



The end of life deserves as much beauty, care, and respect as the beginning.
 – Unknown

End of Life Conversations Milestone Moment

“My father lived with us in our home for two years until it became too difficult for me to be his primary caregiver. Dementia had set in and it was time for a difficult decision. We moved him to a memory care facility not far from our home. I visited him every day. During the last year of his life, my father would tell me he wanted to go home. He didn’t remember living with us and memories of homes he had in Florida and Pennsylvania had faded. I would ask him, ‘Where is your home?’ hoping I would hear him say, ‘With you,’ or talk about the places he lived. He could not answer and would remain silent. About three weeks before he passed away, he told me he wanted to go home again. I took a big gulp and leaned over to him and whispered in his ear, ‘Heaven is home too, Dad.’ He looked at me, shook his head to say yes, and we held hands. He did not ask again.” – Debbie Streicher

The end of life is not something we like to talk about, but it is inevitable. It is not easy to realize we are facing the absence of a loved one from our lives. Some are left in denial and push it aside. Talking about it with family and friends is difficult and often avoided. Turning to our faith and recognizing God’s presence at this time supports us.

There are end of life organizations that provide hospice care and have helped many to be comforted as they witness the ending of a loved one’s life. They treat both the patient and the family. Recognizing that the end of a life is near is difficult. Conversations can be reassuring and helpful.

This End of Life Conversations Milestone Moment provides an opportunity for family and friends to talk about their loved one. Conversation, prayer, and blessings recognize God in the moment. This Milestone Moment uses a simple structure that includes the following:


Naming – Acknowledging that a person has come to the end of their life which leaves their loved ones grief stricken. Recognizing God’s presence in the moment and having the chance to talk about one’s thoughts and feelings can be helpful and reassuring.

Equipping – Taking time to read scripture and engage in caring conversations with family and friends during this difficult and sad occasion can provide comfort.

Blessing – Offering a prayer and a blessing at this sad time reminds everyone involved of God’s presence in our lives.

Gifting – Bring items like pictures, videos, a special Bible, or other memorabilia that help family and friends recall special memories of the person who is dying.

Reinforcing – Stay in touch with those who have shared this milestone moment occasion. Telling stories and sharing memories can bring comfort and ongoing support that nurtures faith and hope.

 Caring Conversations
  Devotions
  Four Key Faith Practices
  Service
  Rituals and Traditions





End of Life Conversations Milestone Moment

For a Small Group or Family Gathering



Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away

“and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

– Deuteronomy 6:7b

A follow-up for the End of Life Conversations Milestone Moment can be done by having caring conversations with family and friends to discuss feelings about the end of life, comfort one another, and accept the grieving that has begun. Gather together to pray and reflect on God’s presence in your lives and in what ways God is always with you and with your loved one at this time.

An important step after experiencing the Four Key Faith Practices in the small groups or home setting is to bless and equip friends and families to continue practicing faith by using the faith practices daily as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.

A suggested resource for continued caring conversations:

[Taking Faith Home](#)
[Taking Faith Home Cards](#)

Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:
www.milestonesministry.org



This outline of the Four Key Faith Practices (Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions) provides an opportunity for people to talk and grow in their faith together. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you gather together, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God’s presence in this moment.



Caring Conversations

Discuss these thoughts and questions:

- What is a memory that comes to mind when you think of (name of person near end of life)?
- What are concerns and worries you may have as (name) grows closer to dying?
- How can family and friends help and support one another as you experience the end of life for your loved one?



Devotions

Read the following:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.”

John 14:1-3 (NRSV)

- When you think of the places and homes where you have lived, what was your favorite dwelling place?
- As you prepare for (name’s) absence from life, where do you find comfort?
- Jesus’ presence in our lives promises that we will dwell forever with God in the life to come. How does this promise give you comfort?



Service

It is important to support your loved one through prayer and if possible, visits. In what ways can you, your family, and friends provide comfort and support needed at this time for both yourselves and your loved one?



Rituals and Traditions

Close by praying together and sharing the blessing with each other:

Dear Lord, for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die. Be with us and our beloved (name) at this time and give us your peace. Amen.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 (NRSV)

Blessing: May God’s promise of eternal care comfort and strengthen you and your loved one.



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End of Life Conversations Discussion Guide



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