

## **A Safe Place to Vent and an Effective Parenting Tool**

Louanne R. shared that her family experienced a series of losses, a new crisis every two to three months (a family pet died, her grandmother died, she had a miscarriage). She could see that these events were really bothering her 9-year-old son, but he wouldn't discuss them at all. She got grunts and single-syllable replies to any attempt to open a discussion at home. She tells how things changed when they got in the car:

My son seemed willing to listen and even discuss what was going on in our family as we were driving. Now that he has found a comfortable place to express his emotions, he has moved our car discussions on to other topics that kids his age often don't discuss with their parents. Instead of filtering everything through his peer group, he'll ask his dad or me for guidance. When we're in the car I mostly just let him talk and sometimes try to guide his decision by asking questions like, "What do you think you should do," or "How would you feel if the situation were reversed?" By asking questions, I can lead him to think through the consequences of any given action. For me, car conversations are an effective parenting tool.

## **Father Son Bonding Time**

Stephen L. is another parent who has discovered the value of talking to his children in the car. He said, "Sometimes I just drive in silence, without any distractions, knowing that within a few minutes my son will start talking about something important to him or asking questions about something he is curious or worried about. As a result, some of our best and deepest conversations have taken place in the car."