

HOW TO HELP A CHILD WHO IS SICK OR HOSPITALIZED

AGE	FEARS	WHAT THEY ARE DOING/ LEARNING	HOW TO CARE
BIRTH TO 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAIN • SEPARATION (8—24 MO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOUCHING, LOOKING, FEELING, SMELLING, MOVING—ONENESS WITH MOTHER • (4—18 MO) • ATTACH TO FAVORITE TOY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVIDE FAMILIAR SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS, TOUCHES, ROOM TO MOVE. • IMITATE CHILD • PEEK-A-BOO • SUPPORT PARENTS WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT HAVING A HOSPITALIZED CHILD SO THEY CAN BE A SOURCE OF FAMILIARITY AND COMFORT
2—4 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAIN • SEPARATION • NEEDLES/SHOTS • MAY SEE PAIN AS PUNISHMENT • DO NOT LIKE CHANGES FOR THE FAMILIAR ROUTINE OR ENVIRONMENT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGOCENTRIC • ONLY “KNOW” WHAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED • REENACT THEIR EXPERIENCES IN PLAY • LITTLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY • ATTRIBUTE SENTIENCE TO ALL THINGS • LIMITED CONCEPT OF TIME • LIMITED LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES • LOVE BANDAIDS—SEE A PUNCTURE AS A WAY FOR THEIR BODY TO “LEAK” OUT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REASSURE THAT BEING SICK/IN HOSPITAL IS NOT PUNISHMENT • TAKE FANTASIES SERIOUSLY • LET THEM ENGAGE YOU IN THEIR PLAY • GIVE REAL CHOICES • BE HONEST • SUPPORT PARENTS WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT HAVING A HOSPITALIZED CHILD SO THEY CAN BE A SOURCE OF FAMILIARITY AND COMFORT • CLERGY: TELL FAMILIAR STORIES, SAY FAMILIAR PRAYERS
4—7 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEEDLES/SHOTS • 4Y/O—THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE • 5-6—DO NOT LIKE THE STRANGENESS OF THE SETTING • 7Y/O—LOSS OF CONTROL/ DIFFERENT LOOKING BODY • SOME SEPARATION ANXETY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MORE VERBAL • MAY FOCUS ON ONE CHARACTERISTIC OF AN ITEM/ EXPERIENCE TO EXCLUSION OF OTHERS • HAVE MORE EXPERIENCES TO COMPARE—GREATER COPING OPTIONS • HAS A NASCENT SENSE OF INITIATIVE • OPEN TO TRUSTING OTHERS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIVE REAL CHOICES • LET THEM TOUCH • BE PATIENT WITH THEIR FEARS • BE HONEST • HELP THEM PLAY OUT THEIR FEELINGS • CLERGY: LISTEN TO WORRIES, SEE IF THEY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THIS, ASSURE THEM OF THEIR GOODNESS, SAY SIMPLE PRAYERS AND ASK CHILD WHAT S/HE WANTS TO PRAY ABOUT.

AGE	FEARS	WHAT THEY ARE DOING/ LEARNING	HOW TO CARE
7—11 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEE ILLNESS AS THREAT TO THEIR COMPETENCY • LOSS OF CONTROL • CHANGES IN THE WAY THEIR BODY LOOKS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAN BEGIN TO REASON • DO NOT THINK ABSTRACTLY • HAVE A GOOD CONCEPT OF TIME • PEERS BECOMING VERY IMPORTANT • OPEN TO TRUSTING OTHERS • HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF SELF • HAVE A UNILATERAL SENSE OF WHAT IS FAIR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE HONEST • GIVE REAL CHOICES • GIVE INFORMATION IN SMALL DOSES AND AVOID ABSTRACT CONCEPTS • PLAY GAMES • ENGAGE IN CREATIVE PLAY • SHARE MUSIC • SET LIMITS • GIVE SOME RESPONSIBILITY • CLERGY: LISTEN TO WORRIES, PROVIDE SOMETHING THE CHILD CAN “DO” FOR ANOTHER AND/OR FOR THEMSELVES. USE SCRIPTURE TO ASSIST THEM SEE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GOD’S HISTORY AND THEIR STORY—LET THEM TELL YOU HOW THEY UNDERSTAND THE STORY. LET THEM TELL YOU WHAT THEY WANT TO PRAY ABOUT. PROVIDE SACRAMENTS THAT HAVE MEANING TO THE CHILD
12—19 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOSS OF CONTROL • LOSS OF PRIVACY • BEING ANAESTHETIZED (LOSS OF CONTROL) • LOSING SKILLS • BEING DISFIGURED/LOOKING DIFFERENT • LOSING FRIENDS/ BEING SHUT OUT OF ACTIVITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAN THINK SOMEWHAT ABSTRACTLY. REASONING BRAIN IS MATURING FASTER THAN EMOTIONS BRAIN • CAN PLAN FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE • FOCUSED ON IDENTITY—WHO I WILL BE, WHAT I WILL DO • IMPORTANCE OF PEERS IS PARAMOUNT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESPECT PRIVACY • LISTEN CAREFULLY • BE HONEST • GIVE TIME TO BE WITH FRIENDS • SHARING STORIES • SHARING MUSIC • PLAYING GAMES • CLERGY: BE DIRECT AND HONEST, HELP THEM LOOK AT DISCREPANCIES IN WHAT THEY SAY AND DO, BELIEVE AND DO NOT BELIEVE. HELP THEM TALK ABOUT WHAT THIS MEANS TO THEM, AND HOW GOD IS A PART—OR NOT. ASSIST THEM IN CONNECTING WITH THEIR COMMUNITY (SCHOOL FRIENDS, YOUTH GROUP). PROVIDE RITUAL/ SACRAMENT THAT THEY DESIRE. LISTEN.