

Instead of saying this

"Tears won't make him well" (if sick) or come back (dead/gone). "Be a man". "Big girls/boys don't cry."

When parents asked a Jewish rabbi after the stillborn should they have a funeral, "how do we bury her?", "What can we do?"; he replied, "Don't worry about all that, in our tradition, stillborn babies are not considered a life".

In the loss of a child, when there are other children, "Well, you still have two healthy boys."

After several months of grieving, "You should be over this by now, it's been..."

Especially to a small child "Alan lost his mother", "Dad went on a long trip. "God took her because she was so good" or "she's in heaven with the angels." "The cat went to sleep last night."

Say this

"It's OK to cry"; "tears are gifts to help you", "Tears are our friends"

"Did the baby have a name yet? If so in spite of tradition, help the parents make some arrangements using the infant's name.

"It must be a terrible loss to you as well as to Johnny and Bob."

"You may miss XXX, for a long time; tell me, what was the most fun you two ever had?"

"Alan's mother died, he will miss her a lot." "Dad died in a drowning accident, we are all sad, but we will get through this together". Grandma was very old and died last night. We will think about her a lot and remember all the good things we did together" "Max was very, very sick and the sickness made him die" "No one really knows if there is a kitty heaven, I think there is."