

Grief and Loss

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we are going to focus on grief and loss.

When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin. In reading the story of Lazarus in John 11, we see how Jesus wept when His dear friend died.

How do you handle grief and loss? What are you teaching to your children?

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

This week's commitment statement is: We are to grieve those who have died before us.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Prior to Meeting



Do: Facilitator please review these resources prior to the session:

- https://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/preparing_for_death.pdf
- <http://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/imce/VicHospChildrenTeenGrief.pdf>
- <https://www.victoriahospice.org/patients-families/useful-brochures>

Welcome *5 minutes*



Say: Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about family identity. We mapped out our family trees and identified behaviors, patterns, character traits, and values that other members in the family pass down generation to generation.



Ask: Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*



Say: This week we are going to focus on grief and loss. When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin.



Ask: How do you handle grief and loss? What are you teaching to your children?

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Many of you have pets or have had pets in the past. Sometimes, when a pet gets old or sick, it dies. Death is a normal part of life. While death is a normal part of life, so are our memories of the pet.

During dinner, discuss the following with your family:

1. How many of you have pets? How old is your pet?
2. What can you do to remember your pet?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

Notes

<i>40 minutes</i>	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Family Time</i>	GRIEF & LOSS

When God created the world, death was not His intention. Death is a result of sin. In reading the story of Lazarus in John 11, we see how Jesus wept when His dear friend died. Later in John 20, we see how Mary responds to Jesus’s death.

SUMMARIZE THE STORIES:

- * **John 11** (Death of Lazarus)
- * **John 20:11** (Mary’s response to Jesus’s death)

Most of us will agree that there are so many wonderful things about life—the love of parents, siblings, and other special people in your life.

Then there are other things we take for granted like enjoying the warm summer sun, playing joyfully in the winter snow, eating pizza or an ice cream cone, laughing at the ridiculous things your pet

does, or even just listening to or dancing to your favorite song on the radio. The list could go on and on.

All the pleasantries in our lives inspire us, strengthen us, and give us a reserve joy to help us pull through when tough and painful times come into our lives. These times include death.

Each one of us grieves in different ways, but research tells us that there are stages of grief. Not everyone will go through each stage in the order in which the model shows, but the stages will help us better understand grief.

Here is the grief model we call the Seven Stages of Grief: (<http://www.recover-from-grief.com/7-stages-of-grief.html>)

Notes

1. SHOCK & DENIAL

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being too overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

2. PAIN & GUILT

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully and not hide it, avoid it, or escape from it with alcohol or drugs.

You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

3. ANGER & BARGAINING

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. Please try to control this as permanent damage to your relationships may result. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion.

You may rail against fate, questioning "why me?" You may also try to bargain in vain as a way out of your despair (i.e. "I will never drink again if you just bring him back.")

4. DEPRESSION, REFLECTION, & LONELINESS

Just when your friends may think you should be getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be "talked out of it" by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving.

During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

5. THE UPWARD TURN

As you start to adjust to life without your dear one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your depression begins to lift slightly.

6. RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

7. ACCEPTANCE & HOPE

During this stage, the last of the seven stages in this grief model, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

You will start to look forward and plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without pain or sadness—the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

You have made it through the seven stages of grief.

Facilitator, share an example of how you handled death. What worked and didn't work?

Ask your group these questions: How have you handled grief? What worked and didn't work?

So how can you help those grieving?

Chuck Swindoll, author and pastor, gives us some tips.

Action Steps:

1. Be Patient

- Encourage your person to give himself whatever time that it takes to heal emotionally.
- Encourage him to keep a routine, get lots of rest, and not try to attempt too much but to direct his energies toward healing.

2. Maintain Friendships

- Encourage the person to let others comfort and share in the journey toward healing.
- Encourage him not to become isolated but to seek meaningful connection with others.
- Make a list of friends to call.
- Locate a grief support group.

3. Feel the Pain

- Help the person understand that the intensity of the pain is normal and that eventually it will begin to subside. The pain will probably never disappear completely, but it will become bearable.
- Trying to avoid the "terrible pain" only prolongs the grief.
- Trying to avoid a loss by hiding the feelings will only cause problems in other areas—emotionally, spiritually, or physically.

Dealing with loss in a healthy manner can be a major avenue to growth and life-transforming change. The



Scripture **SUPPORT**

Deuteronomy 31:8

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Psalms 31:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

Notes

person must move forward by experiencing the grief, while at the same time, rejoining the living through acts of giving and receiving.

We are healed of grief only when we express it to the full.

—Charles R. Swindoll

Share the Quick Reference Guide to Marriage and Family.

Based on lessons learned from the following recommended resources, share your insights and discuss.

- https://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/preparing_for_death.pdf
- <http://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/imce/VicHospChildrenTeenGrief.pdf>
- <https://www.victoriahospice.org/patients-families/useful-brochures>

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain the grief process.
2. Identify ways to help those going through grief.

This week's commitment statement is: We are to grieve those who have died before us.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Family Time

GRIEF & LOSS

Objectives

- **Help children be aware that grief and loss are a normal part of life.**
- **Help children be aware of what the Bible says about tough times.**
- **Help children be aware of why grief and loss are necessary.**
- **Help children be aware of what we can do when we are faced with pain and sorrow.**

Most of us will agree that there are so many wonderful things about life! We have the blessing of loving parents and siblings. Then there are wonderful, fun gatherings with family and friends! There are things we take for granted like enjoying the warm summer sun and playing joyfully in the winter snow. We enjoy eating delicious pizza or a scrumptious ice cream cone, laughing at the ridiculous things your pet does, or even just listening to or dancing to your favorite song on the radio! The list could go on and on. All the pleasant, enjoyable and fun things in our

lives inspire and strengthen us. They give us a reserve of hope and joy to help us pull through when tough and painful times come. Yes, along with all of the good things about life, there are some times in our lives that can make us forget for a moment that life is good.

There is a saying, "Into each life some rain must fall!" What this means is sadness, disappointment, hurt, and sometimes even tragic things will happen in a person's life. Fortunately for you, during the tough times, you have your parents and others who love you to guide you through these

Notes

unwanted times of grief and sorrow. And whether it is a very young child, a teen, or an adult, people handle life's difficult times in their own way.

During these difficult times, remember God is with you too. Having God in our lives is very important in times of confusion, fear, or sadness because we have the assurance that we are not alone. In the Bible, in Deuteronomy 31:8, God makes this promise to us, "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Whether you are dealing with a minor hurtful situation of a broken friendship at school, being cut from the basketball team, or something much more painful such as the loss of a precious family member, your parents are there to support you. Through prayer they will lead you in taking your hurt, disappointment, and sadness to God. Only He can help you work through the dark times, heal your broken heart, and restore your peace and joy. In Isaiah 41:10 God says to us, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

None of us want these distressing times of pain and loss in our lives, but the truth is, even the tough times are a necessary ingredient in making us become the person God created us to be. When we experience crisis and tragedy, it builds our character. It develops our capacity to have compassion and empathy for others when they are hurting.

The good news is that we are more resilient than we may think. Resilience means we can recover from difficult, even tragic circumstances. Tough times help us to grow and learn about ourselves and other people. It is through our own times of trouble and grief that we learn how to comfort, encourage, and pray for others.

Just remember there are powerful life lessons hidden in every one of your hurting moments.

God knew we would have heart-wrenching times in our lives, so He gave us these directions in His Word, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6). When shocking and confusing situations happen in our lives, God tells us to not try to figure everything out using our own thinking ability, He tells us instead to turn to Him. We do this by talking to God in prayer. We can pray alone, but sometimes it’s even more comforting to pray with parents and other family members and friends.

God has given your parents a very important assignment concerning you. Their main job as parents is to raise you to be like Jesus. When God created man, Adam, and woman, Eve, He created them in His own image. When Jesus walked on this earth, He suffered many sorrows. Because we are made in His likeness, in this life we will experience some of the same feelings that Jesus felt. He experienced rejection, hurt, sorrow, and loss.

The Bible says, “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain” (Isaiah 53:3). So, we know that Jesus understands how we feel. Jesus also tells us not to worry about the trouble we may face in the world. He says in John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” And because we are made in Jesus’s likeness, and He has overcome the suffering in this world, we will overcome any hardship and misfortune that may come our way on our journey through life.

In the Bible, Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” God wants us to trust Him to care for us. He has promised those of us who love Him that everything, even things that cause us tears and sadness, will eventually work for our good.



Scripture SUPPORT

Deuteronomy 31:8

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Our responsibility is to keep talking to Him, trusting in Him, and loving Him no matter what. When we do that, God will heal our hearts, give us peace, restore our happiness, and bless our lives.

In Psalm 31:24, God says to us, “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

DISCUSS

- What are some of the good things in life?
- How do all the good things in our lives help us?
- Why do some people suffer sickness, disease, and even death?
- What good purpose can pain, sadness, and disappointment serve in our lives?
- What does it mean to say, “We are resilient”?
- What main assignment has God given to your parents concerning you?
- What does Romans 8:28 mean when it says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”?



Activities

AGES 4-11

Materials

Who Helps Me worksheet
Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Kg2lkCxjMg8> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, emphasize that the fall of mankind is the reason people suffer from sickness, disease, and death, and one day Jesus will return and remove ALL sin, sickness, disease, and death.

- Discuss with children that when we go through any challenging times in our life, God puts people in our life who help support us. These people who help us are our support team.

AGES 12-16

Materials

Who Helps Me worksheet
Pencils, crayons, markers

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Kg2lkCxjMg8> (discuss briefly).

- After the lesson and video discussion, emphasize that the fall of mankind is the reason people suffer from sickness, disease, and death, and one day Jesus will return and remove ALL sin, sickness, disease, and death.
- Discuss with children that when we go through any challenging times in our life, God puts people in our life who help support us. These people who help us are our support team.
- Have children fill in the names of their support team on the “Who Helps Me” worksheet. When they are finished, have them share who are the people who help them when they need support.

There is another video about grief and children.

You decide if you think it would benefit the children in your group. <https://youtu.be/EnC3mV6b-ww>



Scripture SUPPORT

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Psalm 31:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

DO I PRAY FOR MYSELF AND OTHERS
WHEN WE FACE CHALLENGING TIMES?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*God is always with me.
He will never leave me
or abandon me.*

WHO HELPS ME

In the circles, write the name of those who support you and how they help.

