

Condolence Card

By Julie Filby

Teach children how to express sympathy to someone who is mourning a loss—even if that loss was years ago—by making and sending a sympathy card. You can help family members learn to be more understanding and sensitive to others' feelings in times of sorrow. Such support may be especially appreciated around holidays.

For
Young Family

Season
Winter



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Needed

Plain note card or paper, envelope, pens, markers or crayons, postage stamp, Bible; optional: other supplies for decorating the card, such as stickers, rubber stamps, colorful papers

Prepare in Advance

- Identify an individual (family member, friend, church member, or neighbor) who is mourning the death of a loved one. Find this person's mailing address.
- Mark your Bible at Romans 8:38-39.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

O God, we pray for [name of person in mourning] today, as he/she is feeling sad. Watch over him/her and comfort him/her with your love and compassion. Let our love be a comfort to [name of person in mourning] and help us to find ways to care for him/her. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

2. Start the conversation by inviting family members to tell their memories of the person who died, if they knew this person. Otherwise, tell what you know about him or her. Comment on how much this person is missed, and how thankful you are for the memories that you or others have.
3. Say that while you are sad the person died, you also give thanks that God's love is stronger than death. Jesus promises our life with God will never end. Have a family member read aloud the apostle Paul's words in Romans 8:38-39 from your Bible or the text below:

Romans 8:38-39: For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Wonder together about what life with God is like for the person who died.

4. Explain that one way people show their love to someone who is grieving—who is sad because a loved one has died—is to make and send a sympathy card. Brainstorm what pictures you could draw to express love and hope. (For example: flowers, cross, rainbow, butterflies, hearts, or a picture of a special memory of the one who has died.) Brainstorm what words you could write as a reminder of God's love and care. (For example: God's love is stronger than death; God's love never ends; Jesus loves you; God cares for you; or a favorite Bible verse.) Brainstorm what words you could write to

express your own love and support. (For example: I am thinking of you during this sad time; I am praying for you; I am so sorry; I miss _____, too.)

5. Make a sympathy card by decorating a plain note card or folded sheet of paper with some of the pictures and words you discussed. Be ready to help with spelling and writing. Try to use the child(ren)'s words, as these genuine and spontaneous words can be especially comforting.

Variation: Have each family member make a card and place all the cards in one envelope for mailing.

6. Mail the sympathy card. In the days to come, continue to pray for the one who is grieving.

