

HOPE'S HEROES



For Parents/Guardians:

Frequently Asked Questions

Based on questions and feedback that we have received from donor families, we have compiled a list of questions below that your children may ask as you/they read the Hope's Heroes books or log-on to the on-line experience. Please keep in mind that the answers we have provided are suggestions based on what we have learned over time from other families, and they are designed to function as jumping-off points for you to comfortably have a conversation with your child. Parents should first read through the entire book(s) or work through the on-line experience to see if they have any questions before reading the book or participating in the "game" with their children. If so, we encourage you to call the LifeNet Health Donor Family Services department to discuss your questions/concerns. Keep in mind that children understand death in different ways at different ages. Depending on the age of the child, parents should be careful with the language/words that they use to answer certain questions. Children at different ages can and will interpret your answers very differently. Please also note that these questions may bring up more questions regarding death, and how you die. How do you know that it's the right time to talk about donation with your children? When you think they are ready, or perhaps when they ask you a question. The timing for sharing these books or the on-line experience with your children will completely depend on their level of curiosity about the death and/or donation. To reach LifeNet Health's Donor Family Services department with questions, or to obtain the Hope's Heroes books, you may simply "contact us" through the www.healingthespirit.org website. Thanks for visiting us!

Q. What is donation?

A. Donation is saying yes to help others, and above all, donation is hope.

Q. Does it hurt?

A. No it does not. When you die, nothing hurts anymore. You can further support your child by sharing your personal or religious beliefs about death.

Q. How do they take the tissues out?

A. The tissue gifts are recovered by individuals who are highly skilled and trained.

Q. Could you die? Then who will take care of me?

A. I don't plan on dying for a very, very, very long time. But if I do, someone will always be here to take care of you.

Q. If these are such great gifts, why doesn't everyone give?

A. Not everyone has the opportunity to donate. For those who can donate, it takes a lot of strength and courage to say 'yes,' and to offer gifts to others.

Q. How long does the tissue gift last?

A. We hope that the tissue gifts will last for a very long time.

Q. Why did you say yes to donation?

A. The decision to be a donor can either be made by the person themselves while they were alive, or when they die, by their family who knew what they would have wanted.

Q. Do I have to be a donor? Are you a donor?

A. It is a personal choice to give a gift.

Q. Does God believe in donation?

A. The major religions all support donation, or leave it up to the individual to choose. Most religions consider it a generous act.

Developmental Ages and Possible Reactions to Death

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The Preschool Child (Ages 3-5)

Death concept is limited. Children in this age group ask many questions in their search to understand what is happening. It is important, however, to realize that this child will have a very limited concept of death. "Dead" is simply being "less alive." Children this age need to know that death is nothing at all like sleeping. Correctly using the words "died" and "dead" provides the honest base for this young child to begin to cope with what has happened.

The Grade-School Child (Ages 6-10)

Death concept grows. Beginning with a preschool concept of death, the grade-school child gradually comes to understand its reality. By age 10 or before, the child probably understands it fairly well but may still believe that death happens only to other people. Children in this age group cope best by understanding. They need simple, honest and accurate information.

The Pre-Adolescent and Adolescent (Ages 10-18)

Death concept matures. By the beginning of adolescence (typically age 12-14), most children have a rather complete view of the mortality of life. However, much of what has been said about the younger ages can still apply.