

Hurtful Things People of Faith Sometimes Say

Replacing spiritual clichés with compassionate presence

People often reach for familiar religious phrases because they want to comfort someone and do not know what else to say. Yet statements that explain, minimize, or spiritualize a death can leave a grieving person feeling misunderstood. Compassion begins with listening.

WORDS CAN INTENSIFY PAIN

Phrases such as 'Everything happens for a reason,' 'God needed another angel,' or 'You just need more faith' may unintentionally dismiss the reality of the loss.

- Avoid explaining why the death happened.
- Do not rush someone toward gratitude or acceptance.
- Let the grieving person lead spiritual conversations.

WHAT HELPS MORE

Simple acknowledgment often offers greater comfort than an explanation.

- 'I am so sorry.'
- 'I miss them too.'
- 'I am here to listen.'

PRESENCE IS A FORM OF CARE

You do not need perfect words. Remembering important dates, listening to stories, and continuing to show up can communicate love.

- Use the person's name.
- Check in after the initial weeks have passed.
- Respect tears, silence, anger, and questions.

A GENTLE REMINDER

Compassion does not require an explanation. Sometimes the kindest response is simply to stay present.

