

# How to explain to young children about the coronavirus from a Christian perspective

By Tamsin Grimmer, Early Years Consultant.

It is difficult to know if and how we should respond to young children at this time. Should we try to shelter them from the situation by avoiding talking about it or should we talk about it in a manner in which our young children will understand? What about God? How can we pray about a pandemic with young children?

Children will have noticed that something is different, regardless of whether we have discussed the pandemic with them! They're not going to school, nursery, church or any of their usual groups, they haven't seen Nanna for several weeks, Mummy and Daddy are always at home and don't even take them to the shops anymore.

We cannot avoid talking with young children about how our lives have changed because of the corona- virus and we shouldn't feel we need to. Children are more resilient and have a greater depth of understanding than we often give them credit for. Sadly children also worry more than we might think, so I want to encourage parents and carers to not be afraid to talk and pray with their children about this situation.

We can be supportive and honest, and explain things to our children using language that they will understand. For example saying, "The coronavirus is a bug that people can get which makes them feel very poorly. They might feel very hot or have a nasty cough. Some people's bodies will find it difficult to recover from the illness. Other people will get totally better. We need to stay at home to help stop the virus from spreading and to help the doctors and nurses to care for the people who are poorly, and we can pray for them as they do their jobs."

We might need to be prepared to talk with our children about death and what this means. Death is a very abstract concept for young children and talking in terms of concrete things that children might understand can help. For

example, “When we are dead we do not breathe, our heart stops beating and we cannot play anymore.” Try to avoid using analogies like ‘falling asleep’ or ‘at rest’. These are confusing for young children and can lead to them becoming frightened of resting or sleeping themselves. Instead, we should factually explain about life cycles and that every living thing will die one day. We can reassure them that we might feel sad and miss the person who died, but we believe that when you die you go to be with Jesus in Heaven, which is a very special place where there will be no more sadness or suffering. We also have lots of lovely, happy

memories that we can share, and possibly photographs to look at to help us to remember their life.

Children might start to question where God is if they hear about people suffering and dying. We can reassure them that God is still in control and that we can spread his love, hope and peace to other people.

**6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)**



### **Playing at doctors and nurses!**

This article has been written by Tamsin Grimmer who is a member of St. James’ Church, Trowbridge, and is an Early Years Consultant.

You can download this article and Top Tips from the CTBI website as it might be of assistance to you directly or to a school, toddler group, etc..

If you want to contact Tamsin to discuss this article, her website is as follows: <http://tamsingrimmer.com>