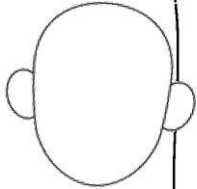


Saying goodbye

It is always difficult to say goodbye to somebody that you love. Even though it is sad when somebody dies, we know that because of Jesus there is a way for anybody to go to Heaven and be with God. Use this sheet to spend some time remembering some of your favourite things about the person you are saying goodbye to and thinking about the wonderful life in heaven that God has promised them.

We can feel many different emotions when somebody dies. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Think about how you are feeling today. Draw the emotion on this face.

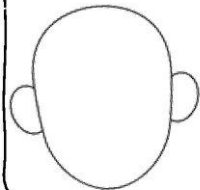


It can take time, but God wants to help us to hold on tighter to the good memories than we do to the painful emotions.

Psalm 30 v 5 says:

Crying may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

How would you like to be able to feel when you think about and remember the person who has died?



Draw the emotion on this face.

Write about or draw a picture of your happiest memory of the person you are saying goodbye to.

In **John 14 v 1-2** Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts 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."

Write or draw an object you would make sure was in the heavenly room of the person who has died.

In the book of Revelation, we read this promise about heaven:

"Now God's presence is with people, and he will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain, because all the old ways are gone."

Even though we are sad to have to say goodbye to somebody we love we can thank God that they are in a place where they are no longer in pain or suffering, where they are close to God. We can thank God that one day we will all be together again in Heaven.

Helping children to say goodbye

Emotions

Children may experience a wide range of emotions in response to a loss. They will also pick up on the emotions of the adults around them.

A child may not show the same emotional response as an adult and it is alright if your child does not respond in the way you expect.

This activity tries to help children articulate how they are feeling but it might be that they find it easier to describe how the emotion makes their body feel than draw it on the face provided.

Although we have a hope in God and heaven, we may also feel angry at God; worried or upset by what has happened.

Over time the way we feel about somebody who has died will change and you can help prepare children for this – a changed emotion does not mean that you love the person any less.

Memories

It is good to share memories of the person who has died, to look at old photos and thank God for the good times that you had with them.

Sharing memories is often a part of funeral services and if there is no service to attend it is an experience that could be missed.

Make space to remember the good times that were shared together – it is alright if these memories make you laugh or smile.

If there is no opportunity to attend a funeral you might like to hold your own short remembrance service together. You may need to explain what would have happened if a funeral had been able to take place. A funeral is a place to remember and to celebrate the life of the person who has died, and this is something you can still share together.

Your child might have questions about what will happen to the body of the person who has died. You might need to help them understand that the body is just like a house for somebody on the earth, but now that person has moved house and has a new body in heaven.

Some children might not want to talk at all, although this can be hard for parents, try not to put pressure on them – they may find others to talk with or open up at a later point and we can trust that God is always available for them to share with.

A note on language

Children can become confused by metaphors and imagery so on the "saying goodbye" sheet we were careful to talk about somebody who has died rather than somebody who has been lost or who has passed away. Children will not find the language as blunt as an adult might.

An object to remember with

Your child might like to select an object that reminds them of the person who has died. It could be something linked to a memory of that person. Perhaps you could make a memory box together as a family filled with pictures, items and memories of the person who has died. It is a reminder that even though you can no longer see them they are not forgotten.

Why does God let people die?

God's plan for this world was one with no pain, suffering or death where humans lived in perfect relationship with God. The world we live in isn't like that, it is fallen, sin has come into our lives and separated us from that perfect relationship with God. The world we live in has pain and suffering, sadness and death.

So God made a new plan, it was a plan that involved His own son dying so that one day we could all live with Him in heaven, in new bodies that never got sick, live lives full of joy and happiness every day.

Even though it is hard to be separated from people, we know that one day we can all be together again. Death is not the end but the next part of a journey with God. For those who know and love God there is the chance to live in Heaven with God forever.