

Kid Talk Leader's Guide - Orientation Week

These activities are used in conjunction with the 14-week Kid Talk Curriculum and the *Our Story* Memory Book for children.

NOTE: The Language of Grief includes lots of new words for the children. There is a Glossary on pp. 148 to 151. You can print the glossary as cards from our website at www.kidtalkgrief.com. The cards can be used as you introduce a few words each week and for the Glossary Match Game in Week 13.

The following activities are described approximately in the order in which they appear in the curriculum.

ASL Psalm 147:3 – this is the theme scripture for the entire Kid Talk series. We open every session by signing this verse in American Sign Language (ASL). There is a demonstration at www.kidtalkgrief.com. After a couple of weeks, the children will lead this activity. Print the verse on self-adhesive Avery 5395 Name Badges which the kids will apply to their Session Log. A printable version is available at www.kidtalkgrief.com.

Session Log: each Kid Talk session begins and ends with the Session Log. The child records their name and the date. Review the theme for the week by reading it aloud together or having the children take turns reading. In addition to Psalm 147:3, there is a new verse and accompanying prayer each week. The verse is printed out on a label which the child applies to their session log. Read the verse together. Discuss its meaning. Pray the written prayer together.

Return to the Session Log for the closing portion of each Kid Talk session. The child circles or underlines the activities they completed and then checks the box for what they liked best. (Some weeks not all the activities get done.) Ask them to explain their choice. They also fill in what they want to remember from this session. The Session Logs are filed behind a divider tab in the *Our Story* binder. They serve as a reminder of what happened at Kid Talk as well as a springboard for discussion at home. A second divider tab is useful to designate additional pages completed by the child.

Ground Rules: make a laminated copy of the Ground Rules included in this week's materials (p. 28) to refer to each week. (You can print it in color from: www.kidtalkgrief.com.) This sheet should be reviewed at the beginning of the first few sessions, then as needed, especially if new children join the group.

The most important rules are summarized by “confidentiality” and “respect.” (What we say here, stays here. The exception is that you can talk to your family about what you said and did at Kid Talk.) Soon the children will tell you the ground rules without needing the graphic.

Explain that tissues are self-serve because if we hand you a tissue, you might think that you shouldn’t cry. Tears are OK!

Wilma: is a Pop-Up Puppet named by the children because she looks like Mrs. Fred Flintstone. She is easily made and worth her weight in gold.

Talking through Wilma gives most children a voice when otherwise they might not find the words. Wilma is always available to do the talking. She is small and portable. The children will make Wilma puppets at our last session together. DIY instructions are included with Week 13, (p. 125). You can purchase a ready-made kit to make 12 puppets. See p. 136.

Fiddle Things: we keep a collection of “fiddle things” in a labeled tub. (Examples include heart shaped stones, Apache tears, shells, buckeyes, pecans, colored glass discs etc.) Studies show that engaging small muscles with motor activity increases the ability to listen and internalize what is heard. They may also be used to open a session. Pass the basket of fiddle things. Each child takes a turn choosing a fiddle thing, sharing “check-in” and then passes the basket to the next person. Similarly, the process can be repeated at the close of the session by returning the fiddle things to the basket while sharing something specific. With some groups, the fiddle things may become a distraction. Coloring the worksheets or mandalas achieves the same result.

Mandalas and Mazes: see Coloring Pages in the Kid Talk Supply Pantry for URLs. We keep a binder of coloring pages for easy retrieval. (Appendix pp. 133 - 137.)

Mosaic Heart Coloring Page: this page is found at www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/heart-mosaic. (Appendix pp. 133 - 137.)

Move!: this is a powerful ice breaker exercise. The script is included with the Orientation Session Lesson Plan (p. 29). The leader reads the “descriptor phrase” and then directs the children where to go in the room. The first items are simple and not emotionally loaded. As the exercise continues, the descriptors become more personal and death related. This activity allows the children to see and experience how much they have in common. It quickly establishes they are with other kids who “get it.”

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