

What to Do When Your Family Has to Move



“Our Family Has to Move”

(A Quick Spiritual Guide to a Family Move)

Introduction:

Moving can be a traumatic experience in the life of a family and for children. Often a move is connected with other life events: job changes, divorce, or finances. Even if it is just a move across town, homes are connected to memories and relationships. It is important that parents approach moving in the best way possible and in a way that makes it part of a child’s spiritual journey, rites-of-passage experiences, and maturing process.

1. Telling Your Kids

- **Be Calm:** Even though parents might be a little nervous about the announcement or because of related circumstances, being calm will keep your children calmer. There will be natural reactions, worry, and questions. All of these should be allowed and embraced as you talk to your children for the first time. Younger children will be concerned about security and location. Older children and teens will be concerned about relationships. Parents should allow children no matter the age to process through this while remaining calm, even if children’s reactions are anger in the moment.

- **Be Real:** While remaining calm, parents need to be appropriately real about their own thoughts and feelings as well. Children will see through parents trying to be fake. Like any other kind of loss that a family will go through, children will go through similar stages:

1. Denial: “we can’t move!”, “this can’t be happening, “I am not moving and you can’t make me!”

2. Anger: “It is all your fault!”, “I hate you!”, “Why did _____ happen, so we didn’t have to move?”

3. Bargaining: “I can live with my friend!”, “What if I _____ would we have to still move?”

4. Sadness/Depression: “It makes me sad we have to move because...”

5. Acceptance: “What is the new house/area like?”, “Are there people my age there?”

It is important to be allow your children to talk and express themselves in a real and authentic way in order to fully process. Parents need to remember to be calm and understanding. Parents usually will have had at least a little more time to know what is going on, so they need to allow their children some time as well.

- **Be Honest:** Parents need to be age-appropriately honest about the move. Younger children do not need to know every detail of the move and the reason for a move, but being honest is an opportunity to build trust. Older children and teens can handle more of the facts and information about the reason for move, if it is related to job, finance, and even family/martial relationships. Once again however, children do not need to be treated as adults with full, detailed information. Honesty with children, at whatever age, is a way to teach and disciple, even if the facts behind the move are not completely positive. Children learn from parents how to react to things and situations of life. If parents act honestly and positively in a Godly manner, children will do so well.

2. Verses to Study Together as You Move

- **Ps. 32:8:** *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”*
- **Prov. 3:5-6:** *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”*
- **Prov. 4: 25-26:** *“Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet then all your ways will be sure.”*
- **Matt. 6:25-30:** *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”*
- **I Cor. 5:1:** *“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”*

3. Family Celebration of Memories: “12 Stones”

- **Read and Discuss: Joshua 4:1-9** as a family.
1 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, 3 and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them

down at the place where you stay tonight.” 4So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 7tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.

- **Remember and Create:**

- Find or buy 12 medium size stones, large enough to write at least one word or a couple words on each.
- As a family, start off talking and remember some of the fun and funny memories you have had in your home and area.
- Next, spend more time talking and praising God for the blessings and spiritual moments your family has had during your time in your home and area. (**salvations, baptisms, sickness/healing...*)
- As a family, agree on the top 12 spiritually important memories and special moments from your time in your home. Choose a word or a couple of words that will remind you of that memory. Write the word(s) you choose on your 12 stones.
- Pack up your 12 stones and take them to your new house. Find a special place for them, creating a spiritual memorial to what God has done in the past and to remind you of what He will continue to do in your family in your new home.