

Talking with Children (Ages 2–10) About Suicide Loss

A Guide for Parents & Caregivers

Young children need simple, honest words when someone they love dies by suicide. They often show grief through play, behavior, and repeated questions. Clear truth plus steady love protects them better than secrecy.

Key Truths to Hold

It is not the child's fault. Say this out loud. Young children often blame themselves.

Death means the body stopped working and the person will not come back. Use plain language.

God is near to those who hurt (Psalm 34:18). Jesus welcomed children (Mark 10:13-16).

How to Talk (Ages 2–10)

Use short, honest sentences. Example: "Uncle died. His body stopped working. He was very sick with a deep sadness, and he died by suicide. It is not your fault. We are safe, and we will take care of you."

Avoid confusing phrases. Do not say "went to sleep," "went away," or "God needed another angel." Those can create fear of sleep or of God.

Do not share how it happened. No method details. Children do not need graphic information.

Answer the question asked — then stop. They may ask the same thing many times. Patience is care.

Use play, drawing, and stories to let feelings come out.

Keep routines steady when you can — meals, bedtime, school rhythm bring safety.

What You May See

Regression (clinginess, accidents, baby talk), big feelings in short bursts, questions at odd moments, or seeming "fine" then falling apart. This can be normal. Stay calm, name feelings, and keep them close.

When to Get Extra Help

If distress is intense or lasting, sleep or eating collapses, or the child talks about wanting to die or join the person who died, contact a pediatrician, counselor, or call/text 988. You are not overreacting.

If You Are in Crisis

Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). Veterans and service members: call 988, then press 1, or text 838255. Text HOME to 741741. In an emergency, call 911. Help is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

Your calm honesty is a gift. Little ones can bring their grief to Jesus — and to you — one simple truth at a time.