



ELEMENTARY CRISIS CONVERSATION GUIDE **FOR PARENTS**

WHEN A KID EXPERIENCES A CRISIS, they tend to have more questions than you have answers. What they're going through could seem minor to you, or be really scary for both of you. Either way, be sensitive to any changes you see in your child and careful to respond by offering grace and support along the way.

During this phase, your child is building a worldview, so when dealing with a crisis, remember to reiterate what is true. When you don't have the answers, assure them you're there and they are loved by you.

VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS BY REVISITING WHAT IS TRUE.

When you interact with your child, there are some things you should say and do to help them feel validated and secure. There are also a few things you should try to avoid saying. Here are a few:

WHAT TO SAY

- "Some things are changing, and that can be tough. But there are some things that will never change. Want me to tell you about some of those?" (For example: *I love you. God loves you. We can trust God no matter what.*)
- "What do you think may have led you to make that decision?"
- "This doesn't make sense to me either. How can I help you feel better?"
- "Help me understand, give me an example . . ."
- "What are you reading or listening to? I want to get to know you."
- "You don't have to pretend with me. You can tell me how you really feel."

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- "I know exactly how you feel because I was your age once."
- "I know why you're acting this way."
- "You're scaring me."
- "Why can't you be more like (name)?"
- "This is a part of God's plan, so just have faith."

Make sure to involve professional counselors, as needed, as well as your ministry leader.