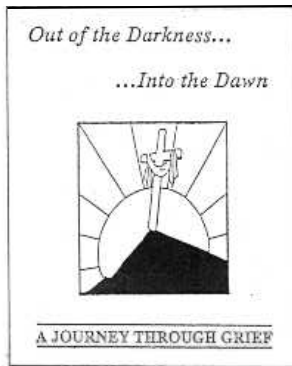


GRIEF BOOK



Simple , Practical, Spiritual

- 56 page booklet
- For grieving persons/ families
- Focuses on grieving as a normal process of healing
- Explanations of common grief experiences
- Questions for individual reflection or group discussion

Price: \$2.00 each—1-49 *Postage*
\$1.75 each—50-99 *costs*
\$1.50 each—100 + *additional*

CONTENT

- Introduction
- Suggestions for using the booklet
- Is there anything normal about grief?
- Stages and phases of the grieving process
- Learning to live with loss "Practical suggestions"
- God! Why don't you help me?
- Grief and adjusting human relationships
- If only I...real vs. unreal guilt...How do you know the difference?
- Prayer at times of loneliness
- A year of special days
- A message to family and friends after the funeral...How can we help?
- Planning for the holidays when you are grieving
- Guidelines: planning for the holiday season
- Surviving the holidays...helpful hints
- Giving gifts while grieving
- Holiday planning worksheet

GOD! WHY DON'T YOU HELP ME?

During the time of grief and the subsequent adjustment to loss every person looks for signs of the support and love of God. Frequently it is difficult for a person to recognize that God is present at such a painful time. Cries of pain may come as anxious questions: "Where are you, God?" "Why are you letting this happen to me?" "What have I done to deserve so much pain?" Instead of recognizing the presence of God when it is most needed, the overwhelming feelings of grief may distort one's perception of the companionship of God. God is part of all life experiences, and in particular during times of sorrow and loss.

Where is God for the grieving?

Where are the signs and symbols that serve as reminders of God's continued activity in this painful experience. A favorite story brings to light an important truth of God's presence. There was a man who found himself caught on the roof of his home during a terrible flood. The man, Sam, was a devout church-goer. As he stood on the roof he was offered three possibilities of rescue from his neighbors by way of truck, boat, or helicopter. Yet to each offer he replied, "The Lord will rescue me." Even though his faith was very great, as the waters of the flood were about to engulf him, he cried out, "Lord, why haven't you saved me? I am about to drown?" The Lord answered, "Of course I tried to save you! Didn't I send a truck, a boat, and a helicopter?"

The problem for this man is the same for many of us. God's intervention, God's signs of presence may seem too ordinary for us to accept. Where do we find the trucks, boats, and helicopters that God tries to offer as support? They are the persons in the life of each individual who offers support and concern during the time of crisis and loss. These are the signs and symbols of the support and care of God. Look at the support of pastor and parish community during the initial time of bereavement; the calls and visits of friends; the sending of flowers; the offering of prayers; or the companionship offered over a cup of tea can all be viewed as signs of God's presence and love. Have you recognized God in them?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. How and when has God spoken to you in other persons? Did you recognize it at the time? Do you feel better able to recognize God's presence in the future?
2. What are some of the ways that you prayed in the past that were comforting...consoling? Have you tried them recently?
3. Do you feel like God is far away from you? How could you gain a better sense of God's presence?
4. What would you like God to do for you right now? What resources has God made available to you?

PRAYER

God, help me to open my eyes to see Your healing possibilities. You are asking me, like the blind man in sacred scripture, "Do you want to be healed?" Help me to say, "Yes!" and to seek the help that I need in order to cope with this loss. I will trust that it is You who reaches out and responds to my calls for help. I will respond to Your love with gratitude and faith as You reach out to me in the service, concern and care which others give me.