

When someone is taken into hospital with coronavirus, it often happens very quickly. If they do not respond to treatment and die, there may not have been a chance for your child to say goodbye. Usually the funeral provides that opportunity, but during the pandemic, the number of mourners at funerals is strictly limited so children are unlikely to be able to attend.

Creating the opportunity to say goodbye can be an important part of the grieving process. It offers the chance of a formal farewell, and for Christians reminds us that we are entrusting our loved one into God's care.

If the funeral is to be taken by your parish priest, s/he may talk to you about the service. Include your child in choosing any music or readings. Your child might want to draw a picture or write a note to be placed on or in the coffin. If the Funeral Director is happy for this to happen, ask your priest or one of the mourners to take your child's contribution to the funeral.

The day of the funeral is likely to be very emotional. Your child may be confused and frustrated that they cannot attend. Coping with those feelings alongside their sadness and pain may not be easy, so your child may appreciate having some screen time with their best friend.









## Things that might help

- Hold a simple service at home. Include prayers, music and readings that were special for the person who died. Share your memories together.
- Light a candle at the time of the funeral service and say Psalm 23 together.
- Suggest that your child to write a letter to the person who has died. They might include memories and feelings, things they are thankful for and things they will miss. If they feel able, encourage them to show or read the letter out loud to a trusted adult.
- Ask close family and friends to write a short letter
- Make plans to plant a shrub, bush or flower as a way of remembering the person who died.
- On the day of the funeral, plan a special meal or treat that reminds your family of the person who has died. This might give a more informal opportunity to remember them. You might want to invite other family or friends to join you through Zoom or similar.

## Our Christian faith

John's vision in the book of Revelation points us towards God's new heaven and earth, where death and mourning, crying and pain will be no more (Revelation 21:1-4). The confusion, sorrow and even anger which we feel in response to death will not be part of our new life in God's presence.

In the midst of grief, our Christian faith gives us hope that this is not the end. God in Jesus promises us life beyond our earthly experience. Death parts us from the presence of our loved ones. It is a final, earthly goodbye. But in the saying goodbye and in the pain that brings, we remember that God does not leave us. God's presence with us is assured (Romans 8:35-39).

## Additional resources

***The Church of England*** has a simple service of reflection which can be used at home while a funeral is taking place.

***Lighting a virtual candle*** can be a helpful action and give space to pray.

***Winston's Wish*** has a page of ways to say goodbye when it is not possible to attend the funeral.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/faith-home/i-am-parent/how-can-i-help-my-child-say-goodbye>