

When Your Child is Grieving...

Sometimes children lose a friend. What can you as a parent in a Christian community do to help your child?

- **Give them a hug and do not be afraid to weep with them.** Remind them Jesus wept when his buddy Lazarus died. Remind them that God created and loved their friend, and the one who created that friend will continue to love and care for them in new ways!
- **Listen:** Listen to what your child wants to tell you about what happened to their friend. Let them ask questions, and do not be afraid to say you do not know. Some children will want time by themselves to process what has happened. Try to be sure this is balanced with time with family, friends and normal events.
- **Share Stories:** Encourage your child when they share a story about their friend. Ask what they remember most about them. If you have pictures, let them know they are welcome to look through them. As Christians, we have helped one another through grief in the sharing of stories since our beginnings.
- **Remember:** Ask your child how they might like to remember, or honor their friend. Perhaps they would like to do something for their friend's family. Maybe they would like to have a special lunch with mutual friends to remember & celebrate their friend. Planting a tree is another good family remembrance.
- **Pray:** Share a prayer. Encourage your child to tell Jesus what they loved about their friend. When children grieve, they have emotions from sadness to anger and guilt. The labyrinth at the church is a great walking prayer path. Encourage your child to share all those emotions in the labyrinth and let God hold them.
- **Counseling:** There are counselors and groups that specialize in children experiencing grief. *For Love of Christi* and *My Healing Place* are two such places.

A prayer

Blessed Father,

You made *my friend*, you know *him/her* and you love *him/her*. Welcome *my friend* home into your love. Give *him/her* courage and joy. Thank you for the gifts they shared on this earth and the memories I have.

Please bless those who are sad and miss them, especially their family, and comfort them. Be with me as I walk with others who are also sad.

In Jesus name, Amen.