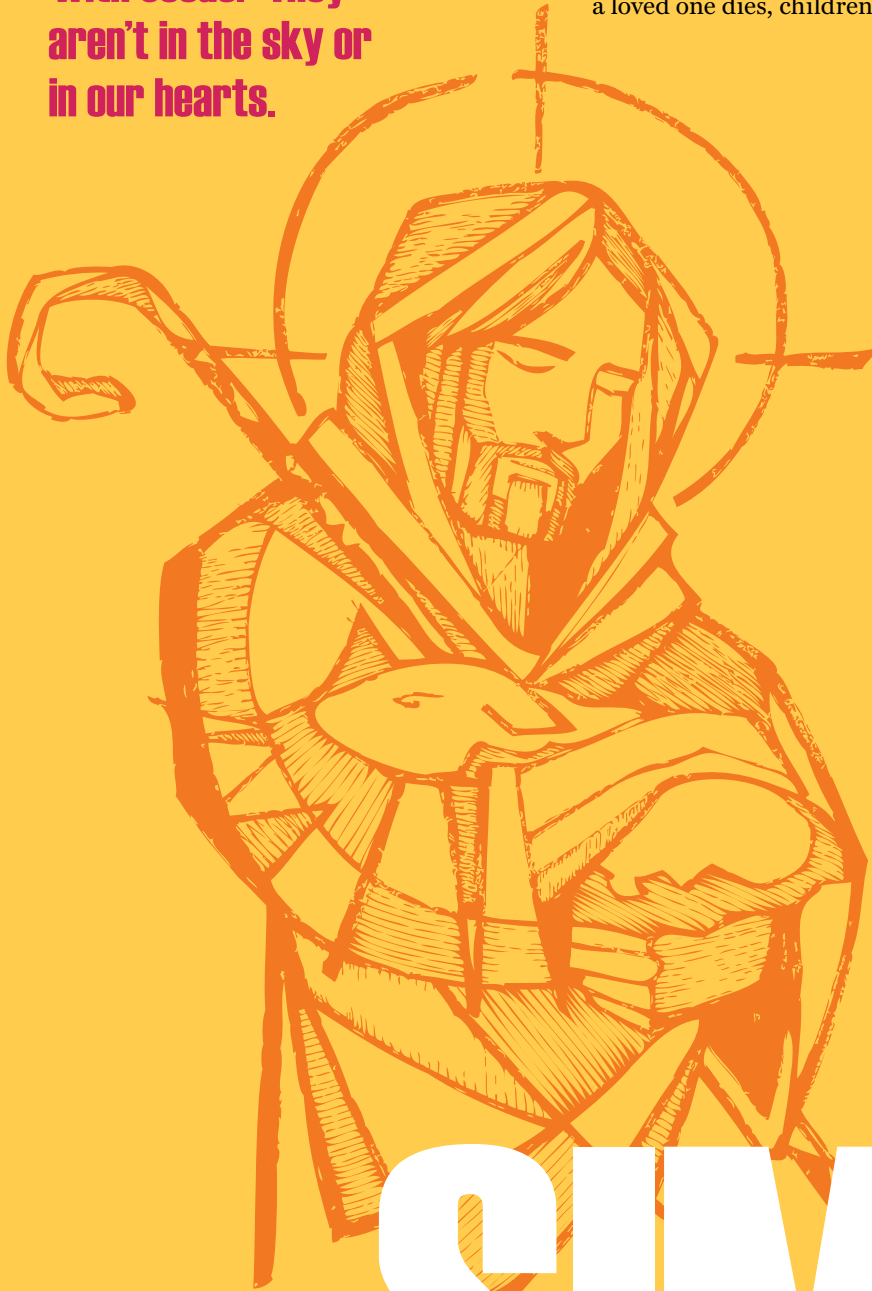


Always speak of your loved ones as “with Jesus.” They aren’t in the sky or in our hearts.

Even as adults, we can have difficulty processing death. The thought of death is scary and uncomfortable. What about children then? As parents, we might be tempted to protect them from it. We don’t want them to feel the pain and sadness of death. But while our intentions may be good, death is a time to share important truths with our children: Death will not win. Jesus is stronger. He rose from death. The sting of death is only momentary in this world, and our life with Jesus is eternal. With this comforting Gospel, you can use these moments to direct your children to God’s mercy and grace.

There are practical ways you can talk to your children about death. When a loved one dies, children should hear simple truths.



1

IT’S OKAY TO TELL A CHILD that this world is not our home. Yes, God has given us many things to enjoy here on earth. But this is also a world of sadness, sin and death. God has given us something better. In heaven we have eternal life with our Savior Jesus. You can say things like, “Your grandma is with Jesus. He has promised this in His Word” and then read John 11:25. You can remind your children that these promises are given to us in Baptism (COL. 2:12).

2

ALWAYS SPEAK OF YOUR LOVED ONES as “with Jesus.” They aren’t in the sky or in our hearts. They’re with Jesus. The common phrase “passed away” seems to dance around the reality of death. To say, “He died” is difficult for many people because it acknowledges the finality of life here on earth. Yet to say someone is “with Jesus” testifies that our death is not final, and we have life eternal in Christ. Children gain comfort in hearing this simple reminder that Jesus is our Savior from death.

SIMPLE

3

DON'T BE AFRAID OF QUESTIONS.

Children have good questions and real fears about death. "What happens when you die? Will it be painful? Will I see a bright light? What is heaven like?" While we don't always have the specifics, God's Word gives us good answers for them. When we die, our soul goes to be with Jesus. Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise on that very day (LUKE 23:43). Our bodies will rest peacefully until Jesus raises them up perfectly on the Last Day. Paul speaks of the faithful dead as those who are asleep in the Lord (1 THESS. 4:15). God's Word is clear. When we close our eyes for the last time, we will be with Jesus.

5

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE IDEA of eternity can be overwhelming for a child. In this world, everything comes to an end one way or another. Eternity isn't what we're used to and may even seem scary. We should remember our minds are very limited. Just as the Almighty God is unfathomable, eternity may seem unfathomable as well. Yet we can always return to the simple and comforting promises that we know fully in our Savior.

6

DON'T FORGET the beautiful pictures of heaven given to us in Revelation. Children will enjoy them as much as adults. Open the Bible with them to Revelation: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (REV. 21:3-4).

These aren't one-time conversations. As often as God gives us opportunity, we direct our children to the hope we have in Jesus, our Savior from death. **LW**



Valerie Boehne
(vsboehne@gmail.com)
is a preschool teacher and
director at Trinity Lutheran
Church and Preschool,
El Paso, Ill.

4

TAKE YOUR CHILDREN TO FUNERALS.

My parents would take me to the visitations and funerals of fellow church members when I was a child. Some funerals were of dear friends. Some were only acquaintances. Nonetheless, they were all fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This, of course, didn't excite me. But my parents thought it was important to go and offer condolences to the suffering members of the body of Christ. Bringing our children along to funerals and visitations invites them to see that not only does the Church rejoice together, but the Church grieves together as well.

by Valerie Boehne

PROMISES