



***Perinatal Loss Resource Guide
(Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Loss)***

***Catholic Miscarriage Ministry
Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise***



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We are so very sorry for your loss and are here to help you through your miscarriage/infant loss journey. You are not alone.

We hope the following resources will be helpful to you as you grieve the loss of your child.

With love through Jesus and Mary,

***Catholic Miscarriage Ministry
Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise***

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***Miscarriage/Still Birth/Infant Loss Resources
Helpful, Practical Resources for Birth/Burial Needs:***

For helpful phone numbers for immediate or impending birth or burial needs, please refer first to the **Local Resources Guide** (enclosed in the Miscarriage Kit, separate from this Resource Booklet). These local resources may include:

- **Local Miscarriage Minister support contact information**
- **Local Parish Priest contact information**
- **Local Funeral Home information**
- **Local Cemetery information**
- **Local Catholic store information**
- **Local Mass/Remembrance Events**

If your area is not yet represented in the Local Resource Guide in your kit, please feel free to reach out to our diocesan miscarriage minister, Tami Gieseke at (916) 201-5964 or CatholicMiscarriage@gmail.com, for support.

If you need immediate help with birth/collecting your sweet baby, please see the practical miscarriage kit (contents in zip

lock bag in your miscarriage kit) or page 21 of this book. For tiny caskets, keepsakes, books, resource links, and more, we recommend you browse the **Heaven's Gain** website (*HeavensGain.org*) from the comfort of your home. This is a comprehensive, one-stop miscarriage resource for information and practical needs from a Catholic perspective.

In This Booklet:

- **Miscarriage Prayers**
- **Blessing of Parents after a Miscarriage Prayers and Blessings for Parents**
<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-parents-after-miscarriage-or-stillbirth> (A note for the future: There is also a Catholic Blessing of the Child in the Womb that can be prayed for subsequent pregnancies.)
- **Comfort Quotes** (from scripture, saints, liturgy)
- **What to Do: Dignifying the Life of Your Child During and After Loss**
 This article includes baby birth and collection tips for early miscarriage and practical, time sensitive memory making recommendations.
- **Home Care Instructions - St. Alphonsus Hospital**
 This information comes from St. Alphonsus' Early Pregnancy Loss Support Resource Guide - used with permission.
- **What to Say: Talking to a Woman Who has Miscarried: Do's and Do Nots** (original source/author unknown)

Enclosed Separately in the Miscarriage Kit:

- **Local Resource Guide**
- **Understanding Your Spouse After Loss; Men and Women Grieve Differently**
- **Caring for Other Children After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Newborn Loss**
- **Children’s Questions After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Newborn Loss**
- **Planning a Special Goodbye**
- **Individual Funeral Mass or Memorial Service Planning Guide**
- **Certificate of Life**

Additional Resources:

Websites for the Journey:

- **Threads of Love:** <https://threadsoflove.org/>
Offers burial clothing and blankets for miscarried babies.
- **Angel Gowns by Baba:**
<https://www.facebook.com/angelgownsbybaba/>
Offers burial clothing for the tiniest babies.
- **NICU Helping Hands:**
<https://nicuhelpinghands.org/programs/angel-gown-program/>
Offers burial clothing for miscarried babies at no cost.

- **My Forever Child:** <https://myforeverchild.com/>
Offers custom remembrance, healing, personalized jewelry.
- **Innocents:** <https://shrineofholyyinnocents.org/shrine-of-the-unborn>

Church of the Holy Innocents in New York has a Shrine of the Unborn. Babies' names can be put in their "Book of Life". A candle is always lit, and people are there praying for the babies on a regular basis. This is another way to honor your little.

- **Trappist Caskets:** <https://trappistcaskets.com/>
Offers infant caskets made by Trappist monks.
- **Heaven's Gain:** <https://heavensgain.org/>
If you are looking for tiny caskets, keepsakes, books, resource links, and more, we recommend you browse them from the comfort of your home. This is the most comprehensive, one-stop miscarriage resource to date for information and practical needs from a Catholic perspective.

Counseling Resource for the Journey:

Catholic Counseling Agency:
<https://catholiccounselingagency.com/>

Jack Roland, although physically located in CA, is open to schedule a FaceTime-type consult to see if long-distance counseling might be a good fit for you. Call (916) 792-9797.

Books for the Healing Journey:

- *Nursery of Heaven: Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Loss in the Lives of the Saints and Today's Parents*, by Patrick O'Hearn.
- A book to read with your children: *Jellybean, A Baby's Journey to God*, by Theoni and Bastian Bell

Songs for the Journey:

We hope these songs are helpful as you journey through loss. They have been helpful to others who also spent time at the foot of the cross, just like you. Blessings in abundance as you spend some time with these songs.

Enter the song title into *YouTube.com* search engine to listen.

- *Oceans* by Hillsong United
- *Broken* by Jeremy Riddle
- *Held* by Natalie Grant
- *Hold on to Me* by Lauren Daigle
- *Heaven Someday* by Shelly Johnson
- *Way to Start* by Craig Aven
- *I Will Carry You* by *Selah Cover* by Mandi Fisher
- *Thy Will* by Hillary Scott
- *I Know* by Big Daddy Weave

We hope these songs are helpful to you as you grieve the loss of your baby.



Miscarriage Prayers

A note regarding the following Miscarriage Prayer by Mother Angelica

Some families find this prayer edifying right away and some find it difficult at first... rather than pray this as a prayer, we encourage you to look to the truth written here regarding your precious child, as it was gifted to Mother Angelica by the Holy Spirit as she ministered to a woman experiencing miscarriage... may this truth, in time (take all the time you need), bring you peace and comfort...

Miscarriage Prayer by Mother Angelica

Why, my Lord—dare I ask why? It will not hear the whisper of the wind or see the beauty of its parents' face—it will not see the beauty of Your creation or the flame of a sunrise. Why, my Lord?

“Why, My child—do you ask ‘why’? Well, I will tell you why. You see, the child lives. Instead of the wind he hears the sound of angels singing before My throne. Instead of the beauty that passes he sees everlasting Beauty—he sees My face. He was created and lived a short time so the image of his parents imprinted on his face may stand before Me as their personal intercessor. He knows secrets of heaven unknown to men on earth. He laughs with a special joy that only the innocent possess. My ways are not the ways of man. I create for My Kingdom and each creature fills a place in that Kingdom that could not be filled by another. He was created for My joy and his parents' merits. He has never seen pain or sin. He has never felt hunger or pain. I breathed a soul into a seed, made it grow and called it forth.”

I am humbled before you, my Lord, for questioning Your wisdom, goodness, and love. I speak as a fool—forgive me. I acknowledge Your sovereign rights over life and death. I thank You for the life that began for so short a time to enjoy so long an Eternity.

Prayer to St. Catherine

Dear St. Catherine, patron of those who have suffered a miscarriage, you know the dangers that await unborn infants. Please intercede for me that I may receive healing from the loss I have suffered. My soul has been deprived of peace and I have forgotten what true happiness is. As I mourn the loss of my child, I place myself in the hands of God and ask for strength to accept His will in all things, for consolation in my grief, and for peace in my sorrow. Glorious St. Catherine, hear my prayers and ask that God, in good time, grant me a healthy baby who will become a true child of God. Amen.

Christian Miscarriage Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus I come to you with a broken heart because of the loss of my baby. I know that your ears are open to my prayers. I am hurting and restless and feel overwhelmed. Please rescue me out of this pit of hopelessness and fear. You know the tears that I cry and my sleepless nights. Father, I give you all my hurts, worries, and cares. I thank you that you are not finished with me yet. I will choose not to be held down by a spirit of discouragement and grief. By your grace I will stand firm and trust you. Help me to remember that others are going through the same pain as me, help me to get strong, so that with the same comfort that you comfort me with, I will be able to comfort others.

Author: Patty Larsen

Source:

<https://www.catholicmiscarriagesupport.com/spiritual/prayers-and-liturgics/>



Blessing of Parents after a Miscarriage

(<https://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/prayers/miscarriage.htm>)

[Miscarriage Prayer | EWTN](#)

When a baby dies before birth, the parents may seek the prayers of the Church. A priest, deacon, or lay minister of the parish, or a member of the family may lead this blessing.

Leader leads all in the Sign of the Cross:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Let us praise the Father of mercies, the God of all consolation. Blessed be God forever.

All: **Blessed be God forever.**

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

For those who trust in God, in the pain of sorrow there is consolation, in the face of despair there is hope, in the midst of death there is life.

(Name) and (Name), as we mourn the death of your child, we place ourselves in the hands of God and ask strength, for healing, and for love.

*Then the Scripture is read (by the **leader or someone appointed**):*

Listen to the words of the book of Lamentations:

My soul is deprived of peace,
 I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is
 lost,
 all that I hoped for from the Lord. But I will call this to
 mind,
 as my reason to have hope: The favors of the Lord are not
 exhausted, his mercies are not spent.
 They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.
 My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore, I will hope
 in him.

(Lamentations 3:17-18, 21-24)

The Word of the Lord.

*All respond: **Thanks be to God.***

*After a time of silence, the leader leads **all** in prayers of intercession.*

These conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

*Then the **leader** may invite all to extend their hands over the parents in blessing.*

Father and Creator,
in whom all life and death find meaning, we bless you at all
times, especially when we have need of your consolation.
N. and N. entrust to your care a life conceived in love.
May your blessing come upon them now. Remove all
anxiety from their minds and strengthen this love so that
they may have peace in their hearts and home.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All respond: Amen.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader concludes:

May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All respond: Amen.



Comfort Quotes

“In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.” (Matthew 18:14)

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it. Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.” (Mark 10:13-16)

“People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, ‘Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’” (Luke 18:15-16)

“... ‘I do not know how you came into existence in my womb; it was not I who gave you the breath of life, nor was it I who set in order the elements of which each of you is composed. Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shapes each man’s beginning, as he brings about the origin of everything, he, in his mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his law’ ...” (Second book of Maccabees 7:1,20-31)

“But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal.” (Matthew 6:20)

“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” (Matthew 6:24)

“Thus says the Lord: In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping! Rachael mourns her children; she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more. Thus says the Lord: cease your cries of mourning, wipe the tears from your eyes. The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward, says the Lord, they shall return from the enemy’s land. There is hope for your future, says the Lord; your sons shall return to their own borders.” (Jeremiah 31:15-17)

“And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29)

“The sufferings of the present are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)

“Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.”
(Luke 6:20-26)

“Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices, you will grieve, but your grief will become joy.”
(John 16:20)

“As Mother Teresa says, our sufferings are God’s gentle caresses, beckoning us to come back to him, to admit we are not in control of our lives, but he is in control and can be trusted with our lives completely.” (Book *Rome Sweet Rome*, by Scott Hahn and Kimberly Hahn)

“In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.” (John 16:33b)

“But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly...as a result, those who suffer in accord with God’s will hand their souls over to a faithful creator as they do good.”
(1 Peter 4:13,19)

“They strengthened the spirit of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in their faith, saying, ‘it is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’” (Acts 14:22)

“All the Lord’s ways are beautiful because their end is one and the same: to save our own soul and to succeed in leading many other souls to heaven, to give glory to God.” (St. Gianna Molla)

“I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden them after their sorrows.” (Jeremiah 31:13-14)

“Our Lord said this to me one day: ‘Thinkest thou, My daughter, that meriting lies in fruition? No; merit lies only in doing, in suffering, and in loving...Do not suppose, when thou seest My Mother hold Me in her arms, that she had that joy unmixed with heavy sorrows. From the time that Simeon spoke to her, My Father made her see in clear light all I had to suffer...’” (St. Teresa of Avila, *Autobiography*, p. 451).

Remember that the Blessed Virgin, our Mother and His, knows our sorrow. She can teach us to hold these most precious gifts, our children, these gifts of great love and great sorrow combined, in our hearts and bear them with great love and surrender for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

“You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you, When I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be.” (Psalm 139, III)

“Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot have love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love.” (St. Gianna Molla)

“A mother’s love cannot be measured by increments of time... an entire lifetime of love can be squeezed into a few brief miraculous moments when necessary...” (Unknown)



What to Do: Dignifying the Life of Your Baby During and After Loss

Early miscarriage (less than two months pregnant) can occur over days or weeks. You might not know you have miscarried until it is confirmed by an ultrasound or blood test after days or weeks of bleeding. If you start bleeding early on in your pregnancy, you might consider collecting anything that might be your baby's body as he/she might be too small to notice when born (basically collect everything). In the moment, this can be very difficult or might even feel awkward, but it will likely be a comfort to you later.

If you are past two months gestation, it should be fairly easy to find/identify your baby upon birth (See "Baby Development" pictures on the laminated page in the Miscarriage Kit for pictures of what your baby might look like and how big he or she likely is based on gestation. This will help you find him/her.)

Please note: If you have already delivered and were not able to do all the things listed below, move forward with trust in God's

goodness. He has this all in His loving hands. ***He has your baby in His loving hands.*** Leave any concern at the feet of Our Lady and move forward. You love your baby. When you are unable to do anything else, that is enough. God sees your love; your baby sees your love – even if you were unaware of how to dignify your little one upon delivery. You can still participate in remembrance events and make and keep mementos (see below). Focus on what you can do that will bring you peace and healing.

God wants you to heal. He loves you and He loves your baby. No matter what you were able or not able to do upon delivery, may His peace be with you and His love be palpable to you.

COLLECT AND BURY YOUR BABY

- To collect your baby after an early miscarriage: (most items needed are enclosed in the Miscarriage Kit – see plastic zip bag). Please, please feel free to reach out to one of our Miscarriage Ministers (See Local Resource Guide within our ministry kit or contact Tami Gieseke, our diocesan Miscarriage Minister) with any questions at all regarding collection. Guidance through this process is very common and there are no off-limit questions. Women who have experienced miscarriage are very willing to assist you.

(SEE LAMINATED INSTRUCTIONS IN ENCLOSED MISCARRIAGE KIT)

- Keep a **container** (silver container with lid provided in the collection kit within this miscarriage kit - first and second trimester kits have collection kits within them) with first and second trimester loss kits) in the restroom for collection. (With a lid to keep contaminants out and also any odor. Odor

is part of the natural process.). This is for early losses or those whose babies have not been identified to be large enough to easily find. (**Practical tip:** these littles, especially younger gestation babies, tend to adhere to whatever surface they are placed on and will likely be hard to transfer after placement. Thus, choose a container you would like to bury your baby in and have that nearby as well.)

- Note for early loss: if the baby's body is not identified during the collection process and placed in the **second container**, the first container with lid may be what you end up burying. Thus, also choose a nicer container for collection if this is important to you). Thus, there are two containers for an early miscarriage because, if you do find the baby, you may want to include all the rest you have collected.
- A **small strainer** (preferably easy to hold under you and tiny holes so baby will not go through) can be used to make collecting from the toilet easier (white kidney strainer included in enclosed Miscarriage Kit). Hold the strainer under you to collect every time you use the restroom.
- Have a **container with water** nearby (peri-bottle included in Miscarriage Kit) to rinse what you collect to aid in finding baby (usually pink tissue). This water can also be used to rinse the strainer after you transfer what you have collected to your collection container. Once you have collected everything and you've rinsed out the strainer, set strainer, first container with lid, and peri bottle back in place for next restroom visit.

- It can be handy to have a **tray or disposable plastic container** available (not included in kit) to place all kit items onto for transfer back and forth from the bathroom (container/tray should fit easily on the back of the toilet or a counter close to the toilet to make collection easier). The large plastic zip bag will work too (especially if you need to collect away from home and need the kit to be more compact), but you may prefer the disposable plastic food container or tray to place everything. (Note in case it's helpful, some women prefer to keep the baby's collection container in its own separate plastic zip bag in between bathroom trips). You may gather **(1)** the container/tray holding the strainer and peri bottle and **(2)** the baby collection container and place them on the back of the toilet before using the bathroom and then place them back in a private location after you are finished with your bathroom trip/collection. This use of a container or tray helps keep things sanitary and convenient.
- See “Baby Development” pictures on the back of the laminated sheet in your Miscarriage Kit for pictures of what your baby might look like and how big he or she likely is based on gestation. This will help you find him/her precious body.
- Note: if you have testing done, only the placenta is needed for testing. The baby does not need to be tested. Collect baby's placenta in a **separate plastic zip bag** if you'd like the testing done.

- You will want to make sure to have **overnight/heavy flow pads** and maybe **pain medication** handy (just like you'd have for a heavy period).
- If you feel your bleeding is excessive (more than a typical period), please reach out to your healthcare provider for guidance. Perhaps request a medical toilet hat to help you monitor your blood loss at home (Local hospitals may give these out to moms facing miscarriage).

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR BABY AND TAKE PICTURES

- Hold your precious child. Take your time. Utilize this precious time you have to take in the little person that was growing so beautifully in you.
- Cherish this time as best you can in the moment. Even if it is difficult in your grief, you will most likely be glad you took this time later. Eventually, these memories may warm your heart as you think of your little one.
- You can take pictures of and with your baby. Have someone (nurse, husband, friend) take pictures of your baby shortly after birth. Remember to include pictures of you and your loved ones holding your precious child.
- This gives you something precious to hold on to. Even if you do not think you will ever want to look at the photos, you might change your mind later. Now is the precious time you have with your little one. Take advantage of the moments you have. Collect memories/keepsakes.

- Practical Tip: Your baby will not look the same shortly after birth/death so take pictures soon after birth. If in the hospital, ask to use a cuddle cot, if available, to keep your precious baby cool. If your baby was not found and you have your collection container ready for burial, you may want pictures of what you did for your child. You may take pictures of the decorated collection container and/or any burial items you gathered to be buried with the baby.
- If you'd like, measure your baby and make note of the baby's length too. Some families like to have this information years later as they remember their precious children in heaven.
- These detailed memories often fade over time so collect them to comfort you later in your journey.

NAME YOUR BABY

- Name your baby (even if you do not know the sex). While the world may not recognize your baby, you will always remember and think of your little one. This baby was very real to you because he/she lived and developed in you. No matter how tiny, he/she was a living baby. Denying this will only feel confusing, for you knew and perhaps even felt this life within you. When the world, friends and/or family forget, you will remember.
- He/she will always be a part of you. Choose to remember and honor the time you had together, even if he/she was with you for just a few weeks.

**HONOR YOUR LITTLE ONE BY PROVIDING HIM/HER WITH
A BLESSING, GRAVESIDE SERVICE OR FUNERAL, AND
PROPER BURIAL**

- If miscarriage is confirmed (usually by ultrasound and/or blood tests if baby is not found), you might choose to have any tissue you have collected (usually pink in color) blessed by a priest. (Or, in the case of a very early miscarriage, just have everything you've collected blessed if the body was not found. Father can bless your collection container... the tiniest of babies might very well be collected but not seen).

**MEET WITH A MINISTER TO PLAN A SERVICE OR
FUNERAL FOR YOUR BABY. BURY YOUR BABY'S BODY IN A
CATHOLIC CEMETERY**

- If you are unable to collect/identify your baby, you can be comforted knowing that you tried, and perhaps you have found him/her in what has been collected. Have a burial and bury what you have collected in memory of your baby.
- If you are able to find your precious baby. No matter what size, you can honor your baby's life by choosing a burial.
- If you deliver in the hospital, know that you can take your baby away from the hospital with you. Call (or have a friend or family member call) your local funeral home (see phone number on Local Resource Guide) to

arrange pick up. Also call a preferred cemetery to discuss burial options. Let your nurses and doctor know you want to take your baby's remains with you. Speak up (or have someone speak up for you) and make sure your wishes are met. Although this is sometimes very difficult, you will be so glad you spoke up when you look back on what you were able to do for your baby.

COLLECT AND KEEP MEMENTOS
AND MAKE MEMORIES

- Make a note of your baby's actual birthday or due date (whichever you prefer, or both). If you experienced an early loss and are not sure of the date, you can choose a date close to the birthday, the date you started the miscarriage process for example. Make this date a day of remembrance in the future if/when you are ready. Do something special in honor of your little one's life such as lighting a candle, having a memorial Mass offered, or making a cake. Whatever you'd like to do will provide treasured memories.
- It is important for you to know that you are not alone. Many women (and men too) hold the loss of a child deep in their hearts. Find someone to talk to about your loss. It can be very healing to speak with others who can relate to you. Together you can find healing as well as honor your little ones by sharing your story. You might also find that your story helps or inspires someone else.

- As you are ready, remember your little one in a way that is special to you. This can be done by starting a family tradition on the baby's birthday, by offering an annual Mass for your little one, by making Christmas ornaments for your baby to include on the Christmas tree, etc.
- Your local Catholic Miscarriage Ministry Minister may be able to provide you with information regarding local remembrance events and/or Masses or retreats for families who have experienced miscarriage/loss of an infant (also see Local Resource Guide). These events can be very healing.
- Your baby is an innocent saint! (The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament" (No. 1257)... for those babies that were not able to be baptized, the Catechism says, "Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,' offers us hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism" (No. 1261).) Be comforted by Our Lord's love and mercy... He who wants us all in heaven surely knows of your intent to baptize your baby should you have had the chance. We trust your little one is beholding His face and singing with the angels, as Mother Angelica says in the Miscarriage Prayer. You have a beautiful intercessor in heaven!

- You can keep mementos of your baby in a special box. Although you might not want to review these items now, collecting them ensures that they'll be there if you want to look at them later. A few ideas are keeping pictures, blankets, clothing, cards received, hand or footprints - whatever you have; making a baby album with the pictures you have, get a ring with baby's birthstone; and framing a handprint or footprint.

TAKE YOUR TIME. BE EASY ON YOURSELF AND GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ADJUST AND HEAL

- Remember, you just gave birth as well as lost someone dear to you. No matter how small this person was, this is still a loss. You are dealing with a lot. Not only are you feeling monumental grief; you also have the physical reminders that you just gave birth. You need time to heal physically as well as emotionally. Give yourself time as you endure the physical reminders of your loss, which can add so much intensity in this devastating season (Physical reminders can include your milk coming in, a pregnant-looking tummy, perinatal bleeding/recovery, perhaps recovery from surgery, hormonal changes, etc.). These physical sufferings are signs that a little person you love exists and was with you, even if for just a short while here on earth. It is so difficult to endure this extra physical burden during this already very trying season. This time of physical healing, with all its hurtful reminders, will pass. It will pass... It will all get easier... You are going through so much!
- Be patient with yourself and give yourself time.

We hope these tips and ideas will help you honor the life of your baby and move forward with hope.

It takes time to heal after a great loss. Be patient with yourself and grieve as you need. Give yourself time and love. Reflect, pray, and move forward knowing that you did everything you could to honor your baby. Proceed with hope. Although it probably doesn't feel like it now, there are more joyous seasons ahead. Keep moving forward one day, one breathe, at a time.

May God's abundant blessings and grace be yours as you journey forward, honoring your precious baby, making memories, and finding healing and hope.

God bless you, through Mary, who knows what it's like to lose a precious child... May she guide you through this season.



Homecare Instructions
From Saint Alphonsus Hospital's Early Pregnancy Loss
Support Resource Guide (used with permission)

Note: These are suggestions and not medical advice. Please seek the direction of your healthcare provider for any medical decision you make.

- Normal everyday activities are fine. No strenuous activity or exercising until your provider gives approval.
- You may want/need to have some extra help at home.
- Write down how many pads you use each day. Write down how soaked they are.
- Do not use tampons. Do not wash out your vagina (douche) or have sexual intercourse until your doctor approves.
- Only take medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Do not take aspirin as it may increase bleeding.
- Keep all doctor visits.

- If you or your partner has problems with grieving, please contact your mental health and health care provider.
- Call your doctor's office right away if:
- You pass large clumps of blood (clots) from your vagina that are egg-sized or larger. Save the clumps as your provider may want to see them.
- You soak more than one pad per hour for two consecutive hours.
- You have thick, bad-smelling fluid (discharge) coming from your vagina.
- You get lightheaded, weak, or you faint.
- You develop a fever of more than 100.4 degrees or have chills.
- If your sadness becomes severe enough that it is interfering with your ability to function.
- Go to the Emergency Room right away if you have any of the above issues and your doctor's office is closed.



***What to Say to a Woman Who has Miscarried:
Don'ts and Do's***
(source unknown)

When women experience the loss of a child, one of the first things they discover they have in common with each other is a list of things they wish no one had ever said to them. Their lists tend to be remarkably similar. The comments are rarely malicious - just misguided attempts to soothe.

The list below was compiled as a way of helping other people understand pregnancy loss. While generated by mothers for mothers, it may also apply similarly to the fathers who have experienced this loss. When trying to help a parent who has lost a baby, the best rule of thumb is a matter of manners: don't offer your opinion of her life, her choices, her prospects for children. No woman is looking to poll her acquaintances for their opinions on why it happened or how she should cope.

Don'ts

- **Don't say**, "It's God's Will." Even if we are members of the same congregation, unless you are a cleric and I am seeking your spiritual counseling, please don't presume to tell me what God wants for me. Besides, many difficult things are in accord with God's Will, that doesn't make them less difficult.
- **Don't say**, "It was for the best - there was probably something wrong with your baby." The fact that something was wrong with the baby is what is making me so sad. My poor baby never had a chance. Please don't try to comfort me by pointing that out.
- **Don't say**, "You can always have another one." This baby was never disposable. If I had been given the choice between losing this child or stabbing my eye out with a fork, I would have said, "Where's the fork?" I would have died for this baby, just as you would die for your children.
- **Don't say**, "Be grateful for the children you have." If your mother died in a terrible wreck and you grieved, would that make you less grateful to have your father?
- **Don't say**, "Thank God you lost the baby before you really loved it." I loved my son or daughter. Whether I lost the baby after two weeks of pregnancy or just after birth, I loved him or her.

- **Don't say**, "Isn't it time you got over this and moved on?" It's not something I enjoy, being grief-stricken. I wish it had never happened. But it did and it's a part of me forever. The grief will ease on its own timeline, not mine - or yours.
- **Don't say**, "Now you have an angel watching over you." I didn't want her to be my angel. I wanted her to bury me in my old age.
- **Don't say**, "I understand how you feel." Unless you've lost a child, you really don't understand how I feel. And even if you have lost a child, everyone experiences grief differently.
- **Don't tell** horror stories of your neighbor or cousin or mother who had it worse. The last thing the grieving parent(s) need to hear right now is that it is possible to have this happen six times, or that a mom could carry until two days before my due-date and labor 20 hours for a dead baby. These stories frighten and horrify me and leave me up at night weeping in despair. Even if they have a happy ending, do not share these stories with me.
- **Don't pretend** it didn't happen and don't change the subject when I bring it up. If I say, "Before the baby died..." or "when I was pregnant..." don't get scared. If I'm talking about it, it means I want to. Let me.

- **Don't say**, "It's not your fault." It may not have been my fault, but it was my responsibility and I failed. The fact that I never stood a chance of succeeding only makes me feel worse. This tiny little being depended upon me to bring him safely into the world and I couldn't do it. I was supposed to care for him for a lifetime, but I couldn't even give him a childhood. I am so angry at my body you just can't imagine.
- **Don't say**, "Well, you weren't too sure about this baby, anyway." I already feel so guilty about ever having complained about morning sickness, or a child I wasn't prepared for, or another mouth to feed that we couldn't afford. I already fear that this baby died because I didn't take the vitamins, or drink too much coffee, or had alcohol in the first few weeks when I didn't know I was pregnant. I hate myself for any minute that I had reservations about this baby. Being unsure of my pregnancy isn't the same as wanting my child to die. I never would have chosen for this to happen.
- **Don't call** more than once and don't be angry if the machine is on and I don't return your call. If we're close friends and I am not responding to your attempts to help me, please don't resent that, either. Help me by not needing anything from me for a while.
- **Don't ask** why I choose not to attend baby showers, christenings, birthday parties, etc.

Do's

- **Do say**, "I am so sorry." That's enough. You don't need to be eloquent. Say it and mean it and it will matter.
- **Do say**, "You are wonderful parent(s) and that baby so blessed to have you." Parents need to hear this.
- **Do say**, "I lit a candle for your baby," or "I said a prayer for your baby."
- **Do send** flowers or a kind note – each one I receive makes me feel as though my baby was loved. Don't resent it if I don't respond.

If you're my boss or my co-worker:

- **Do recognize** that I have suffered a death in my family - not a medical condition.
- **Do recognize** that in addition to the physical aftereffects I may experience, I'm going to be grieving for quite some time. Please treat me as you would any person who has endured the tragic death of a loved one - I need time and space.
- **Do understand** if I choose not to attend baby showers, christenings, birthday parties, etc.
- **Please don't** bring your baby or toddler into the workplace. If your niece is pregnant, or your daughter just had a baby, **please don't share** that with me right

now. It's not that I can't be happy for anyone else, it's that every smiling, cooing baby, every glowing new mother makes me ache so deep in my heart that I can barely stand it. I may look okay to you, but there's a good chance that I'm still crying every day. It may be weeks before I can go a whole hour without thinking about it. You'll know when I'm ready: I'll be the one to say, "Did your daughter have her baby?" or "How is that precious little boy of yours? I haven't seen him around the office in a while."

- Above all, please remember that this is possibly the worst thing that ever happened to me. The word "miscarriage" is small and easy. But my baby's death is monolithic and awful. It's going to take me a while to figure out how to live with it.
- Please bear with me.

Feedback Request

We hope this resource booklet is helpful to you. We would gladly accept any feedback you have to offer toward our effort to make this ministry as helpful as possible.

Please feel free to call the Diocese of Boise, Respect Life office to offer feedback. Contact us at 208-350-7555. You may also email any feedback to Tami Gieseke at: CatholicMiscarriage@gmail.com

Your feedback may very well help someone else!
Thank you.

God bless you and yours always... in abundance.

With love and hope in Our Lord and Our Lady,

Catholic Miscarriage Ministry
Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise

