

Saying the Right Thing

It is one thing to know we need to help people; it's quite another to know how to do it. Here is an exercise to help young people discuss practical options when helping someone.

The following situations give different options for a response to a

specific problem. Discuss the pros and cons of each response and add whatever other responses you might think are appropriate. There are no right answers, but you should be able to discover that certain responses are more appropriate than others.

A woman is dying of cancer. She is not active in a church, but does attend worship services. She has three teenage children. You have been visiting her in the hospital. She has been telling you about her oldest son, who's been in some trouble. You have prayed with and for her and are excusing yourself to leave. She begins crying. What do you say/do now? Why?

1. Is there anything you'd like to share with me?
2. I see you have some deep feelings. What are you crying about?
3. It's really difficult being in the hospital when you're concerned about your children, isn't it?
4. Listen, I'll go see your son and try to help.
5. I've got a great book that really will help you with the problem.
6. I'm sorry...Good-bye.
7. I'll send the pastor over.
8. Don't cry...everything will be all right.
9. Listen, don't worry, God will work it all out.

You have a good friend (your age) whose father suddenly died. After

missing several days of school, your friend just returned to classes. You see him for the first time since his dad's death. What do you say/do?

1. I hear your father just died. Gee, that's too bad.
2. Boy, I know just how you feel.
3. I'm really sorry about your dad. I don't know what I'd do if my dad died.
4. I'm sorry about your dad, but at least he's in heaven.
5. Hey, how you doin'? Good to see you.
6. Boy, you and your dad were really close, weren't you? It must be tough.
7. What's happening, man? Hey listen, a bunch of us are getting together for a big party this weekend, what are the chances of you coming?

Your brother (or sister) has just had a fight with your mom and dad. It seems that your parents forgot to tell him that they had something planned for Saturday so he will have to cancel his plans for Saturday. Your brother stomps angrily back to his room and is grumbling about how unfair the situation is. What do you say/do?