

## Talking with Children (Ages 2–10)

*When a Parent Goes to Prison*

Young children do not need every detail about crime or court. They need to know they are safe, loved, and not to blame. Use simple, calm words and repeat them as often as needed.

### Key Biblical Truths

**God loves children deeply** (Mark 10:13-16).

**God is close when we are sad** (Psalm 34:18).

**A parent's love can continue** even when they are far away.

### How to Talk with Young Children

**Use plain language.** "Daddy is in a place called prison. He cannot live at home right now. It is not because of anything you did."

**Answer the same questions again and again.** "When is Mommy coming home?" may be asked many times.

**Reassure them they are safe and cared for.** Name who will pick them up, feed them, and tuck them in.

**Use drawing, play, and stories** to help them show feelings they cannot say yet.

**Keep routines steady** — school, meals, bedtime, church.

### Visits, Calls, and Letters

**Prepare them briefly before a visit** — what the room looks like, that there may be rules.

**Let them bring a drawing or photo** when appropriate.

**Afterward, name their feelings:** "That was hard. I'm glad we went together."

### What to Avoid

Do not use prison as a threat ("You'll end up like your dad"). Avoid adult arguments in front of them, graphic details about the case, or forcing them to choose sides.

*Little ones need presence more than perfect answers. Your calm love teaches them they are not alone.*