



## Conversation Guide: Crisis

Parents, we want you to be able to have Christ-centered conversations with your kids about navigating crisis, change, or anything your child might define as a hardship. Feel free to use this *guide* below as you navigate some of the questions your kids might ask you. As always, we are here for you, partnering with you on this journey.

**Talk tip:** Remember to keep this a conversation. **ASK** questions and pause for their response. Create a safe environment for your child to talk. (Think: on a walk, in the yard playing ball, etc. Not interview style at the kitchen table.) Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words to say! Feel free to let this be a natural conversation that takes place over time. Kids are curious, coping, and might ask these questions over time. This is simply a guide for when your child needs to talk.

---

How do you respond when kids in your own home are going through a crisis? Do you feel useless because you really want to help, but don't know how? Maybe you feel awkward because you want to say something encouraging, but you're not good with words. It's important to have open conversations with kids and to be a good listener as well, when they are ready to talk.

**Here are a few practical tips to help you navigate this conversation or season in your child's life:**

- **Don't pretend everything is fine.**
  - *Sometimes the most compassionate thing you can do for a child who is hurting is to affirm their feelings.*
  - *It may not seem like a BIG deal to you that ballet recitals are cancelled or that you never got to say goodbye to your beloved 3rd grade teacher, but that doesn't mean it's not a BIG deal to them. This crisis is an opportunity to help kids learn how to respond to life-altering problems in a Biblical manner.*
- **Offer REAL hope.**
  - *Saying things like, "Don't worry, your Daddy is going to be fine," or "This will all be over soon," sounds nice, but it tempts us to put our trust in temporary solutions rather than an eternal Savior.*

- *You don't KNOW that someone will be fine and can't guarantee life will soon be back to "normal". Offer real hope instead by admitting the problem is real, focusing on Jesus, and showing love to them in a tangible way.*
- *Frankly, it's often best to just be quiet and listen, but when you do need to say something, use words that communicate truth, humility, and compassion.*
- **Play with them.**
  - *Playing with kids can breathe fresh air into their lungs. It can remind them that it is all going to be OK. Kids also process a lot while playing. This can be a great time of healing for your child. You can also play meaningful games that intentionally point kids back to God's sovereignty and goodness.*
- **Make it personal.**
  - *Pray for them, cheer for them, listen to them, surprise them. Let your child know you are there for them. Actively listen to what they have to say, even if they only want to talk about Minecraft® or unicorns. They may not want to talk about their problems, but you can provide opportunities by dropping hints that you're willing to listen.*
- **Widen the circle.**
  - *Other caring adults in their life make a big difference. They may process things with another adult that they haven't with you yet.*
- **Keep reminding them of God's presence.**
  - *Talk about how God is there and point out things He's made. Are you driving in the car? Talk about how God knows everything that you're doing and that He's with you. And when those worries come knocking? Assure them of God's presence, love, and care for them. If you create a culture of enjoying Jesus at all times, everywhere, it will be natural for you to point kids to Jesus when they are scared, overwhelmed, worried, or even angry. Jesus is there at those times and we have the privilege of helping kids know He is.*
  - **"So do not be afraid. I am with you." Isaiah 41:10**
- **Help them learn God's word.**
  - *Knowing who God is and what He says gives kids (and families) strength and hope to endure the unendurable with joy.*

- **Take worries to God in prayer.**

- *This one can follow pretty naturally if you're helping your kids recognize God's presence everywhere. You can thank Jesus for pancakes for dinner, for the frogs in the pond, and the beautiful rainbow after the storm. Just as Jesus wants to hear from children about the fun things, He wants to help us through difficult times, too. Not only does He want to, He is capable! Nothing is too small for Jesus to notice. He knows it all anyway! Creating a culture of prayer in your home helps children develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus.*

- **Some books your child may enjoy that also may help:**

- *It will be Okay by Lysa TerKeurst*
- *Quinn's Promise Rock by Christie Thomas*
- *What am I feeling? By Dr. Josh and Christi Straub*
- *Firebird by Brent McCorkle and Amy Parker*