

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SOCIAL SKILLS LESSON PLAN

CASEL COMPETENCY: SELF-AWARENESS

SOCIAL SKILL: IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS

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BOOK INFORMATION

Book title: The Memory Box: A Book About Grief

Author: Joanna Rowland

Illustrator: Thea Baker

Publisher and date of publication: Sparkhouse Family, 2017

ISBN: 9781506426723

Number of pages: 28

Reading level: 1-2

Interest level: K-6

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The narrator talks about how she was once sad over losing her balloon. But she was not as sad as she is now when her loved one died. She wonders if the love is gone, worries she will forget them, and wishes she could hug them. She makes a box so she does not forget them. She goes to places to think of them and looks around until she remembers them and puts something in the box. Some days are good and some days she is really sad. She asks others to share their memories of them. She writes them down and puts them in the box. She goes to places that they planned to go. She makes new memories and describes that they are still with her in her heart. She stops worrying that she will forget and is confident that this process works.

This book would be good to teach students how to cope with grief as it directly discusses life after a loved one dies. It does not say who passed away, though it appears it is likely a parent or sibling. This book shows many different emotions and thoughts that are involved with mourning death.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is for students to learn that their thoughts and emotions after a death are normal. Students should learn of different ways they can remember the person who passed away and see that a person can feel better when they look for ways to remember the person and do things that bring them joy.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

K-2 materials:

- A red balloon
- A cardboard box big enough to fit several items for each child
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- A piece of construction paper for each child

3-6 materials:

- A red balloon
- A cardboard box big enough to fit several items for each child
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- A piece of lined paper for each child
- A pencil for each child

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Confidence: feeling strongly about the truth of something

Grief: deep sadness, especially caused by someone's death

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Show the students a red balloon and explain that sometimes (pop it) balloons pop or fly away. We may feel sad but we can usually get a replacement. Explain that in the book the girl is sad about her balloon popping but she also feels sad from someone she loves dying. She cannot replace that but she learns different ways of helping herself feel better.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

Ask students to show with their arms and hands how sad she was with the balloon flying away and how sad she was when her family member died. Explain that it is normal to feel sad when someone we love dies.

Ask the students what kind of things she worries about? How does the memory box work? Why does it help her to talk with the family?

In the book she makes new memories. How do you think she feels about doing these new things? What kind of things do you want to do? How might that make you feel?

By the end of the book she is confident that she will not forget the person. What makes her feel sure about that?

POST READING ACTIVITY

K-6: Have the students make their own memory boxes. Have them design them, color pictures on them, and choose a few things to put in them. Explain that this box will help them remember the person who died and that they can add to it or look through it whenever they would like (or if the boxes are going to be kept in the room, whenever the student is in the room). Explain that they can share it with people they trust, including yourself. Ask the student if there is anyone they want to share it with and provide them an opportunity to do so if they so wish.

K-2: Ask students to color a picture of themselves and their loved one who has died doing an activity that they did together. Have the students put this in their box if they would like.

3-6: Ask students to write a memory of themselves and the person. Have the students put this in their box if they would like.

CLOSURE

We experience many questions and emotions after our loved one dies. We deal with these emotions in many ways, from being by ourselves, to talking with others, to going to special places. Doing these things helps us remember the person. We can gather things from these places and put them in our boxes so we can remember our loved one. We can also do new things that bring us joy even when we feel sad about losing our loved one.



“Those we love and lose are always connected by heartstrings into infinity.”
- Terri Guillemets

