



**Don't Flush the Goldfish!**  
Using **Bobby's Books** to  
Help Kids Cope

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## **Bobby's Books**

Using children's  
literature to empower  
adults to help children  
cope with grief, loss,  
and change.

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## **The History of Bobby's Books**

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## Consider .....

- ◆ How old were you when you experienced a significant loss, e.g. death, parents' divorce?
- ◆ Were you a child when you attended a funeral for the first time? How old?
- ◆ What were your feelings & thoughts then?

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## What Is Grief?

The natural reaction to loss is a process unique to each individual, called grief.

Experiencing loss is not easy or enjoyable for adults or children. It is necessary. From the moment life begins, loss and change are forever happening.

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## Common Feelings

- ◆ Sadness
- ◆ Emptiness
- ◆ Abandonment
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Fear
- ◆ Guilt
- ◆ Insecurity
- ◆ Numbness

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## Common Behaviors

- ◆ Regression
- ◆ Panic
- ◆ Explosive emotions
- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Acting out
- ◆ Provoking rejection
- ◆ Changes in sleeping & eating patterns

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## Myths About Children & Grief

- ◆ Children only grieve for a short time
- ◆ A child's grief proceeds in predictable, orderly stages
  - "She should be over this by now."
- ◆ Infants & toddlers are too young to grieve
- ◆ Bereaved children grow up maladjusted
- ◆ Children are better off if they don't attend funerals

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## What hinders.....

- ◆ Not talking about the loss, death
- ◆ Not having the opportunity to attend the funeral
- ◆ Being labeled and given Rx's too quickly
- ◆ Family "rules" like "Boys don't cry."
- ◆ Making statements like "You're the man of the house now."

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## What helps....

- ◆ Having a “child” within
- ◆ Thinking like a kid again
- ◆ Inviting the child to tell his/her story
- ◆ Being patient
- ◆ “Companioning” the child
- ◆ Increasing your knowledge about children’s grieving

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## Teachable moments

- ◆ The “mini” losses of life provide children with opportunities to build coping skills and a philosophy for dealing with suffering
- ◆ The importance of using Bobby’s Books proactively

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## Examples of Losses

- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Objects
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Self
- ◆ Skills/Abilities
- ◆ Habits

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## Relationships

- ◆ Parental death
- ◆ Sibling death
- ◆ Death of a close friend
- ◆ Death of a classmate
- ◆ Parental divorce
- ◆ Death of a grandparent
- ◆ Death of a pet
- ◆ Friendship ends
- ◆ Friend moves
- ◆ Brother/sister leaves home

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## Objects

- ◆ Teddy Bear or favorite toy
- ◆ Pacifier
- ◆ Favorite blanket
- ◆ Loss of symbolic jewelry/class ring
- ◆ Driver's license
- ◆ Loss of items through vandalism or theft

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## Environment

- ◆ Natural disasters
- ◆ Flood
- ◆ Home fire
- ◆ Move
- ◆ Change schools
- ◆ Blended family
- ◆ New baby in home
- ◆ Family separations

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## Self

- ◆ Body part (arm, leg, teeth)
- ◆ Body organ (eye, transplant)
- ◆ Body image – self-worth
- ◆ Failed grade
- ◆ Failure to be chosen
- ◆ Loss of self esteem through teasing or “put downs”
- ◆ Physical/sexual abuse

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## Skills/Abilities

- ◆ Physical disability
- ◆ Learning and developmental differences
- ◆ Injury

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## Habits

- ◆ Giving up sucking thumb
- ◆ Changes of daily routine
- ◆ School ends/begins
- ◆ Family meals end
- ◆ Taking care of someone/something

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## Recognizing and Understanding Losses

- ◆ By the time today's children reach high school, 50% will have experienced the divorce of their parents, 20% will have experienced the death of one parent and there will be an average of four moves per family.

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## Book Selection

- ◆ Include Parents/Caregivers
- ◆ Picture Books
- ◆ Use of Puppets
- ◆ Writing
- ◆ Art Activities

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## Tips for reading aloud to children

- ◆ Use care in choosing quality children's literature
- ◆ Preview the book
- ◆ Add prop whenever possible
- ◆ If reading a lengthy book to small children, take a break—listening is hard work
- ◆ Be sure all children can see the pictures in the book you are reading
- ◆ Remember even teenagers enjoy a good picture book
- ◆ Only read a story you enjoy yourself
- ◆ Allow enough time for the story to be introduced, read and discussed

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## **Love You Forever**

- ◆ Written by: Robert Munsch
- ◆ Illustrator: Sheila McGraw
- ◆ Possible Themes:
  - Continuity, love, change

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## **The Kissing Hand**

- ◆ Written by Audrey Penn
- ◆ Illustrated by Ruth E. Harper & Nancy M. Leak
- ◆ Possible themes:
  - safety, security, comfort

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## **Eggbert, The Slightly Cracked Egg**

- ◆ Author: Tom Ross
- ◆ Illustrator: Rex Barron
- ◆ Possible themes: self esteem, coping

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## **Egbert**

- ◆ Activities that can be shared after reading this story to a child or group

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## **Puppets**

- ◆ Make puppets accessible/encourage exploration
- ◆ Facilitate communication with puppets
- ◆ Discuss use of puppets in reading with children
- ◆ Make a puppet for home use.

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## **The Jester Has Lost His Jingle**

- ◆ Written and Illustrated by: David Saltzman
- ◆ Possible Themes: change and building self-esteem

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## **Writing**

- ◆ Talk it out
- ◆ List words from the story
- ◆ Write or tape the story
- ◆ Write their own story or another chapter to the story you are reading

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## **Tear Soup**

- ◆ Written by: Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen
- ◆ Illustrated by: Taylor Bills
- ◆ Possible Themes: grieving, coping, healing

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## **How Are you Peeling? Foods with Moods**

- ◆ Written and Illustrated by: Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers
- ◆ Possible Themes: Emotions, Differences, Reactions to Situations

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**From *How are You Peeling? Foods with Moods***  
by Saxton Freymann & Joost Elffers.

- An Arthur A. Levine Book published by Scholastic Inc./Scholastic Press.
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**The Power of Art to Express**

- ◆ Use a variety of art media
- ◆ Consider using clay, watercolors, crayons, fabric, legos, fingerpaint, sidewalk chalk, etc.
- ◆ Create and talk about it

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**Teachable Moments**

- ◆ “Learn it and live it”
- ◆ Look for natural moments
- ◆ Repeat a significant part of a book

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## USE OF QUOTES.....

Take an excerpt from a book  
to generate discussion

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## Core of the **Bobby's Books** Program

- ◆ Educational Seminars
- ◆ Bundle of twenty classics, favorites
- ◆ Read-aloud guide
- ◆ Bibliographies by category
  - Loss of sibling, loss of pet
- ◆ Website - [www.bobbysbooks.org](http://www.bobbysbooks.org)

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For more information  
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