

The loss of a teacher is a traumatic event in the life of a child, especially in a second grader. Research has shown that children are **NOT** as resilient as we had once hoped. **Trauma of this magnitude has lasting and recurring effects.** Often school is the primary source of stability and security 7 to 10 hours a day in the lives of our children. The consistency of activity, rules and people, make school a major factor in shaping a child's outlook and understanding of life. Bottom line: **THERE WILL BE RAMIFICATIONS** in our children due to the loss of Mrs Pitt and Mrs. Raymond. Our goal should be to **use this event as an opportunity to move more deeply into our childrens' lives, and help them place their lives in the hands of an all-knowing, all-loving God.**

With any loss of such magnitude, there is grief. **Grief is a process**, not an event. Grief shows itself in different ways in each child. The loss for our children is real, but the pain can heal. Parents can help...

1. Educate yourself about the stages of grief: shock and denial, anger and resentment, guilt, depression and loneliness, finally, hope and healing. Remember, grief is a process. Your children will have good days and bad. **Memories will trigger feelings long after the event has passed.**
2. Give your child permission to mourn. Encourage them to talk and pray. Don't let them stuff feelings. They could write a letter to their teachers, draw a picture, or make a card including some good memories.
3. **Listen**, listen and listen. Encourage your children to talk about their feelings. Give them lots of hugs and provide **extra** opportunities for physical closeness with mom and dad.
4. Reinforce the stability and security in their home lives.
5. Be prepared to explain and answer questions multiple times. This is part of the healing process. Children need continuous reassurance, not just a one time explanation.
6. Children tend to blame themselves. Let them know often and in different ways that it is not their fault.
7. Make certain your children get enough sleep, eat nutritiously, and exercise. Bedtime if often especially sad...questions tend to emerge.
8. Pray out loud and daily with your children...not only about themselves, but about their teachers. Plant the seed of **focusing on others while in the midst of personal pain (sacrificial love)**. What an opportunity for them to be like Jesus!

Some ways parents interfere with the grief process...

1. Parents' **inability and impatience in tolerating** the pain of their child and his/her need to mourn. Thus, the child is not given permission to mourn.
2. Parents **not providing a stable home life**...too many activities, too much chaos, inconsistency in schedules, and a general mood of uncertainty about what will happen next.
3. Parents not being **available and approachable** for the child to share longings, feelings, memories, and questions. Quality time is not enough; children need quantity time.

Don't see this situation as simply an unpleasant event to "get over", seize it as an opportunity to model your faith, affirm your child, and offer him/her a closer relationship with the Savior.

For specific concerns, please do not hesitate to call!
Jack Lipski, SOTHCS Counselor