Dear Parents,

Everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest adult, experiences anxieties and fears at one time or another. Feeling anxious in a particularly uncomfortable situation never feels very good. With children such feelings are not only normal, they are also necessary. Dealing with anxieties can prepare young children to handle the unsettling experiences and challenging situations of life.

Young children can get spooked by just about anything — the dark, the wind, or even a favorite stuffed animal. Or they seem to sail through a real frightening situation, only to become afraid of something days or weeks later. No matter how scared your child gets, childhood fears are usually nothing to worry about. They are normal emotions that help your children figure out how the world works.

A few things to try:

-Take a deep breath and try to understand why your child is afraid.

-Let your child know that you take their fears seriously.

-Give your child truthful information on topics such as death or war, age appropriate of course, and let them know you are willing to answer any questions.

-Encourage your child to confront the object of their fear, such as dogs, one step at a time at their own pace. For example, perhaps start with pictures, then try a very small, gentle dog that is tied up, so the child decides how close to get.

-Allow your child some control. For example, if they are afraid of intruders, make shutting and locking their bedroom window one of their night-time responsibilities.

-Daily routines and rituals give a child a sense of stability and security, and may ease general anxiety.

There is no doubt about it. Life can be scary at times for children. We cannot keep our children from everything they fear—nor should we even try, but we can help them learn ways to be brave. It is an important step to growing up.

Take some time to check out this month’s video to see how you can deal with your child’s fear.

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/102090867/95aa561824>

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah