

Fear and coronavirus (COVID-19)

Support for households, parents and children

We are all being affected in so many ways by the coronavirus, life is challenging in new ways bringing anxieties and fears. It is especially painful acknowledging the reality that someone we know and care for may become seriously ill and possibly die.

Supporting ourselves and our children with fears and in grief will be different from usual when our expected and hoped for ways of caring for people and saying goodbye are not possible. However, as we have found in many aspects of life, there are other ways to help each other and to remember and celebrate our loved ones.

Parish clergy and people trained in counselling or bereavement support are still available to talk to. There are also good organisations and websites to go to.

How do we talk to children about coronavirus?

Offer comfort and honesty

Focus on helping your child feel safe, but be truthful. Don't give more detail than your child needs. For example, if they ask about shops closing, address that question and leave it there.



If your child asks about something and you don't know the answer, say so. Use the question as a chance to find out together. Check for up-to-date, reliable information about coronavirus. That way, you have the facts and your children don't see headlines which might distress them.

Speak calmly and reassuringly. Explain that most people who get the virus feel like they have a cold or flu.

Allow children opportunity to share their fears.

It's natural for them to worry; "Could I be next? Could that happen to me?" Let your child know that children don't usually get as poorly as adults. Let them know they can always come to you to talk about what scares them and you can find answers together.

Know when they need guidance.

Be aware of how your children access news and information, especially older children who go online. Point them to age-appropriate content so they don't end up with incorrect information.



Help children feel they have some control.

Having a feeling of control can help to allay fear. Let them know that staying at home is helping them and lots of other people too. Also, their regular hand washing (explaining how soap better kills the virus if it's on our hands) and having a good routine to follow to keep healthy and strong is helpful!



Talk about all the other people who are helping

Hospitals and doctors and nurses. Scientists working on vaccines and tests, engineers making equipment etc. Even Joe Wicks helping us stay fit!

What about questions around death?

If children ask, explain that dying from the virus doesn't happen to everyone. Most people get better. Watch age appropriate news with your children so you can filter what they hear.

Children may hear that older people are more likely to be seriously ill and even die they might worry about their grandparents. Don't dismiss this fear, honesty is best. You will know about your personal situation remind children of everything that is happening to keep people safe. Talk about the people they are fearful for and help them keep in touch.



Let your children know that it's normal to feel anxious at times. Everyone does. Recognising these feelings and knowing that stressful times pass and life gets back to normal can help children build resilience.

Keep the Conversation Going ...

Advice on how to share information about coronavirus with children and to help them with their anxieties about it is available from these websites.

BBC News [Coronavirus: Keep it simple, stick to facts – how parents should tell kids](#)

BBC Newsround [Coronavirus: What is being done to tackle the virus?](#)

BBC Newsround [Coronavirus: Why it might not be as scary as it sounds](#)

Christian perspectives for supporting children.

<https://parentingforfaith.org/coronavirus>

For children with additional needs

<https://theadditionalneedsblogfather.com/>

