

## Explaining Cremation To Children

Children experience grief just as adults do. It is important to remember that children deal with death DIFFERENTLY at different ages and that their reactions are not always obvious or immediate.

A child of 2 or 3 years of age has little understanding of the permanency of death, while one who is 8 or 9 has a capacity to grasp life's mysteries and will remember the experience vividly.

Cremation can be explained to children by firstly talking about the death and helping a child understand that grief is a natural feeling when someone has died.

A child needs adults to confirm that it's all right to be sad and to cry; that the hurt they feel now won't last for ever.

### **Answering A Child's Questions**

Adults can help a child during a time of loss by being OPEN, HONEST and LOVING and by RESPONDING to their questions in a FACT giving way.

\* There is no need to be evasive, but modify explanations to what a child can understand. They will ask more questions as their intellect grasps the concept of cremation. This will happen over several months or years.

\* It is better NOT to withhold information, children can cope with what they know. If the truth is withheld, often their imaginations can conjure up explanations much scarier than reality.

\* Be careful about using euphemisms or even telling white lies to children in an attempt to protect them.

E.G.: If a child is told that God took the person to heaven or that the person has gone to be a star in heaven.... the child may feel confused and upset that their loved one chose to leave them.

\* You can tell them that cremation does not hurt the person. The person is dead.... which means the body doesn't work any more. The heart does not beat, the brain has stopped working, there is no breathing and the body does not feel anything anymore.

\* There is no smell when a body is cremated. The coffin containing the deceased person is placed into the cremator which is heated to 3 times hotter than your oven at home and the body just disintegrates leaving only fragments of bone.

\* Talk about how the fragments of bone are then put in a container (urn) which can be placed in the garden at home or in a Cemetery.

For more information contact Gizelle on 8522 1734