

Explaining Cremation to a Young Child

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Hope and Healing of Pinellas

Begin with basic information about the death:

“ _____’s body was too sick, too hurt or too old to keep living, so his body stopped working. Doctors tried to fix their body, but it was too sick, too hurt or too old to be fixed”

When a person’s body stops working, this is called “dying” or “to be dead”. What does “dead” mean to you?

When a person’s body stops working, or their body is dead, they can’t hear, see or talk. They also cannot feel anything anymore. They do not get hungry or thirsty anymore. The body cannot feel anything anymore.

The person went to heaven and didn’t need their body anymore, so their body stayed here on the earth. A person can’t take their body with them to heaven.

Suggestions to explain cremation (young children ages 4 and up)

There are 2 things a person’s body will happen after it stops working. One is called being buried. Do you know what being buried is? A family will choose a very big box and put the body in the box. Then, the box is buried in the ground. This is called having a funeral. After many, many years, the person’s body turns to a soft powder inside the big box. We can’t see the powder because the big box has to stay in the ground. (you can use sand or white flour to “show” what it can look like)

Another thing that can happen to a body after it is dead is to be cremated. When a person’s body stops working, it is put into a special room that gets very, very warm. Much warmer than being outside in the summer. Can you think of things that are very warm? This room is warmer than any of those things. The warm room turns the person’s body into soft powder in only a few hours. This does NOT hurt since the body cannot feel anything anymore.

The soft powder is put into a small box or special vase that the family picks out. Sometimes the box is kept in the family’s house, or it is taken to a cemetery and put in a special wall (mausoleum) or buried in the ground. Another way the family uses the person’s ashes to make a special is to leave some ashes in a special place the person loved to visit, like the beach.