

Healing Activities for Children in Grief

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Activities suitable for support groups with grieving children, preteens, and teens

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A Message from the Author

My husband was electrocuted in our backyard in a tragic accident in 1988. My children were four and seven at the time of his death. We desperately wanted and needed a support system to guide us during this difficult time of grief and loss; however, we were not able to find a place to interact with other grieving families. I went back to school to get my Masters in Counseling and in my studies found such a place in Fort Worth, Texas: The WARM Place® (*What About Remembering Me*). The agency was founded in 1989 by Peggy Bohme and Dr. John Richardson and their work continues to inspire me and others who work with grieving families. After completing my degree I was able to go to work at this wonderful place. I only wish that I could have found it in time for my children to attend. In my 12 years at this agency I have seen so many people come to us in their deepest pain. When they leave they are in a better place: they are on the road to healing. Children are so often the forgotten mourners and I believe strongly that children can experience hope and healing when they have the opportunity to grieve in the supporting presence of others who share the same pain.

As a grief counselor, one of my responsibilities has been to develop activities for support groups. This book is a compilation of the favorite activities of many groups over the years. The activities in this book provide the tools to allow children to express their feelings, discuss their fears and concerns, and remember the loved one who died.

This book follows the group structure that is currently in place at The WARM Place. The children are grouped with other children who have experienced a similar death loss. There are parent loss, sibling loss and grandparent loss groups. The children are also grouped based on their age. The Children's groups are for 5 to 8-year-olds, Preteen groups are for 9 to 12-year-olds, and Teen groups are for 13 to 18-year-olds. The Children, Preteen and Teen groups are open-ended, with the participants staying in the program for as long as they choose to stay. A parent or guardian also attends a group support session while their child/children are in their group(s).

The activities in this book can be used in a multitude of group settings. They can be used in a grief agency, in a school or in a church group for kids in grief.

— Gay McWhorter

Using This Book

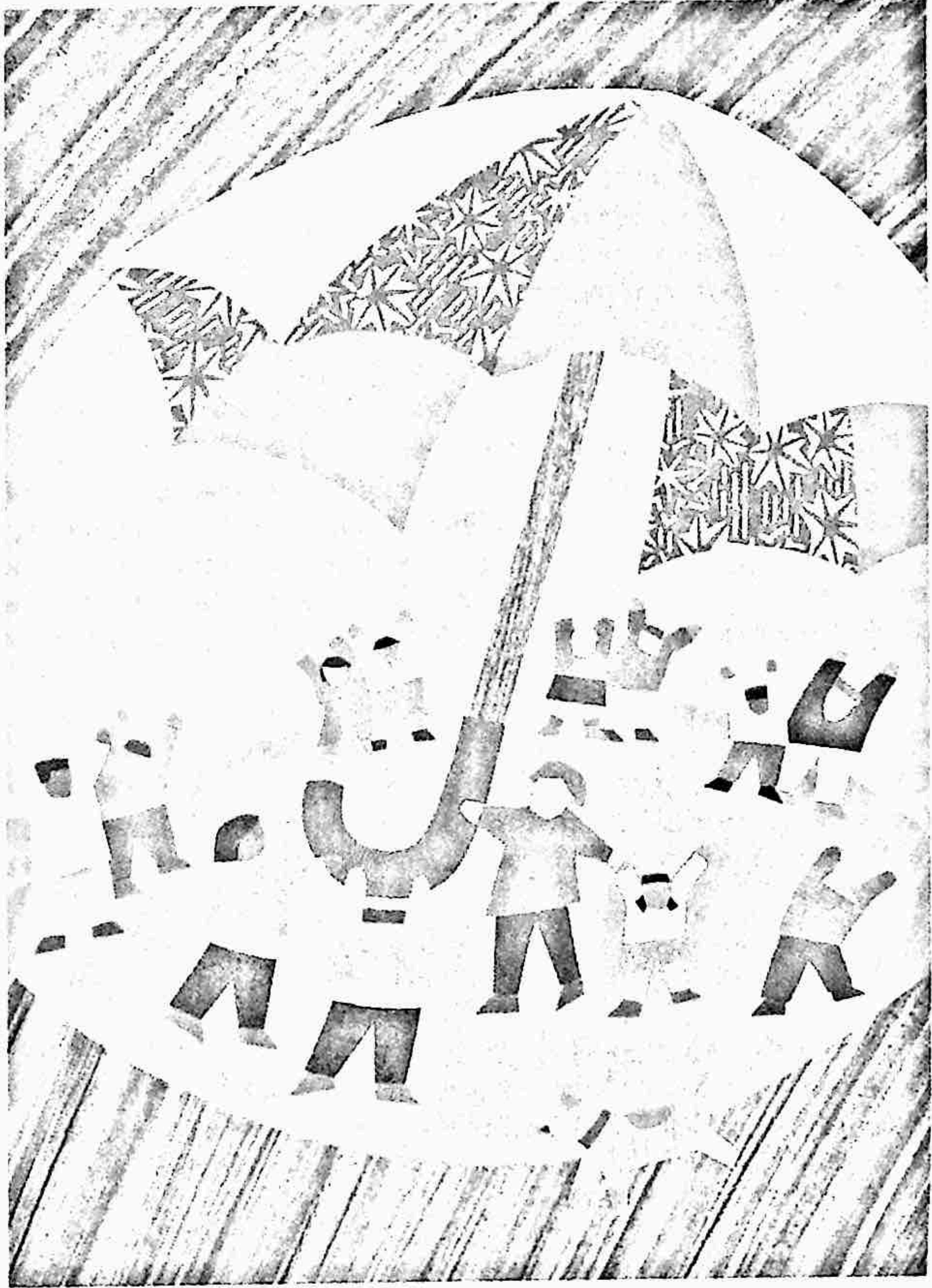
There are two types of activities in this book: an opening activity and a main activity. The activities are numbered.

The letter "A" following a number identifies the activity as an opening activity. An opening activity can be a book or an activity designed to promote discussion.

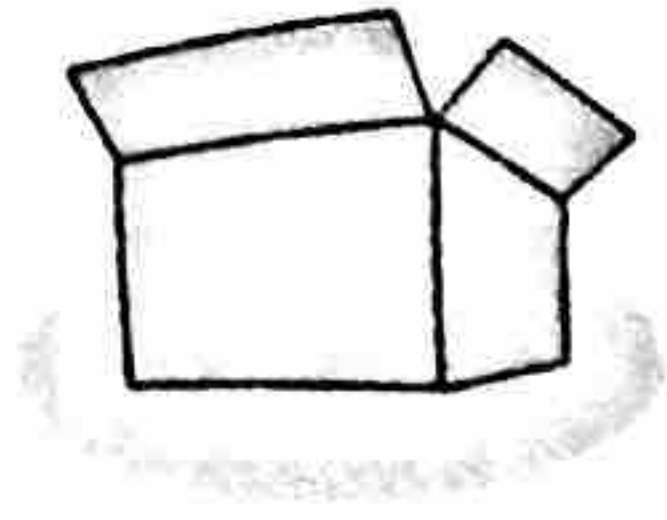
The letter "B" following a number identifies the activity as a main activity that involves a specific topic or theme. When planning a group, first choose an activity from the Activity "A" section, and then choose an activity from the Activity "B" section.

There are some "A" and "B" activities that work well together and they are grouped in a separate section titled "Combined A & B Activities."

Children's Activities (Ages 5 - 8)



Children's Opening (A) Activities:



Children's Activity #1A:

Make a box of items. This box should contain lots of items that children talk about when they remember their loved one: baseball, glasses, fishhook, telephone, cowboy hat, baseball cap, cross, hammer, apron, remote control, favorite sports team items, eyeglass case, airplane, playing cards, camera, baseball glove, aftershave, shin guards, tie, fish bobber, calculator, scrunchie, paintbrush, canteen, stethoscope, coffee mug, business card, keys, golf tee, newspaper, etc. Have the children pick out an item that reminds them of the person who died and tell why they think of their loved one when they see that object.



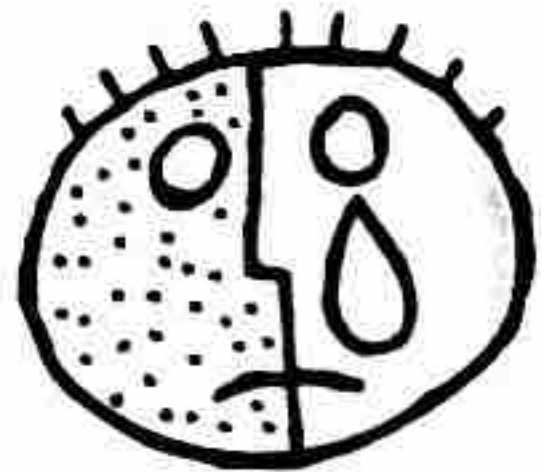
Children's Activity #2A:

Give each child 2 or 3 pipe cleaners. Have them bend the pipe cleaners into something that reminds them of the person who died. When they are finished, ask if anyone would like to share their art with the group.



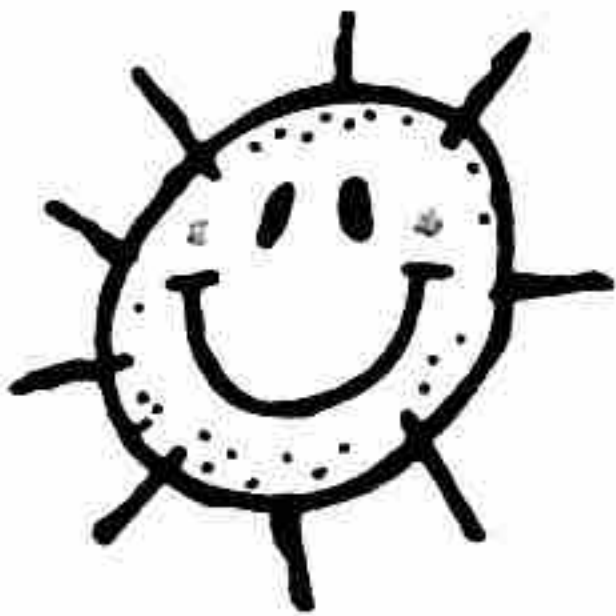
Children's Activity #3A:

Give the children an assignment to bring in a memento or item of the deceased's to share. Give children a chance to talk about their item. Next, using the Polaroid camera, take a photo of each child holding their special possession (take the photo close up to the child) and then place this special photo in a photo holder/folder. The child can decorate this photo folder as they wish.



Children's Activity #4A:

Use small, hand held blackboards and have the children take turns by drawing a face on the board (with chalk) of how they feel tonight and have the other children guess that feeling.



Children's Activity #5A:

Face cards. Make four large feeling face posters. Use faces showing mad, sad, happy, and guilty feelings. Ask the children when they have felt the feeling on the poster. This works well with young children to encourage a discussion of feelings they have experienced since the death of their loved one.



Children's Activity #6A:

Play the song: "The Frog Song (Tell Me How You Feel)" on the tape Best I Can Be by Hugworks. This is a cute song for young children. It helps to start a discussion of what feelings they are experiencing.



Children's Activity #7A:

***Read: Alice's Special Room** by Dick Gackenbach. This is a long book for young children so you may want to paraphrase some of the middle pages, while completely reading the first and last pages. This book talks about a little girl whose cat dies, and she tells Mom that the cat is in a special room. The mom keeps looking for the cat and then discovers the special room is in her heart.

Discussion: We want to talk about how it feels when we start forgetting things about the person who died. Everyone, even adults, starts to forget things. It makes us sad to forget things. There are some things we can do. One thing we can do is to make a memory box and fill it with special mementos and drawings and notes and photos. Other things might be to get your loved one's cologne/perfume and smell it from time to time. Another thing to do is to ask people (other parent might help with this) to tell you a story about the person who died. If there is a video with the person who died it might be helpful to watch it with family members. Another way to "not forget" is to talk about the person who died. Ask the children to share their very favorite memory. You might also ask what item of clothing reminds them of the person who died. What was the loved one's favorite thing to do? Did they have a favorite food? Did they have a favorite restaurant that the family went to a lot?



Children's Activity #8A:

***Read: Daddy's Chair** by S. Lanton. This book tells about a boy who, after the funeral, while visitors are at his house, gets very upset that other people might sit in his Dad's chair. Later he finds that the chair is a special place to remember his dad. Discuss: Is there any place at home where the child can go and remember his/her parent like the children in this book?



Children's Activity #9A:

***Read: Feelings Inside You and Outloud Too** by B. Polland. This is a simple book with a page for each feeling. It has a question on each page to stimulate discussion. If you have specific feelings that you want your group to discuss you might want to pick out in advance which feeling words you want to address. It is a good book to stimulate discussion for the children.



Children's Activity #10A:

***Read: Geranium Morning** by S. Powell. Discuss. This book deals with two classmates, one whose father has died and another whose mother is dying of cancer. Timothy and his father did a lot of things together, including working in the nursery. Every spring Timothy's dad got new geraniums to add to his collection. Usually Timothy went with his dad to get the geraniums, but one morning Timothy wanted to stay in bed. He told his dad he would wait until he returned and then have cocoa with him—another geranium morning tradition. However, Timothy never got his cocoa because his father was killed in a car accident. Timothy begins to hate Saturday mornings and cocoa. His mother also had difficulty dealing with this unexpected tragedy. "If only..." was the phrase Timothy kept thinking over and over again. If only he had gone with his dad. If only his dad hadn't wanted geraniums. No one seems to understand Timothy's feelings except Frannie, whose mother is dying. The story tells how the two children help each other deal with the death of their parents. Some discussion questions: ***What things are different for this boy now that Dad has died? *What secret did the boy have that was bothering him? *Why didn't the boy want to go to the zoo? *What happened when he talked to Frannie?**



Children's Activity #11A:

***Read: Grandad Bill's Song** by Jane Yolen. This story tells of a boy's struggle to express his feelings following the death of his beloved grandfather.



Children's Activity #12A:

Read: Grandma's Scrapbook by Josephine Nobisso. After her grandmother dies, the memory of her legacy of love brings comfort through the pictures and mementos of her scrapbook.



Children's Activity #13A:

***Read: I Know I Made It Happen** by Lynn Blackburn. This is a helpful book that directly addresses the issue of guilt in children. "I made it happen" thoughts are often an attempt to find a cause when important things happen. This book explains that things do not happen because we think bad thoughts. Many times a child feels responsible for a death because at some time he wished bad things about that person.



Children's Activity #14A:

***Read: I'll Always Love You** by Hans Wilhelm. This is a story about the relationship between a boy and his dog, Elfie. As the years go by, the boy grows up and Elfie grows older. One night, Elfie dies in her sleep. The boy is comforted by the thought that every night he told Elfie, "I'll always love you."



Children's Activity #15A:

***Read: It Must Hurt a Lot** by D. Sanford. Joshua's dog Muffin is killed, and Joshua hurts more than he has ever hurt before. But, with time, Joshua finds he has gained important secrets he can grow on.



Children's Activity #16A:

***Read: Lost and Found: Remembering a Sister** by Ellen Yeomans. A young girl searches for understanding after the death of her sister. When she is told they lost her sister, she wonders if someone who is lost can also be found. This book shows the confusing thoughts and feelings this girl experiences following the death of her sister and the number of ways she continues to feel her sister's love.



Children's Activity #17A:

***Read: Molly's Mom Died** by Margaret Holmes. This book talks about the feelings that Molly has experienced since the death of her mother.



Children's Activity #18A:

*Read: My Grandma Leonie by Bijou Le Tord. In this book a small boy reminisces about the special things he and Grandma Leonie did together. Grandma gets sick and goes to the hospital but never returns, and the boy misses his Grandma Leonie.



Children's Activity #19A:

*Read: My Grandson Lew by Charlotte Zolotow. In this book Lewis misses his grandfather even though he died when he was just two. Since the boy was so young his mother never told him that his grandfather died; she just stopped talking about him. The boy and his mother find that they both have lots of memories and that remembering Grandpa together is less lonely than each remembering him alone.



Children's Activity #20A:

*Read: My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss. This book describes each day in terms of a particular color, which in turn is associated with a specific emotion. Discuss how days before the death might be a different color than days after the death or different days are different colors. What color is their day today?



Children's Activity #21A:

*Read: Some of the Pieces by M. Madenski. This book looks at a family a year after the father's death. They can now look back and see that they have times when they are sad, but it isn't the intense pain as it was when Dad first died. It also talks about the importance of memories. This book also deals with the issue of spreading cremains.



Children's Activity #22A:

*Read: Sometimes I Feel Like a Storm Cloud by Lezlie Evans. This is a really cute book where a child describes how it feels to experience a variety of emotions.



Children's Activity #23A:

*Read: Someone Special Died by J.S. Prestine. The book tells the story of a young girl who wonders what life will be like when someone she loves dies. It includes what happens to the body and ways to remember the person who died.



Children's Activity #24A:

*Read: Stacy Had a Little Sister by Wendie C. Old. Stacy has mixed feelings about her new sister, Ashley. When the baby dies of sudden death syndrome, Stacy is sad and misses her.

Children's Activity #25A:

*Read: The Saddest Time by Norma Simon. Three poems about death separate each of the stories about a death. The first story is about Uncle Joe who dies while he is still relatively young. The second story is about a young boy who dies as a result of an accident. The third story is about a grandmother who is ill and eventually dies. The book conveys the idea that death can happen at any age.

Children's Activity #26A:

*Read: Toby by Margaret Wild. This is a story about a dog named Toby who is old and sick. The children become aware that he is getting weaker and weaker. The siblings in the family react differently to the dog's illness and death. Discussion topic: Have family members in their house reacted differently to their loved one's death?

Children's Activity #27A:

*Read: Tough Boris by M. Fox. This book is about a tough pirate whose parrot dies, and we find that even a tough, mean pirate cries. There are not a lot of words in this book but it is very cute so the "reader" needs to read this with a lot of feeling and expression.

Children's Activity #28A:

*Read: When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. This book explains in simple language the feelings children may have regarding the death of a loved one and the ways to honor the memory of someone who has died.

Children's Activity #29A:

*Read: When Someone Dies by Sharon Greenlee. This simple book offers help in dealing with the confusion and hurt felt by children and adults following the death of a loved one. The author encourages her readers to remember the good times to help transform sorrow into comfort.

Children's Activity #30A:

*Read: Where's Jess? by Joy Johnson. This is a simple book that answers the questions and concerns of children following the death of a brother or sister.

Children's Activity #31A:

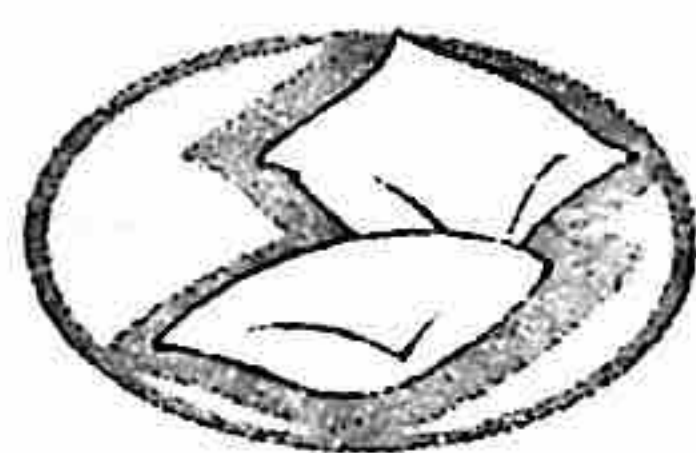
*Read: Why Do People Die? by Cynthia MacGregor. This book answers the questions children commonly ask after a death.

Children's Main (B) Activities



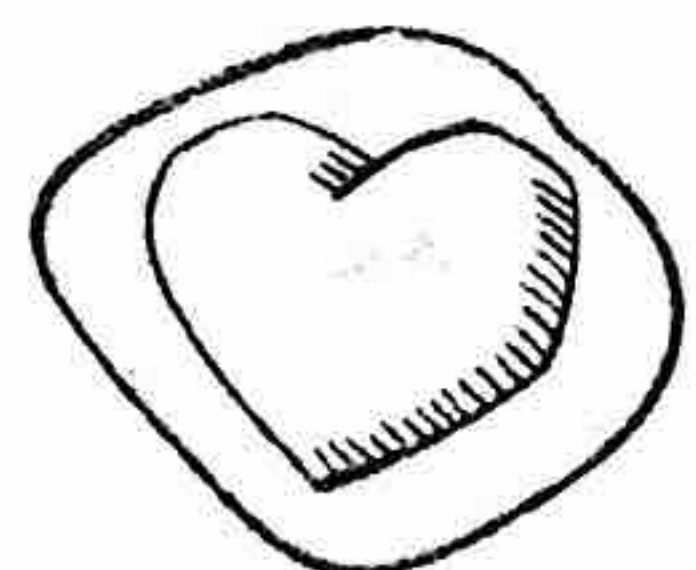
Children's Activity #1B:

Make a ribbon in memory of the loved one who died, using wide ribbon and magic markers. At the end of the evening place the ribbons on a tree or in a special place where your group meets. Create a ceremony as each child ties the ribbon on the tree or special place.



Children's Activity #2B:

(This activity is helpful for memories and anger.) Have the children draw on pillowcases. On one side, the children can draw all the happy memories that they can remember of their loved one. On the other side, the children draw all the things that have made them angry about the death. Make sure the children use permanent markers. Put a paper bag inside the pillowcase so that the colors do not go on to the other side. Explain to the children that when they get home they should put their pillow in this pillowcase. When they are angry, hit the bed with the angry side of the pillowcase. Then at night, to have happy thoughts, sleep with the memory side up. On the hem of the "happy" side of the pillowcase the children can autograph each other's pillowcase, if they so choose.



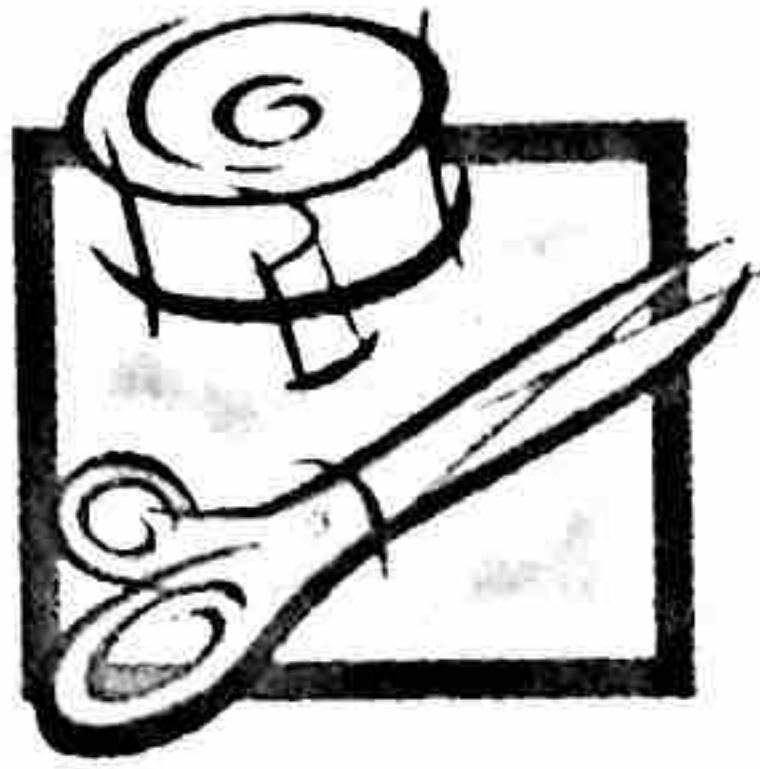
Children's Activity #3B:

"Remember" the loved one by making a memory heart. Materials needed: 1 piece of construction paper in red or pink (8 x 12 size) for the background, one long strip (1 1/2" x 18") for each child for the heart; and 10 pre-cut red strips (1 1/2" x 8") for inside the heart, scotch tape, scissors, and glue. Have the child choose a background sheet of construction paper. Take the long strip of construction paper and tape the ends together, then make a fold at the midpoint of the strip to form a heart. Tape this heart to the background sheet of construction paper. Then take the smaller pre-cut pieces of paper and write a happy memory, a message to their loved one, or a special thing about the loved one who died. Then curl them, and put them into the center of the heart to fill it. When all ten pieces are in the heart, they will not fall out. Some children may need help writing, and facilitators will need to provide help as needed.



Children's Activity #4B:

Give each child a piece of sturdy paper. Have them trace their hand on the paper and then cut it out. On the palm of the hand, have them put their loved one's name or the relationship (Dad, Mom, Sister, Grandparent, etc). On each "finger" put things that they remember about the loved one. After they have finished their drawing, staple a Popsicle stick on the hand (at the wrist). Then as a group "wave" your hands saying goodbye to the loved one. Remind the children that saying goodbye is not the same as forgetting.



Children's Activity #5B:

Make and pass out a "Me, Myself, and I" poster to each child. This poster can have a variety of topics to color and/or cut out pictures from a magazine. (Topics can be: These are some of the things I used to do with my loved one; This is a picture of my family; These are my friends; My favorite memory with my loved one; and This is how I feel tonight.) Also include in this poster a section to include the child's height and weight and "facts" about the child such as favorite food, color and hobbies.



Children's Activity #6B:

Have the children make sock puppets. Supplies: tube sock (1 per child), yarn for hair, buttons or eyes for eyes, red felt for mouth, black, brown, and yellow felt for eyebrows, mustaches, etc. and sticky glue. You will need a hot glue gun for the yarn for the hair (this is to be used by the adults only). After the children have made the puppets encourage a discussion of (choose one topic):

- Reaction to being told of the death
- Last memory of person who died
- How they are feeling tonight
- Special memory with loved one



Children's Activity #7B:

Take a large piece of butcher paper and cover the walls with the paper (The number of children you have will determine how much paper is needed). Let each child have a 2-3 foot space in front of the paper and give them magic markers. All at the same time have the children draw a picture of what they remember about the day their loved one died. Some may have seen the person die, others may have had someone bring them the news of the death. After they have finished, let the children explain their drawing.



Children's Activity #8B:

Purchase "design a mugs" for the children. These are special mugs into which the child can slip a paper in a special sleeve of the mug and enjoy the picture as he uses his/her mug. The children will draw a picture of a favorite memory with their loved one and then put it in the cup. The children can also add a photo at home.



Children's Activity #9B:

Using the sidewalk chalk let the children draw on the sidewalk coming up to your center. Let them draw something special for the loved one who died or have them draw a special memory.



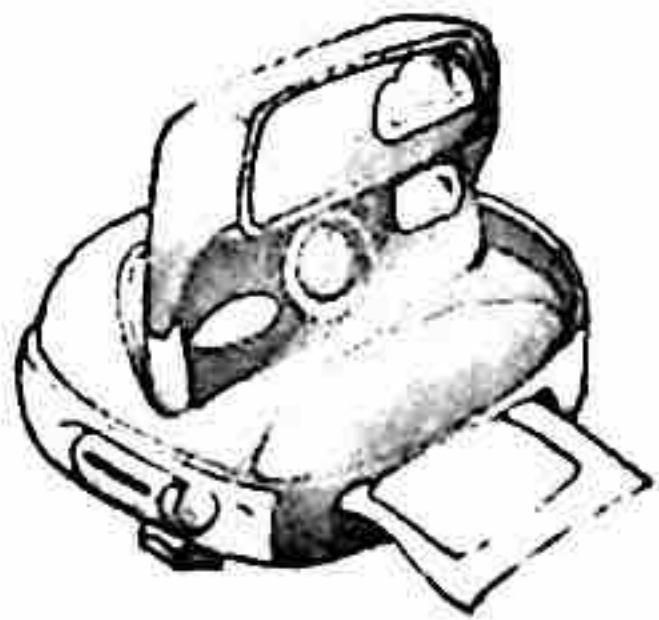
Children's Activity #10B:

Have the children draw a **now and then** or **before and after** picture. Supplies: manila paper, markers, crayons, magazines, scissors, glue stick. Take a large piece of manila paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side of the paper the children will draw/cut out of magazines pictures that remind them of their family before the death and on the other side, pictures or a drawing of after the death. This can be a drawing of what the family looks like **now and then** or a special event or memory that happened **before the death and after the death**. While they are working on the pictures, encourage a discussion of what has changed and what is the same.



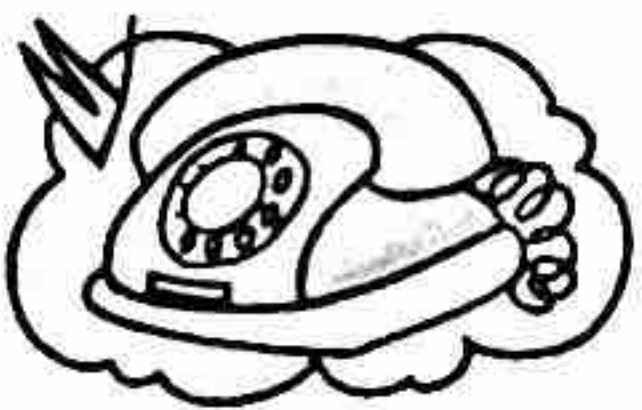
Children's Activity #11B:

Balloon launch. Give each child a helium balloon and a tag with a string. Let each child write a message on the tag and then tie it to the balloon. As a group, go outside and "launch" the balloons together and watch them as they float into the sky. This can be used for special occasions or on special days like birthdays and anniversaries.



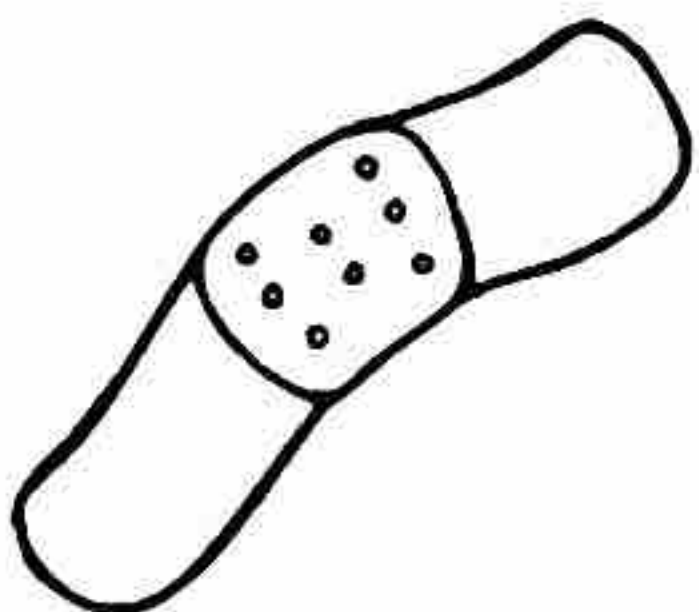
Children's Activity #12B:

Polaroid feeling poster activity. Encourage a discussion about the feelings we have felt since our loved one died. Ask the children to think of a feeling they have felt and "show" us what they look like when they feel that feeling. Using the Polaroid camera, take a photo of each child as he/she "shows" us the feelings they have felt since the death. Use a poster board (18 x 24) and mount these photos on the poster and write the feeling the child is showing under the photo.



Children's Activity #13B:

Use **phones** and let the children "tell someone how they are feeling tonight" and then the adults, using the phones, role play a response back to the child.



Children's Activity #14B:

Make **body pictures**. Discuss first: has anyone had parts of his/her body hurt since the death? Sometimes it feels like our heart hurts, sometimes our eyes hurt from crying or from trying not to cry. Sometimes stomachs hurt. Sometimes heads hurt. Sometimes even legs or arms hurt. Tell the children that sometimes grieving can make you feel sick. Using large pieces of butcher paper, have each child lie on the paper and trace the child's body. Have the children color their "body" including making the face the way they are feeling tonight. Pass out Band-Aids and let the children place 1 or 2 Band-Aids on their bodies where they hurt.



Children's Activity #15B:

Make "balloon people." The idea is that they will make this balloon "person" to show how they feel tonight. Each child will get balloon feet (cardboard cut in the shape of feet) and a balloon. First have the child color/decorate their "feet" with markers. You can also punch holes and have yarn available for those who want to put shoelaces in their feet. Next, help the children blow up a balloon and tie it. Push the knotted end of the balloon into the feet so the balloon person will stand up. Next, have the child use washable marking pens to draw their facial features on the balloon, encouraging them to draw how they feel tonight.



Children's Activity #16B:

Make a secret thoughts pouch. Explain to the children that this is a special pouch to keep someplace special to help keep their private thoughts. After the children have made (and decorated) their pouches, they can write or draw their secret thoughts on a piece of paper and hide it in the pouch. They could write things that make them mad, things that people have said, write or draw something for the person who died, or write things that they are worried about. When they get home, encourage them to find a place where they could hide their secret thoughts pouch. Whenever they think of something, they can add it to the pouch. Supplies needed: paper, crayons, hole puncher, yarn, little pieces of paper (for secret thoughts/pictures) and magic markers.



Children's Activity #17B:

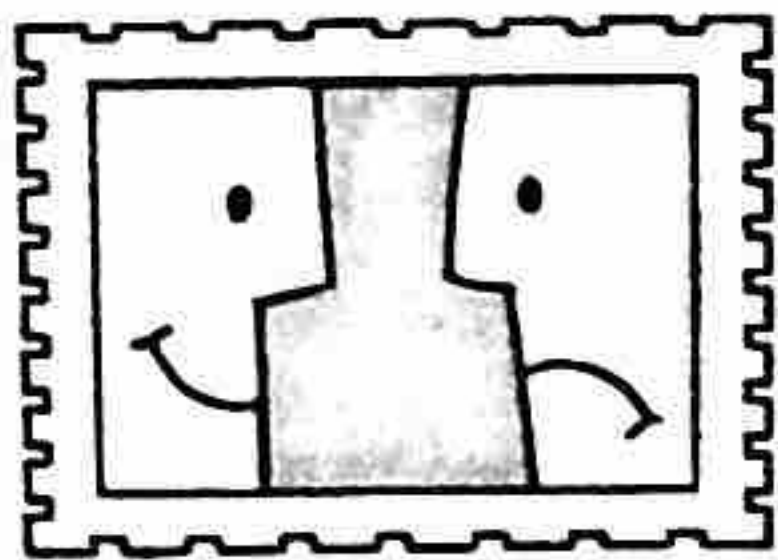
When a new child comes to your group, give him/her a coloring book or journal book. For this age group I recommend How I Feel: A Coloring Book for Grieving Children. This is especially helpful for young children to color along with their parents. If you pass out a journal book, encourage them to add photographs and mementos to this book. It can be helpful for the child to ask the adults in his life to also add to this journal book.



Children's Activity (A&B) #4:

***Play the video The Tenth Good Thing about Barney or read the book by the same name by Judith Viorst.** In this video/book, the boy's cat, Barney, dies. The boy is very sad and Mom has a great idea to have a funeral for Barney. Then the family comes up with ten good things about Barney. This helps the boy remember special things about Barney. Discussion topics: ***How did the boy feel at the start of the video? (sad) *How did you know he felt that way? (didn't eat dinner or chocolate pudding, didn't watch TV, didn't read his book)*What did the boy's mother suggest to help him feel better? (have a funeral, think of ten good things about Barney)*What were some of the good things the boy thought of Barney? (brave, smart, funny, cuddly, etc.)**

Have the children make a list of the ten good things about their loved one. Some of the children may need help writing the ten things about the loved one. (For example: Mom made chocolate chip cookies, she tucked me into bed every night, she read me a story, Dad took me fishing, etc.)



Children's Activity (A&B) #5:

***Read: Double-Dip Feelings by Barbara S. Cain, M.S.W.** This book talks about times when we sometimes feel two feelings at the same time. Talk about times they have had double-dip feelings. They may have these feelings about coming to a support group; anxious about coming, but happy when they make new friends; or about closing at their group, happy that they can remember their loved one without coming to group, but sad to leave new friends. Sometimes when we have "double dip" feelings, we show one feeling and hide the other.

***Activity: Paper plate feelings activity.** Pass out paper plates. On one side of the plate the child draws a picture of his/her face showing a feeling he "shows" and on the other side he draws a picture of one of the feelings he "hides". Another option is to have the child draw two feelings that he is currently feeling. Use yarn, glue, magic markers, scissors, paper plates, and tongue depressor sticks. Have the children put the plates in front of their face and have each other guess both sides of the plates. (Use the tongue depressor sticks as a holder on the plate).



Children's Activity (A&B) #6:

***Read: Today I Feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis.** This is a cute book that looks at some of the feelings children experience.

A doll with changeable faces is available for purchase with this book. Encourage the children to pick one of the changeable faces and put on the doll as he/she explains when he/she has felt that feeling.



Children's Activity (A&B) #7:

***Read:** The Garden Angel by Jan Czech. This is a story about how a young child remembers grandpa's love as she plants a garden.

Life involves things growing and everything will at some point die. This activity is to **plant a seed**. Ask the children what will happen to this seed. ***What does this seed need to grow? *Will this seed live forever?** Part of this activity is the lesson that everything will die, even a seed, but another part of this activity is that we will make this flower for someone special in our lives. We will decorate the flower pots and plant a seed and then watch it grow and give this to a special person. Leave this open to the children. It could be something that the children bring to the cemetery, it could be for a surviving parent, or it could be for a special friend who has helped them in their grief journey. They need to decorate the pot before they plant the seeds in the dirt. Supplies: paint, brushes, soil, pot, Styrofoam 6" plate and one packet of seeds. Divide the seeds from the packet so that each child gets the same amount of seeds. Watch to make sure the child puts the seeds about 1" from the top. Water slightly.



Children's Activity (A&B) #8:

***Read:** A Terrible Thing Happened by Margaret Holmes. The "terrible" thing that the boy experienced is never identified, which leaves it for the group to talk about. Discussion topics: What do the children think the boy "saw" or experienced? What is the terrible thing in their life that they have seen or experienced? This book is also good to show children that their anger is related to the "terrible" thing.

***Main Activity:** Have the children draw a picture (like in the book) of what was terrible for them.



Children's Activity (A&B) #9:

***Read:** When Something Terrible Happens by Marge Heegaard. This book can be used for discussion or as a coloring/journal book. It was designed to help children understand and cope with the overwhelming feelings from loss and change.

Have the children color the "paper doll" (see pages 12-13 in the book). This is to help the children express with colored crayons what they are experiencing and also show us where in their body they are feeling these feelings.



Children's Activity (A&B) #10:

***Read:** It's Not Your Fault by J. Flynn. This is a good book that helps us reassure the children about the fact that they didn't do anything to make the person die. Children often connect things that are not logically connected or perhaps they don't know that there was nothing anyone could do to keep their loved one alive. Children need to be reassured that they did not make their loved one die.

After you have discussed the book, there is a page where the children can fill in the blanks on a letter to the person who died. Work with the children and help them as necessary.

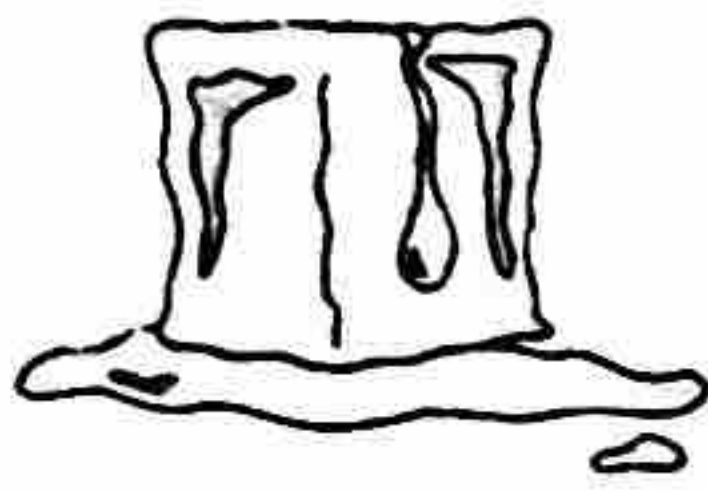
Children's Activity (A&B) #11:

***Read: I Was So Mad** by Mercer Mayer. In this simple book Little Critter is mad about some things. Discuss what things make the children angry and what they have done to help themselves feel better. Children need ways to cope with feelings that work for them. Discussion topics: *What things make Little Critter mad? *What things did Little Critter do to help him feel better?

Next, we have several anger releasing activities for the children to choose from.



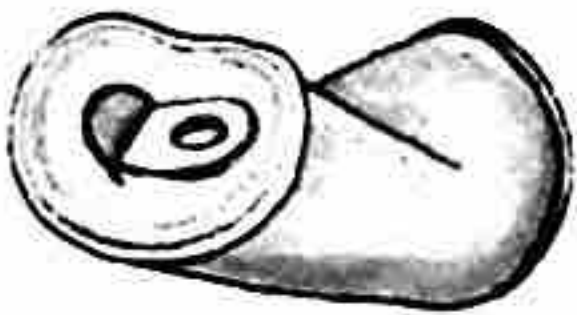
Make "Angry Faces" on paper plate masks. Play music, "I get so mad," on the "Mr. Al Sings: Friends and Feelings" tape by Melody House. Let children dance to the music and hold up their masks when the song says, "I get so mad." Talk about what is OK to do when you are mad and what is not OK to do. Supplies needed: Plain white paper plates, Popsicle sticks or tongue depressors, markers or crayons, and yarn or strips of paper in yellow, brown, and black: Decorate with the yarn or strips of paper for hair. The Popsicle stick is glued at the bottom when the face is complete and is used as a handle for the children to hold the mask in front of their face.



Ice cube throw. Get a paper cup for each child and fill with ice cubes. Take the children outside and get into small groups. Have the children take an ice cube and throw it at a wall or down on the ground. When they throw the ice cube they are to say something that they are angry about. Talk about "What makes you mad?" and "What can you do when you feel mad?" You may also be able to identify feelings underneath the anger, like sadness or loneliness.



Balloon stomp. This is a "fun" anger activity. Blow up a balloon for each child. Use a ribbon and tie a balloon to each child's ankle. Go outside and have the children pop each other's balloons by stomping on them.



Take the children outside and let them **smash soda cans**. When they stomp on the can encourage them to name what they are angry at. They can step on the cans and walk around "smooshing" the cans as they walk.

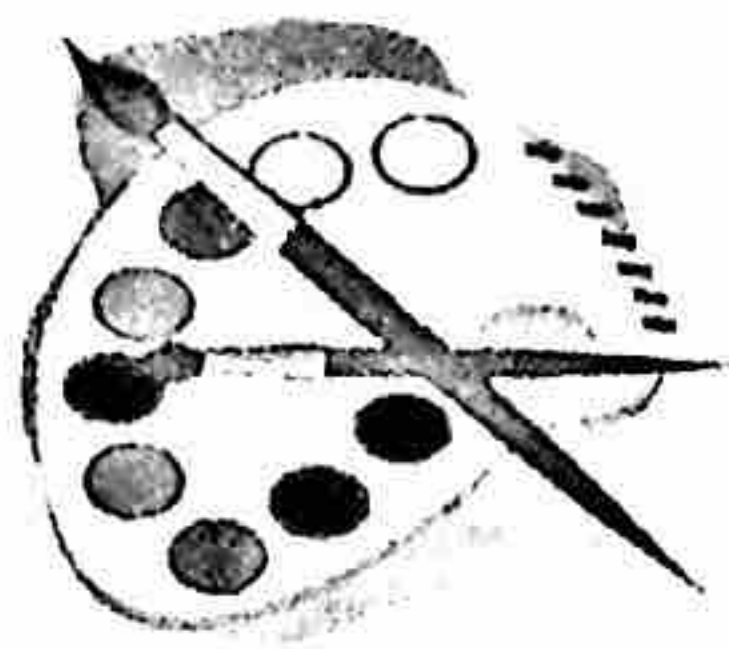
Have **bubble wrap** available for the children to "stomp" on to release anger.



Children's Activity (A&B) #12:

***Read: The Hurt** by Teddi Doleski. In this book Justin has a hurt. By not talking about his hurt, it gets bigger and bigger until it surrounds him. When he talks to his father, he finds the hurt can get smaller. Discussion topics: How hurt and sad/mad feelings can feel bigger and bigger, can get in the way, and prevent sleeping. How do they affect you? What did Justin do that finally helped (talked to his Dad)? What do you do when hurt gets big?

Let the children **blow up balloons** to represent their hurt. Have them name their hurt. Have them blow up the balloon and hold onto the balloons (don't tie) and let them go together or one by one.



Children's Activity (A&B) #13:

***Read: The Accident** by Carol Carrick. In this book, Christopher's dog dies. A car hits Bodger, the dog, accidentally. Christopher was angry that the man hit his dog, even though it was not his fault because the dog ran out in front of the truck. The next morning Christopher wakes up, and for a minute forgets the dog has died. Then he remembers and is very sad. Dad buried the dog and Christopher was very angry that Dad did not let him help. So Christopher and Dad search for a stone to mark the grave and have a mini-funeral, by talking about fun memories. There is a lot in this book that may be similar to the feelings, events, etc. when a loved one dies. Discuss.

Give each child a smooth, 3" river rock or shell and using acrylic paints, have them paint a rock or shell for his loved one. Place the rock/shells in a special place at your agency (around a special tree, in a memorial garden, etc.) After the rock is painted, a facilitator should spray the rocks with the fixative spray. If dry before the children leave, lay the rocks around the special place as the child says their loved one's name.



Children's Activity (A&B) #14:

***Read: Saying Goodbye to Daddy** by J.Vigna. In this book the girl's father died unexpectedly, and Mom and Grandfather help her understand what happens at a funeral and they remember special times with Dad. Discuss the book. Some possible questions could be: *Why was the lake house special to Clare? *Was Clare angry in the book? *Why was she angry? *Did Clare blame herself for her daddy's death? *Did dropping daddy's coffee cup or getting mad at him cause her father's accident? *What worried Clare? (What if mommy dies, too?) *Why did Clare put the chocolate chip cookie in the casket? *How did Clare feel when she and mommy found things in daddy's wallet? *Does anyone remember any of the same feelings Clare had?

The book leads in quite well to a discussion of what the children did for their loved one's funeral. Using felt pieces and a flannel board let the children show what happened at the funeral or memorial service. You may want to talk about funerals in general and ask each child to share what they remember about their loved one's funeral. Did the children do anything special at the funeral? Did anyone place something in the casket? **Note:** prior to group make felt pieces of all of the items a child might see at a funeral: casket, floral sprays for the casket, tall floral arrangements that are arranged at the side of the casket, hearse, people, an urn, etc.

Have the children draw a picture of what they remember about the funeral.



Children's Activity (A&B) #15:

***Read: Love is a Family** by Roma Downey. This book tells of a little girl preparing for Family Fun night at her school. She is worried what the other children will say because she feels that her family is different from all the other children's families because she just has a mother. She finds that a family should not be defined by mother, father, and child, but by love.

Prior to group make felt people and animals. Have each child show on a felt board what their family looks like. (For a family with a mom and two children, the child would place a woman and two children and maybe a pet on the felt board). Make pets that the children can also include in this demonstration (cats, dogs, birds, fish, turtle, bunny, and hamster). The important message for the children is that everyone's family is different, but it is still a family. It would be helpful to normalize that there are places where they are aware that their family is different.