



Helping Kids Grieve

Parents and Families,

Death is an inescapable reality of our fallen world. When death impacts our children, it can be hard to know how to help them. Our community is grieving the loss of Charlotte and Sebastian, Jr. These beautiful and precious children should have had many years of life. As your family grieves with the Trotter Family, here are a few helpful reminders about how kids grieve and what they need from parents and caregivers in the days ahead.

- **Children do not grieve at set times.** Just like adults, children may experience feelings of grief at different and unexpected times. They may be playing one moment and expressing sadness the next. Give your children time and space to grieve. When they share, they are sad, allow them that emotion. Reassure them that it is okay to be sad. Then, don't be surprised when the moment ends as quickly as it began, and kids return to their play or activity.
- **Use words well.** Kids have trouble with abstract phrases such as "pass away." It's okay to say, "Charlotte and Sebastian died." It's important not to say things such as "It's like falling asleep." Death and sleep are not the same thing, and young children can become frightened of sleep if death is expressed in these terms.
- **Share information appropriately.** This can often be the trickiest part of navigating grief and loss. Don't share more than what kids are ready to receive and hear. Preschoolers may only be ready to hear, "Charlotte and Sebastian died. They are in heaven with Jesus." Elementary-aged children can hear more details: "Charlotte and Sebastian were caught in a flood, and they died. They are in heaven with Jesus." Be prepared to answer questions such as "When will I see them again?" The permanence of death is a hard thing for kids to understand. Help them to know that Charlotte and Sebastian are in heaven with Jesus, and everyone who trusts Jesus as Savior will see them again in heaven.
- **Hold on to what we know.** The reality is that we don't understand why two beautiful children like Charlotte and Sebastian died. We do know that God loves Charlotte and Sebastian, and God loves us (Jeremiah 31 :3). We do know that Charlotte and Sebastian are in heaven with Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:8). We do know that one amazing day, Jesus will come back and make everything right again (John 14:3). Reassure yourself and your children of these things in the days ahead. Don't let the things we do not know overwhelm what we do know.
- **Pray for the Trotter family.** Our community is grieving, but the Trotter family is facing a devastating loss. This is a wonderful opportunity to help kids learn the value of praying

for one another. When we pray, we take our own hurts and doubts to God; we also show we care for others who are hurting.

- **Seek help if needed.** If you believe that your child needs help coping with loss or if you need help coping with loss, seek professional counseling.

The days ahead will be hard for our community; two beautiful and precious young lives have been lost; and it's okay to be sad and to grieve. But we do not "grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13, ESV). The coming days offer us a chance to honor the Trotters and grieve with them.

If your family is looking for a safe place to grieve and learn about the hope that we have in Jesus, First Baptist Church is ready to partner with your family and especially your children in this loss. Together, let's fix our eyes on Jesus, "the author of our faith," as we hopefully await the glorious day of His return.