for a moment before you begin any size or shape and any kind of candle is fine. You can even do this online (<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle>)

Prayer

Altogether (or just one person) read this out loud. Wherever it says *N* please say the name of the person you are remembering.

God the Holy Trinity,

we have prepared this space, we ask you to make it Holy as we gather here together to remember N, please be with us at this sad time, help us to trust that you are with us.

We know that Jesus made ordinary things Holy and we ask that you will make this space Holy for us today.

We know that Jesus came alive again on Easter Sunday and that Jesus promised that because of his resurrection we too will be alive in Heaven one day.

As we remember N give us faith and hope, we pray. Amen.

Remembering

Together take time to remember and talk about the person you love. You might want to use these questions to guide you.

What made them really special to you?

What is your favourite memory?

When did they make you laugh?

How did they care for you?

What did you learn from them about Life? Love? God?

Each person may wish to choose the one word they would use to describe the person you love. They could be written on one sheet of paper or a card or picture. (if someone is able to go to the funeral they could take this paper with them) Use bright colours if you can.



Bible Reading

These two Bible readings are often used at funerals. You can replace these with another Bible reading if there is one that is special to your family.

Psalm 23 verses 1-4

The Lord is my shepherd. I will always have everything I need. He gives me green pastures to lie in. He leads me by calm pools of water. He restores my strength. He leads me on right paths to show that he is good. Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me. Your rod and staff comfort me.

John chapter 14, verses 1-3

Jesus said, "Don't be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am."

Praying together... We thank God for the life of the person we love and ask God to help us, and all who are sad, because someone has died. (You can use these prayers or you can write your own. We talk to God the same way we talk to one another; we don't need special words and we can be totally honest with God about how we feel).

Dear God, Thank you for N, for all that they meant to us and to others. Thank you that your promise your love is stronger than death, nothing can separate us from you, even though we can't see N we trust that you are holding them and us today. Amen.

God of Love, You love everything you made, the whole universe, including each one of us. You made us to live with you. Please be with us and everyone who is sad because the person they love has died, help us all to know that without you we have nothing to hope for; with you we have nothing to fear. Please be with us and bring us Light and Peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray together:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come
Your Will be done
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread
And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory.



This final prayer is used at the end of a funeral service. It commends our loved one into God's loving arms and is our way of saying Goodbye.

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and entered into glory. Confident of his victory and claiming his promises, we entrust N to your mercy in the name of Jesus our Lord, who died and is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever. Amen.

Some of these prayers are very old and have been used by Christians in good and bad times.

Our Father in Heaven
 Hallowed be your Name
 Your Kingdom come
 Your will be done
 On earth as in heaven
 Give us today our daily bread
 Forgive us our sins
 As we forgive those who sin against us
 Lead us not into temptation
 But deliver us from evil
 For yours is the kingdom, the power
 and the glory
 Forever and ever
 Amen

Let nothing disturb you,
 Let nothing frighten you,
 All things are passing away:
 God never changes.
 Patience obtains all things
 Whoever has God lacks nothing;
 God alone suffices.

Lord Jesus,
 I cannot find the words I need,
 But you know everything.
 Please hold me and give me hope as
 I wait for this dark night inside me to
 pass into the light of a new day
 Amen

I arise today
 Through the strength of heaven;
 Light of the sun,
 Splendour of fire,
 Speed of lightning,
 Swiftmess of the wind,
 Depth of the sea,
 Stability of the earth,
 Firmness of the rock.

I arise today
 Through God's strength to pilot me;
 God's might to uphold me,
 God's wisdom to guide me,
 God's eye to look before me,
 God's ear to hear me,
 God's word to speak for me,
 God's hand to guard me,
 God's way to lie before me,
 God's shield to protect me,
 God's hosts to save me
 Afar and anear,
 Alone or in a multitude.

Christ shield me today
 Against wounding
 Christ with me, Christ before me,
 Christ behind me,
 Christ in me, Christ beneath me,
 Christ above me,
 Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
 Christ when I lie down, Christ when
 I sit down,
 Christ in the heart of everyone who
 thinks of me,
 Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
 Christ in the eye that sees me,
 Christ in the ear that hears me.

I arise today
 Through the mighty strength
 Of the Lord of creation



A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

No one ever chooses to be on a journey with bereavement. We all wish we could put back time so things were different. The truth is that everyone will experience bereavements as they go through their life. If you love people bereavement is impossible to avoid.

So you will have some good days and bad days. There will be times when life seems to come back to full colour and other times when you feel back in the darkness and pain. This is normal. Most people come through the darkest part of their grief with the help of their family and friends and don't need external support through counsellors or specialist help. Sometime though people can get a bit stuck in their journey with grief. Something seems to stop them moving on. If this feels like you please ask for help. As well as you family, teachers, youth workers and church leaders are all people who might be able to help you get your grief journey going again or find you the right help if you get a bit stuck.

I sometimes tell grieving young people that their grief is a bit like a mountain on a journey. While you are very close to the death it is all you can see, just like when you are close to the mountain it fills you view. As you get further away the mountain is not any smaller, but you have a broader perspective. It is not the only thing you can see any more. Right now your grief is probably like that mountain up close. It feels massive and overwhelming and as if it is all you will ever see. Give yourself time. You won't forget the person, but in time you will regain the ability to see other things as well as the mountain.

Your loved one will always have had an impact on you and you will carry their memory and influence with you.

I'm going to leave the final words to two Bible promises. God has not forgotten you. You can trust him to carry you even when everything around feels hopeless and scary.

Jesus said:

Blessed at those who mourn for they will be comforted
(Matthew chapter 5)

And in St Paul's letter to the Church in Rome we find these words:

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from God's love: neither death nor life, neither angels or other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above or the world below – *there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(Romans chapter 8 verses 38-39)

BIG QUESTIONS

I am sure you have some questions. A few that are asked most often are on this page. You will find more answers and support through the resources page.

Christians say God is loving and powerful but the virus is killing hundreds of people and many others are sick. Why doesn't God just take it away?

This is a really common question. Every time a person dies someone who loved them asks why God didn't stop it. The truth is that death is part of life. One day we are all going to die, we just hope everyone has a long and enjoyable life first. Can you imagine this world if no one ever died?

The virus is terrible, but can we say it is God's fault? We live in a world where there is soap as well as viruses. It wasn't God taking all the toilet rolls from the shops. Where some people are greedy and there is not medical care more people will die. Where people think of others by isolating well and caring for each other more people will live. We have amazing aeroplanes that can take us around the world, but they also transfer viruses in record time.

In the Bible God sometimes performs miracles, but not always. Do you remember the stories of Jesus dying on the cross? If not you can look them up. The night before his death Jesus asks God for another plan so he would not have to die but he is still willing to give up his life. Christians see that God is there with us in our suffering and pain. He understands us because he has been broken and felt abandoned too.

The Bible does promise a time will come when there will be no more suffering, death and tears. Until that day God comes to share our suffering by giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit to be our comfort and guide through life. You might want to ask God to be with you, and to fill you with the Holy Spirit to help you in your grief and sadness.

Did God choose my loved one to die?

Viruses don't have brains and don't make choices. Viruses just spread without thought. That means anyone can get a virus. We still don't fully understand why some people have serious illness or die because of it and others don't, but it is not God picking out certain people.

The friends of Jesus once asked him why some people were killed by a falling tower. They wondered if the people were bad and so were being punished. Jesus said it was nothing to do with their sins or even their parents. He went on to say that each one of us should remember that life is fragile and should realise that we will all die one day.

Will I ever feel better?

Yes! Ask anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one in the past. They will probably say that at first the pain is overwhelming and feels like it will last forever. Most people say they still miss the person, but they learn to live with the loss and that while they don't forget they find their enjoyment of life returns and they learn to live with the loss they experienced.

Where is my loved one now?

Often people want to know if the person they loved is in heaven. There are two parts to this answer. One part is about time and the other about place.

The time question is about where the person is now. Some Christians believe that as soon as a person dies the immortal (which means never dying) part of them goes straight to be with God. Others believe that the person dies and will come alive again at the end of time and be with God then. In the meantime, they are not aware of time passing, so for them it is more like being asleep and waking up when God calls them. Whichever of these ideas you believe the person you love is not in pain any more.

The second part of the question is about place. Some people worry about whether the person they love is going to be in heaven with God or in hell. Even people who didn't think they believed in God can find they have this worry. Again, Christians have different views. We all believe that Jesus shows us God's amazing love and invites us to share it with him. Some Christians think that the only way to be sure of being with God in heaven is to become friends with him now, other believe that when Jesus died he opened his arms to the whole world and paid for us all, whether we realise it or not.

We can be sure of this: God is love. He loves the person who died even more than you do (even if you find that hard to believe right now). Only God can see people's hearts and because he is loving, just and kind we can trust him to do what is right. At a Christian funeral service the dead person is 'commended' to the love of God because God is like a parent, waiting for his children to return home.

Does God love me?

Absolutely! The Bible says God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus, so that whoever believes in Him can have eternal life. We tend to think that eternal life is about 'forever' but it is also about having a really full life now. However lost, upset or overwhelmed you feel you can be certain Jesus loves you more than we can ever explain, or you could ever fully understand.

MORE SUPPORT

Here are some organisations and charities that support people who are bereaved. Some of them have great resources including videos of other young people sharing their experiences. All of these resources are meant to help but if you find something you watch upsetting please talk to one of your adults about it.

<https://help2makesense.org/> - A place where you can see how other young people have dealt with grief and bereavement.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org> - Helping families to rebuild their lives when someone close to them dies.

<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/> - Part of Cruse bereavement Care, specifically designed for children and young people.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> is another great source of support. Here you will find help with bereavement and other worries you may have during the pandemic.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/> is also there to listen and help. They have apps and online resources as well as phone lines.

All of these charities give great support so you know you are not alone. What they can't do is replace the support of your family and friends.

Remember to take breaks and to distract yourself with other activities as well as looking at resources on line. Don't use apps or the web to hide from people. You will need them and they will need you!

If you or someone in your family wants to get in touch with your local church you can find the details here:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

Here are some other apps and resources to help you pray and understand more about the Christian faith (most of these are not written specifically for young people but you should find them useful)

Teaching and support for learning to pray from the Church of England: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/learning-pray>

Pray as you go is an app that has a number of prayer resources including a great prayer for the end of the day called the Examine (don't worry – it's not a test!). There is also a website: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/home/>

At <https://www.soulsurvivor.com/> you will find many resources including podcasts and an app for reading the whole Bible over a year. These are aimed at young people and pretty cool!

You can also find simple and accessible services to join in here <http://anordinaryoffice.org.uk/> Use the tabs at the top of the page to find a simple video service.

Want to know more about Christianity? This is a great site <https://christianity.org.uk/>

Take care when on line.

Keep your details private and follow the normal rules for staying safe.



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This material was first written for students of Wren Academy, a Church of England school in North London by its chaplain, David Booker. Church Army has developed the contents and made them available free of charge to support young people grieving because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

David has over 25 years of experience working with young people. He is a Church Army Evangelist, teacher, curate of a church in North London and a member of the Archbishops' College of Evangelists. Over the 7 years David has been chaplain at Wren he has spent time with many of young people who have experienced the death of a loved one, sometimes in traumatic circumstances.

Church Army is a mission focused community that has been pioneering mission and evangelism for nearly 140 years by training, enabling and resourcing the church and its members to share the gospel.

Our vision is that everyone everywhere has the opportunity to encounter God's love, and be empowered to transform their communities through faith shared in word and action.

Church Army has a strong, proud heritage. Founded in 1882 in England by Wilson Carlile, an ordained priest in the Church of England whose vision to put the call to evangelism into the hands of ordinary, working Christians so they could transform the world around them is a legacy that Church Army is built upon today.

Church Army are known as trailblazers. Ordinary people who are radically dependant on Jesus, generous and expectant that God does and will continue to change lives. By releasing evangelists to go beyond the church walls and into areas where others will not to bring change and hope, we are able to reach individuals and communities across the UK and Ireland regardless of the circumstances.

The *A Service to Remember at Home Service* was adapted from a model created by Alison Booker, a vicar in rural Leicestershire.

YOUR NOTES





Church Army : April 2020

Patron: H M The Queen

President: The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Lord Williams of Oystermouth

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