

‘Why can’t I see granny? I miss giving her a hug.’

One of the hardest things about the coronavirus crisis is the isolation of lockdown. Families who are used to meeting regularly are now only able to do so via screens. The hugs and cuddles which reassure us that we are loved are missing. Older children may be able to understand that this is to help slow down the spread of the virus, but many younger children (especially those looked after by grandparents whilst parents are at work) will be confused by the change. Equally, adults who are now deprived of the company of children because of self-isolation will be missing the contact.

It is important to reassure everyone that this is ‘just for now, not for ever’. By staying home, we are helping other people (including granny, and Eric, and Uncle Dev) stay safe. It feels hard, but it is helping others. It seems to be a long time, but it will come to an end.

However, lock-down does not mean total isolation. The prevalence of smart phones, tablets and social media apps keep us connected – albeit in a different way. Teens can help older family members get set up with social media, introducing them to the delights of Facebook Live, Zoom and WhatsApp groups.

Things that might help

- As well as family Zoom/Facebook/WhatsApp chats, create space for children and adults to have 1:1 time.
- Through screens or phone calls, include family members in bedtime routines – Aunty Emma sharing a story, Grandad praying, Daniel reading from his Bible story book.
- Encourage children to draw a picture or write a letter to family members. Receiving something tangible is important during separation.
- On slips of paper, write things to look forward to when isolation and lock-down are over. Put them in a jar as a visual reminder that ‘this too will pass’.
- If your separated loved one is a person of faith, agree to say The Lord’s Prayer at the same time each day.

Our Christian Faith

Many of the letters in the New Testament express longing to be with people from whom the writer was separated (Romans 16:1-6; 2 Timothy 1:4; Colossians 4:7-18). The writers didn’t know if or when they would see these people again, but they were certain that they were held and connected within the love of God. They prayed constantly for them and many of their prayers were for grace and peace (Colossians 1:3,9; Ephesians 1:1,2; 1 Peter 1:1,2). We too can pray for the people from whom we are separated, knowing that they are held in God’s love.

Additional resources

The Child Bereavement Network has a downloadable sheet of ideas for staying connected during isolation.

Baptist minister and author Richard Littledale has written a [**downloadable story**](#) for young children to help explain the importance of social distancing.

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