

▶ Monthly Newsletter

Mother's Day/Father's Day

Volume 2, Issue 3, May/June 1997

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*Praying today that
in the silent moments
you will find peace
in knowing God's
promises are true.*

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▶ May and June Bring Two Difficult Holidays

The months of May and June bring us two days that are perhaps the most difficult holidays bereaved parents have to endure: Mother's Day and Father's Day. Those of you who lost your first and only child may be wondering if you qualify to be recognized on these two Sundays. Absolutely! Although your beloved baby is not here on earth with you, you are indeed a parent.

I was so deeply touched last Mother's Day when many of my friends acknowledged the emptiness they knew I must have been feeling with the absence of my little Jonathan. The entire day I reminisced Mother's Day the year before when I was six months pregnant. Byron bought me a couple of nursing tops with the anticipation that I would soon be nursing our baby. I remember how swollen I was that day...my ankles looked like Miss Piggy and my family insisted that I lie down the rest of the day. Little did we know that five days later I would be put on bedrest and we would have to move in with my parents only to be hospitalized two and a half weeks after that. Eleven days into my hospital stay was Father's

Day . My mother-in-law graciously bought Father's Day gifts for me to give Byron. We celebrated the day in the hospital taking numerous pictures and videos of Byron,Jr. and Jonathan (via my big tummy). We still have the card that I signed, "Love, Byron and Jonathan" for the boys to give their Daddy. Six days after Father's Day our beloved Jonathan was in the arms of Jesus. I have yet to watch the videos we took on that 1995 Father's Day...maybe this year I'll be ready.

I encourage all of us to face these days without shame or feelings of inadequacy. Let's keep our heads high and be proud! Solomon, who was the wisest man in the land, declared: "May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!" (Proverbs 23:25).

Rebekah Mitchell

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Am I Not A Mother?

by Gail Fasolo

Am I not a mother
On this Mother's Day?
I had a baby, but she's gone.
Death took her away.

Hopes and dreams have vanished
a happy time turned cold.
My motherhood-where is it now?
Gone? Or put on hold?

Am I not a mother
even though my child died?
Does anyone know my heartbreak
or the anguish felt inside?

Special gifts and flowers
but who'll remember me?
As I stand and shed some tears
at your graveside where I'll be.

Mother's Day-so painful
but I will make it through.
Yes, I am a mother!
but God takes care of you.

*In Memory of Christina
stillborn February 5, 1991*

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People Don't Understand...

People don't understand...
why I miss you so much...
they've never had a baby...
they could not touch.

I never got to hear you cry...
dry the tears from your face...
or watch mommy dress you up...
in clothes made from lace.

To hold you once...
on my chest while you sleep...
I long for that moment...
it's hard not to weep.

To hear your giggle...
count your fingers and toes...
do up your hair...
with ribbons and bows.

Oh the longing at times...
is selfish I know...
people wonder about me...
when there is nothing to show.

But we know you're there...
awaiting the day...
when God brings us home...
forever we'll stay.

We miss you...you see...
the reason for this...
just thought you should know...
we send up a kiss.

Until then God promised to keep you...
safe and warm in his lap...
then it's forever...
on my chest you will nap.

*Written for "Terri" by her husband,
this poem was posted on
the Internet Group Infanlos.*

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Linda Hegarty

Our daughter, Mary Emily, was born June 29, 1993 and died the same day, so I had almost a year before I had to face Mother's Day without her. I also experienced a miscarriage on December 15, 1993. When Mother's Day finally came I was facing it with the loss of two babies.

It was difficult for me and all the feelings came back during Mass that day, but it was a good day also. I had three children who were perfectly healthy, Laura, Caitlin, and Danny, and I knew in my heart my two in heaven were where they belonged.

When any holiday or special occasion is coming I know the grief is going to come. So, instead of trying to forget, I gather up everything I have and go through it all. I look at pictures, the cards and letters. I read Mary's baby book and sometimes add my feelings to it. I open the memory box and look at her hat and booties, her stuffed toys from her brother and sisters, her baptism certificate, her footprints and the lock of her hair. The sadness is overwhelming, but when the tears are gone I feel so much stronger, as if I can face another year without her. I do have an ultrasound picture of the baby I miscarried in 1993 so I look and wonder what that baby would have been like. remembering is so much healthier and easier than trying to forget!

In 1994, I gave birth to a healthy little girl, Maureen Rose, now age 2, and had a miscarriage again after her. This time we know it was a boy and I have an ultrasound picture of him, too. Now I am pregnant again and due April 7th. When this Mother's Day comes I know it will be bittersweet with the good and the bad memories, but I will always know that I am a mother of eight children no matter what happens to them. Some live with me and some live in the Kingdom of God. Some day I will be with them all and that gives me great peace. I can remember always wanting to have children and be a mother, so Mother's Day is truly a blessing to me because I have been blessed so many times over.

Linda Hegarty
Belchertown, MA
In loving memory of
Mary Emily Hegarty
6/29/93-6/29/93 Trisomy 18,
Baby Hegarty
Miscarried 12/13/93,
and Baby Hegarty
Miscarried 8/15/94

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Denise Gradel

On June 16, 1990, my husband and I lost our son, Aaron Philip Gradel. Then on May 14,

1993 we lost our baby, Angel. Aaron was stillborn at 28 1/2 weeks the Saturday before Father's Day and I miscarried Angel, at four weeks, on the Friday before Mother's Day. I lost both babies in different ways but the outcome is still the same. Two of my precious babies are dead. How can this be? I have a beautiful daughter who is now 10 years old. So, why did I lose these two?

Father's Day and Mother's Day are bittersweet at our house. We celebrate the life of our beautiful daughter, Ashley. At the same time, we feel sadness for these two children we lost. It took a long time for me not to be totally devastated on these days.

I still pause when someone asks me how many children I have. In that second, I decide if I'm in a "safe" situation to tell this person I have a daughter and two babies in heaven. We are the parents of three children.

Part of remembering these holidays is doing something to honor their short lives. We planted a tree at the cemetery where Aaron is buried. So we usually go there and have a prayer time. I also have an angel collection that I started after Aaron died. So, I try to find a "special angel" for each baby. Doing these things helps me to get through those days. The passing of time, prayer and sharing with other grieving parents has given us the ability to go on with our lives and enjoy the child we have with us.

Denise Gradel
Lewisville, TX
In Loving Memory of
Aaron Philip Gradel
stillborn June 16, 1990,
and Baby Gradel
miscarried May 14, 1993.

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Lynne Böer

Mother's Day last year was a strange one for me. The several previous ones were wonderful with my two youngsters helping to bring me breakfast in bed, making special cards, and hugging me to pieces. This one should have been more of the same with the anticipation of a new arrival as well.


While I was showered hugs and kisses and cards again by Paul and Maggie, the expected joy of knowing a new life was growing inside me was missing. I felt my baby kicking inside me...but we had been told he would not live. Six days before Mother's Day, we received the call from the genetic counselor telling us our baby had Trisomy 18.

That next Sunday, Mother's Day, before going to church, we went to the breakfast they were serving in honor of moms. It was bittersweet. Of course, it was nice to be there with the two children we already had. It was also difficult -answering innocent questions about the pregnancy from those who didn't know yet and having to sit among other pregnant moms who were, as far as I knew, having healthy babies.

This year (and all the rest of the years of my life), I'm sure our celebrations will be wonderful. I

will rejoice and be grateful that I am the mother of two living beautiful children. At the same time, I'm sure I will take a moment (at least) to remember Michael with love and ponder what it would have been like had there been three.

*Lynne Boer
Duncanville, TX
In Loving Memory of
Michael Joseph Boer
Stillborn July 17, 1996.*

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Happy Birthday Jonathan!

It's hard to believe it was two years ago when Jonathan was stillborn. I never know what to call the day...his birthday or anniversary? It's hard for me to consider it his birthday since he would not have been born had he not died. He was not due until September 7, but he was born/died June 24.

The weeks that led to his first birthday were really hard for me. I had no idea how I would possibly get through the day. I assumed I would be an emotional wreck. About a week before, I fortunately found the Internet support group, *Infanlos*. I shared my thoughts and apprehensions of the day with women all over the world who knew what I was feeling. Jeanette Wayne of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, who had recently commemorated her little Olivia's first birthday, told me that the anticipation of the day was far worse than the actual day. How right she was! I spent the day mostly by myself quietly reflecting on the seven months I carried my sweet baby in my womb. I got out all his memorabilia and displayed them in my house. I went to the cemetery alone in the afternoon and my family met us there that evening for a time of prayer and celebration of his life in Heaven.

as I ponder the past two years I'm amazed at how far I have come, Never did I dream that I would be "okay" again. Not a day goes by that I don't think of my little boy and wonder what our household would be like with him, but I've learned to go on and have accepted the role of being a mother to a child who is with the Lord.

So to my little Jonathan Daniel: Happy Birthday, baby. Mommy loves you with all my heart! Until we meet again...

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Mommy and Daddy

Please don't be so sad,
I miss you so much, too.
It's beautiful here where I am,
but I worry a lot about you.

I sleep with angels watching me,
there's only love up here.
I'm never lonely or afraid
'cause God's so very near.

I walk with angels every day,
they're very kind and sweet.
Don't worry, Mom and Dad,
they hold my hand when
we cross a golden street.

I never cry or hurt myself,
I see rainbows every day.
I play and laugh and sing a lot,
and I hear you both when you pray.

Please Mommy and Daddy,
don't be mad at God,
you see, he loves me, too.
And even though you're not with me,
I'm really still with you.

Author Unknown

This poem was posted on Infanlos by

Stephanie Wright

Columbus, GA

It was given to her by

a co-worker of her husband.

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Resource Reviews

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- [Someone I Love Died \(Children\)](#)
- [Hannah's Prayer \(Internet\)](#)
- [Pregnancy and Infant Loss Center \(National Organization\)](#)
- [Together We Can Heal \(Music\)](#)

Note: M.E.N.D. has no financial interest in any of these product reviews. The purpose in reviewing them here is to let others know what we have found to be helpful in our own situations so that you may find some comfort in these resources as well.

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[Empty Arms](#)

by Pam Vredevelt.

Published by Multnomah Press.

Pam Vredevelt is a licensed professional counselor in the state of Oregon. She

wrote this book based on her own experience of suffering a miscarriage and from counseling other women who have lost a pregnancy. Vredevelt includes many scriptures, Biblical references and deals with issues such as anger, other's reactions, husbands and their hurt, and hormones. She includes facts on miscarriages and stillbirths and has recently updated her book to include information on tubal pregnancies. Empty arms is published by Multnomah Press and can be purchased or ordered at most Christian bookstores.

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Someone I Love Died

by Christine Harder Tangvald.

Published by David C. Cook Publishing Company.

Someone I Love Died is a beautifully written and illustrated book that is from the *Please Help Me, God* series. This is a perfect book for children to read if they have lost someone they were close to. The book has "blanks" so the child can fill in the name of the deceased to make the sentence apply to their situation. Tangvald explains the biblical principles of death and discusses Heaven, the soul, Bible heroes who are already in Heaven, and questions the child may want to ask God. She also includes nine suggestions for parents to follow when conferring death with their child. Someone I Love Died is published by Davis C. Cook Publishing Company and can be purchased or ordered at most Christian bookstores.

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Hannah's Prayer

Hannah's Prayer is a Christian organization that reaches out to not only families with fertility problems, but also to families that have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. This site is filled with many resources such as articles, poems, Internet links, and medical information. They also offer a newsletter. If you do not have Internet access but would like more information about Hannah's Prayer and/or would like to be on their mailing list, you can write them at:

Hannah's Prayer
P.O. Box 5016
Auburn, CA 95604-5016

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Pregnancy and Infant Loss Center

The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Center publishes a catalog of helpful resources as well as a newsletter. You may contact them at the following address:

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Center
1421 East Wayzata Boulevard, #30
Wayzata, MN 55391
(612) 473-9372

Together We Can Heal

Steve Barta. Source Music.

Steve Barta of Source Music has produced an absolutely beautiful collection of music for bereaved families. If you have lost a child, spouse, sibling, relative, or a close friend, you will find great solace in this recording. It is ideal listening for quiet moments of reminiscing your loved one.

To order your copies of this recording on tape or CD, you can visit their web site at:

<http://www.sourcemusic.com>

or call or write to:

Source Music
P.O. box 1543
Colorado Springs, CO 80901
(719) 442-0152

Please enclose \$10 for tapes and \$15 for CD's plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling. Visa and Mastercard are also accepted.

I'm An Angel Now

One night I cried to Jesus as I sat beneath the tree,
I looked into the open sky and hoped he'd answer me.
I'm lost, dear Lord, I've traveled far but still I seem to roam,
Please light the way and lead me, Lord; I need to get back home.
I told Him of my burdens and of the sadness in my heart,
That from his gracious love I'd never felt so apart.
Why did you take my child, Lord? I cannot understand!
No longer can I touch his face or hold his tiny hand.
I'm angry Lord. I'm missing him. I'm drowning in my sorrow.
Please help me to heal my yesterday and face each new tomorrow.
It was then I heard his gentle voice and felt his presence near.
How I wanted to hold him as I cried another tear.
He said, "Mommy, I'm an angel now. my spirit will be free.
I'm an angel now in heaven, so please don't cry of me.
I was chosen by the Lord above and now I'm in His care.
When you need me, look inside your heart. I promise to be there.
No one can ever take away our bond with one another.
For I'll always be your special child as you will always be my mother.
So if you cannot find your way or the road to home seems far,
Just look up the Heavens and I'll be your guiding star."
He said, "Mommy, I'm an angel now, my spirit will be free,

I'm an angel now in Heaven--no need to cry for me."

Janice Grogan

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Subsequent Births After Loss

Congratulations And Best Wishes!

Nancy and Les Brown of Hudson, NH joyously welcome Cody Matthew, born 3/16/97, while remembering Kali Alyssa, stillborn 4/12/96. Their bundle of joy weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 20 1/2 in. long.

Laurie and George Ottinger of Allen, TX welcome Hannah Michelle, born 4/9/97 while remembering Cailey Elizabeth, stillborn 6/7/96. Hannah weighed 5 lbs. 7 oz. and was 17 3/4 inches long.

Linda and Patrick Hegarty of Belchertown, MA and their children, Laura, Caitlin, Danny, and Maureen remember Mary Elizabeth, 6/29/93-6/29/93, and their two miscarried babies, 12/13/93 and 8/15/94 and welcome Francis "Frankie" Cedric born 4/13/97 weighing 9 lbs. and 15 oz. He was 22 1/2 inches long.

If you have had a subsequent birth after loss that you would like to announce, please send the appropriate information to [Rebekah Mitchell](#).

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Baby Tears

We cried tears when we learned that a child would be,
that God had allowed you to quicken in me.
We cried tears with our loved ones as the shared in our joy,
and we thought about names for a girl or a boy.
I cried tears as I thought of the things that we'd do,
all the things that your Daddy would pass on to you.
And I cried tears as I thought of each inch you had grown,
as I pondered the day that you'd make yourself known.
Then to think of the world you must enter brought fears.
Once again, little loved one, your mother cried tears.
Something's wrong, I can tell - once again there are tears,
and I'll not get a chance of your love through the years.
Oh the ache and the sorrow and all of the pain,
and again, yes again, my tears fell like rain.
Then his peace comes to me as I think of your there,
gently rocking with the Father, in His favorite chair.

Your sweet little fingers clenched tight in His palm
and His Son softly singing to help keep you calm.
Our Father knew, your days before they came to be,
and he knew, little one, you would not stay with me.
So, I cry but I know that when this life is done,
I will greet and embrace you my sweet little one.
There is a time to be born, and a time to die,
and the joy and the sorrow both make us cry!

Conni Johnson

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Depression

and Some Suggestions for Coping with Depression

A key symptom of depression is a feeling of deep pervasive sadness and hopelessness that lasts for longer than two weeks. Other typical symptoms may be:

- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Insomnia or sleeping much more than usual
- Inability to enjoy anything
- Apathy/restless or anxious behavior
- Preoccupation with thoughts of suicide, or wishing to be dead
- Loss of interest in sex
- Difficulty in concentrating and making decisions
- Poor memory
- Can't cry/won't cry/can't stop crying
- Guilt
- Withdrawal from friends and relatives
- Headaches/backaches/more colds and illnesses
- Self-criticism, pessimism, discouragement
- Neglect of appearance
- Irrational anger
- Alcohol and drug abuse

Suggestions for Coping with Depression

- Acknowledge your depression.
- Accept responsibility for alleviating it.
- Depression serves a purpose. Face it and work through it.
- TALK. It could help avoid serious depression.
- Redirect energy into constructive channels, to make more pleasure in your life.
- Pleasure is a source of energy (take a trip, evening out, etc.)
- Exercise helps you to relax, work off tension, sleep better.
- Lean into your pain. Allow yourself to experience the many feelings you get, such as anger, guilt, etc. Express your feelings - hit a pillow, scream, etc.
- Get involved with others; do volunteer work.
- Try deep breathing. It stimulates physical energy.
- Good nutrition is very important.
- Think pleasant thoughts, hard as it may be (one minute at a time).
- Alcohol is a depressant. Avoid it.
- Work on self-esteem. Do something that you do well. Try harder to like yourself. Be gentle with yourself.
- Remember - you do have a choice. Depression can be managed. It doesn't have to ruin your life.

If the depression is so severe that suggestions such as these don't help you, please don't hesitate to seek professional help.

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Beyond Surviving

Here are some additional helpful ideas to think about as you go through the "grief process":

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why" or until you

- are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
 4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy -- you are in mourning.
 5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
 6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
 7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on these thoughts.
 8. Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
 9. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
 10. Give yourself time to heal.
 11. Remember the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
 12. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
 13. Try to put off major decisions.
 14. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
 15. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
 16. Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
 17. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
 18. Know that there are support groups which can be helpful. If you can't find a group, ask a professional to help start one.
 19. Call on your personal faith to get you through.
 20. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, e.g. headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
 21. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
 22. Wear out your questions, your anger, your guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
 23. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving.

Iris Bolton, TCF, North Atlanta Chapter

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The Grief of My Man

There are no words to ease his pain.
He has that look in his eyes again.
He travels on down that lonely road.
It sure has been a heavy load.

The pain does not ease. The tears do not flow.
He keeps it inside. That is all that he knows.
He stands all alone, so proud and so strong.
Inside he is broken. This trip has been long.

His knees never bend. His back never breaks.

But deep doewn inside, oh how his heart aches.
He counts all the days. He dreads all the nights.
Try as he may, he can never make it right.

He keeps on going, from one day to the next,
Finding the good, and leaving the rest.
He tries not to question God's life plan.
But, still I can feel the grief of my man.

For My Loving Husband, Andy
I Love You Forever
Melissa

*Written for her husband, Andrew
in memory of their son, Kieran Andrew,
2/15/96-2/17/96.*

The Coxwells have two living children,
have had three miscarriages
and one neonatal loss(Kieran).

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In Loving Memory...

[*Jonathan Daniel Mitchell*](#)

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident

Donation in memory of
Jonathan by his parents,
Rebekah and Byron Mitchell
and brother, Byron, Jr.

Donation in memory of
Jonathan by grandparents,
Dennis and Sue Brewer, Sr.

Donation in memory of
Jonathan by caring friend,
Jean King.

[*Michael Joseph Böer*](#)

Stillborn July 17, 1996
Trisomy 18

Grateful Acknowledgement

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D's mission by providing our newsletter, web-site, and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to the page entitled [Contributions](#) for more information on where to send your donations and what information to include.
Thank you so much!

Donation in memory of
Michael by his parents, Lynne
and Paul Böer and siblings,
Paul, Jr. & Maggie.

Sam Phillips

Stillborn November 30, 1993
Spinabifida and Hydrocephalus

Donation in memory of Sam
by parents, Lynn and Ben
Phillips and brother, Payton.

Hans Clayton Walker Jorrick

Stillborn January 22, 1996

Donation in memory of Hans
by parents, Pamela and Ian
Jorrick.

Garth Allen Moyer

Miscarried February 14, 1997

Donation in memory of Garth
by parents, Andrea and
Lonnie Moyer.

Annelle Ahmed, M.D.

OB/GYN
January 8, 1958 - April 5, 1997

Given with love by Lynne and
Paul Böer, Paul, Jr. and
Maggie

Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti

Stillborn November 21, 1996

Parents - DaLana and Randy
Hambrick- Barsanti

Donation given by Uncle and
Aunt, Rusty and Melissa
Barsanti.

Future Newsletter Topics/Submission Deadlines

September/October Topic

Subsequent Pregnancy
Deadline - July 1, 1997

November/December Topic

Surviving Thanksgiving and Christmas
Deadline - September 1, 1997

Stories, poems, thoughts and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Refer to the page entitled [Subscriptions](#) for the appropriate address to send your submission.

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This page was last updated August 15, 1997.

For Questions or Comments, e-mail [Rebekah Mitchell](#).
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