



PRESCHOOL CRISIS CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

YOUR CHILD STRUGGLES WITH THE THOUGHT OF SHARING A TOY—how will they cope with a much bigger crisis when it happens to them or around them? What do you do? What do you say? A preschooler may not use as many words, but there are ways to pay attention to your child's verbal and non-verbal cues.

No one knows your preschooler better than you. You will be able to notice a change before anyone else. Investigate it with loving conversations and provide an open, safe, and loving presence for them to heal and grow.

INSTILL A DEEP SENSE OF SECURITY.

When your preschooler is experiencing discomfort or has been through a crisis, there are some things you can say and do that will help them feel secure, and some things that could make them feel less safe. Here are a few ideas:

WHAT TO SAY

- "I'm here, you're not alone." (**Listen** to their feelings and validate them.)
- "I see you." (**Pay attention** to what they mirror, watch how they play and notice changes or regression in their behavior.)
- "I'm looking out for you." (**Adopt** a preventative approach.)
- "I'll help you when you need it." (**Adopt** a reactive response.)
- "I'll play with you [comfort you]." (**Move** to their play area or space.)
- "He/she died and that means . . . her body stopped working." (**Explain** the few words you use.)
- God loves you.
- Use a few simple words.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- "Everything is fine. Stop crying."
- "Why are you acting like a two-year-old?"
- "We lost grandma (person who died)." (confusing metaphors)
- "I can't handle you right now. Mommy/Daddy has enough to worry about."

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