

Ideas for Students Grieving the Death or Loss of a Loved One

Often it is difficult to come up with ideas to help children who are beginning to deal with the death or loss of a loved one. Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD, has written a series of wonderful little books – one of which is Healing the Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Kids.* The book offers clear ways for youngsters to reach out to their grieving friends. The following are a sample of some of the ideas:

- **Talk about the person who died.**

It's good to talk about the person who died. After all, this person was a big part of your life. And he or she will always be a part of your memories.

Talk about the death. Tell stories about him or her. Ask questions about the life of the person who died.

- **Find a "grief hide-out".**

Maybe you can find a private spot to go when you want to be alone with your grief. It could be a fort in your backyard or a quiet place somewhere in your house.

When you're in your grief hide-out, you can cry, write, draw or just sit and think.

- **Pack a memory box.**

A memory box is easier than a memory book. You just put things that remind you of the person who died in the box. The box can be as big or as small as you want. Fill it with pictures, souvenirs, things that belonged to the person who died.

You can take out your memory box whenever you want to sit and spend some time thinking about the person who died and use the contents of the box to stimulate our thoughts and bring pictures to your mind of the times you spent together with the person who died.

- **Hold onto something that belonged to the person who died.**

When you were smaller you might have had a special blanket or teddy bear that made you feel good. Maybe now you can hold onto something special that belonged to the person who died, like a favorite shirt or a toy. Choose something that reminds you of happy times together.

- **Do something that the person who died would have liked.**

The person who died probably really liked doing this or that. Maybe he liked to play cards. Or maybe she loved chocolate cake. Think of something he or she really liked and do it today. Ask a grown-up for permission if it's something you can't do yourself.

- **Be a friend to someone else who's grieving this death.**

Who else is grieving this death? Probably lots of people. Pick one person and be especially nice to that person today. Maybe the two of you can even talk about your feelings about the death.

Healing the Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Kids

Wolfelt, Alan D.,

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