

## HOW TO UTILIZE THIS BOOK

This book can be used for small group counseling or just read individually. The book Good Grief was written to help youngsters in their journey through grief after the loss of a loved one. Children in upper elementary through middle school (grades 2-6) are the target audience. This book is self-paced. One can move along as fast or as slowly as desired. The main goal is to help youngsters think and talk about their experiences and feelings. By doing this, the healing process begins to take hold.

This book includes two separate booklets that can be reproduced and read with kids. The first booklet, Good Grief: Understanding Grief and Change, explains the grieving process in a conversational,

matter-of-fact fashion. This section contains two or three thought-provoking questions after each page of the story. Because of time constraints in group settings, the group leader can choose which question(s) may be most appropriate for the group.

The second booklet involves the fictitious story, William's Great Loss. The story follows a child's experiences through the grieving process. Discussion questions are found throughout this section of the book as well.

Optional small group activities are included in the back of the book. These activities, which are divided into seven sessions, can be used at the discretion of the group leader before or after reading the book. Another option is to do these small group activities as lead-ins before reading different portions of the book.

There are five steps or stages of grief that many people experience. They are as follows:

- 1) **Denial:** Acting like the loss or change never happened.
- 2) **Anger:** Feeling mad that this loss had to happen.
- 3) **Bargaining:** Wishful thinking that if you do certain good things, your loved one or pet will somehow come back and that life will be the same again.
- 4) **Depression:** Deep sadness about the loss, and not caring about normal things.
- 5) **Acceptance:** Taking what happened and finding peace about it.

Denial

ANGER

BARGAINING

Acceptance

Depression

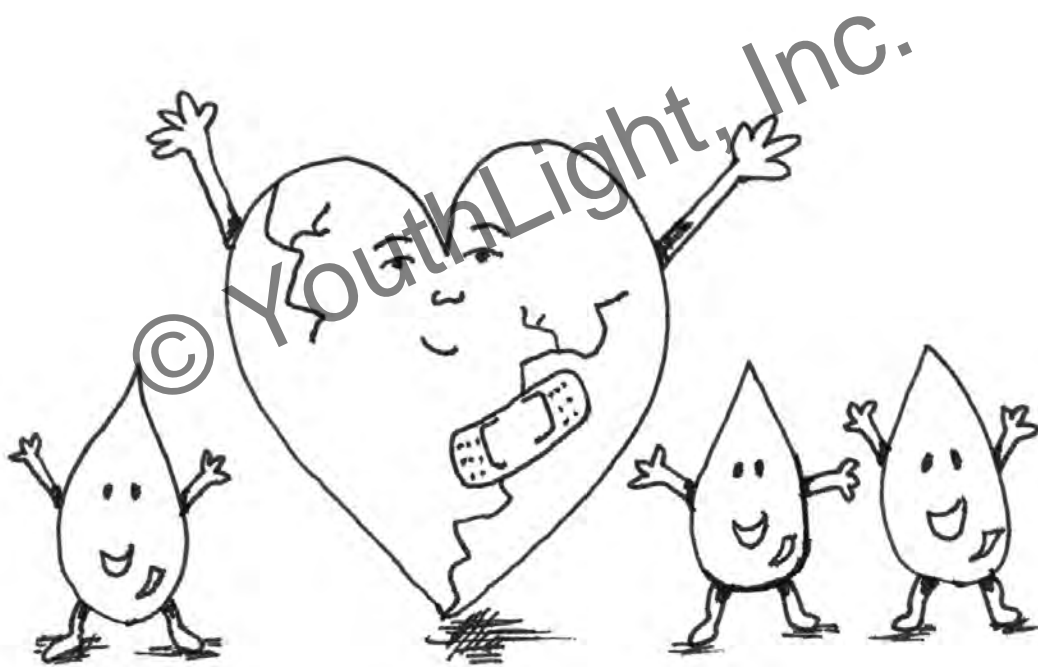
## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Grief takes time

Going through these stages takes time. Everyone grieves in his or her own way. It could be a short or long time before that “okay” feeling comes back.

1. How long have you been feeling grief?
2. Do you have hope that it will get better? Why or why not?

As William talked about his feelings, he began to feel better and better. He even learned that it was okay to cry when he felt like it. As William talked and let out his tears, his broken heart did start to heal. Eventually, in fact, life got back to normal for the most part.



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

One day William realized that he was feeling better. Life felt good again. He was going on with his life. Friends, good grades, and normal activities were all a part of his life again. How good it felt to be alive and well!

1. What are some ways you will know that life is getting back to normal for you?
2. What was life like before the death of your loved one? Do you think you can get back to a normal life again? Explain your answer.

## SESSION THREE: FRAMING GRIEF

### Icebreaker

Have each member of the group find a common object in the room (a ball, marker, piece of chalk, eraser, book, etc.) that describes him or her. Each person can then explain how it relates to him or her.

### Activity

Ask each person to draw a picture using the following reproducible page of what death means to him or her.

Have each person talk about his or her drawing.

