



## **Suggestions for Utilizing the Children's Workbook**

*The purpose of the children's workbook is to help a child find healing from the emotional scars of losses in their lives. With this purpose in mind, let's examine different ways in which the workbook can be utilized by:*

**Parents**

**Grandparents**

**Foster Parents**

**Churches**

**School Officials**

**Workshops**

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**Martha Faircloth Bush**

**409-883-8856**

[www.marthafbush.com](http://www.marthafbush.com)

[martha@marthafbush.com](mailto:martha@marthafbush.com)

## Parents and Grandparents

### 1. Family Shared Loss

Quite often, the loss a child experiences is the same loss that the whole family experiences, such as death or divorce. In cases like this, try to set up a designated time when all family members can participate in the discussion and activities in the workbook.

### 2. One on one

Even in a family shared loss, each person grieves differently. Therefore, you might find it is necessary to spend more time on a one-on-one-basis with any given child in your family. Try to schedule alone time with him and carefully guide him through each chapter. It is important not to rush him, but allow him time to absorb each step.

### 3. Devotional

In addition to helping your child grieve through losses in his life, the workbook could also be used as a devotional book.

As the primary guardian in a child's life, whether it is a parent or grandparent, we often teach what we consider the main fundamentals of child-rearing, such as: spiritual training, discipline, responsibility, good etiquette. Why not balance the scales of the "fundamentals" we are teaching them with **how to recognize feelings, how to express feelings, learn about forgiving others, asking others to forgive them.** These topics are so important to dealing with life in general.

In short, don't wait for tragedy to strike. Use the workbook as a devotional emphasizing scripture memorization in each chapter to help your child or grandchild build a solid biblical foundation at an early age in order to meet the **realities of life** on an everyday basis.

**Remember:** You do not have to possess so-called teaching skills to help your child cope with the realities of life. The best skill you can possess is a "listening ear." Listen to what he is saying and what he is not saying.

Activities are provided for you in the workbook to help break down those walls that children sometimes have after a loss. But, sometimes your best activity is your own creativity.

And above all, incorporate your child into the activities by allowing them to be involved in skits and role playing. The more they participate, the more they learn and grow from their experience of a loss.

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## Foster Parents

You have **chosen** to be a parent to many children, and have devoted years of your life in helping children heal from the emotional scars of losses. Without you, many young lives would be forever torn apart. Therefore, I feel very inadequate in suggesting a source to help you, given the vast amount of experience and knowledge you already have.

However, I have found in my own walk of faith and healing that “if there is one sentence or one word spoken that touches my heart, then another piece of the puzzle has gone into place to be a part of the healing process.”

And with that, may I suggest ways to use this guide in the hope that one word or activity may just be a piece of the puzzle that enlightens a child to cope with a loss or losses he might have incurred in his short life.

### 1. Group Teaching

- (1) No doubt many of you start the day or end the day with a **devotional** for all the children in your home. The workbook could easily be used as a devotional guide, along with a group discussion.
- (2) Another way you might consider using it as a group teaching is to get together with **other foster parents** in your area and have a group session. To generate excitement, involve the kids in skits or puppet shows, followed by an adult leader summarizing the important points. Take a few minutes after the lesson to complete the activities.

### 2. One on One

There is so very much for a foster child to grieve. For example: family, home, neighbors, pets, toys and other personal items, innocence, (especially if sexually abused,) school, friends, culture.

Because every child grieves differently, a child may need individual attention. If so, try to schedule alone time with him and guide him through each chapter. The length of time you spend on each chapter depends upon the needs of the child. It is important not to rush him; allow him time to absorb each step. Healing is a process.

**Note:** Activities are provided for you in the workbook to help break down those walls that children sometimes have after a loss. Involve your child in these activities with skits and role playing. The more they participate, the more they learn and grow in their healing journey.

You might find that there are not enough pages in the workbook for the child’s drawings, stories, and expressing their feelings about their loss. May I suggest buying a composition pad or art pad to go along with the workbook that becomes their own special place to unveil themselves fully.

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## Children's Church Pastors

For many children, **YOU** are the only one who gives spiritual training to a child, as so many children come to church without a parent. Within that hour or so that you have them on Sunday morning, without a doubt, you do everything in your power to:

- impress upon each child how much Jesus loves them
- teach character building traits through the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Jonah
- create fun-filled social events in addition to the time you spend with them on Sunday morning

My hat is off to you, and all your workers. And yet, quite possibly, there has been an area of their life you might have inadvertently omitted, and that is: **“how to help them with losses that they face every day.”** In fact, this book came about as a result of my own children's pastor saying to me, “I have got some hurting children in my services, and I don't know what to do about them. Can you help me?”

So, I am suggesting that children's pastors use this book in at least three ways:

### 1. Group Teaching

Insert the principals of the workbook into your curriculum to build a foundation on recognizing feelings, how to express feelings, forgiveness. In short, don't wait for tragedy to strike. Use the workbook to help build a solid biblical foundation at an early age in order to meet the **realities of life** on an everyday basis.

To generate excitement, have the kids teach the lesson through skits, followed by an adult leader summarizing the important points. Take a few minutes after the lesson to complete the activities. Use your workers to double check the children to see if they need help with the activities.

### 2. One on One

Depending upon the type of loss, a child may need individual attention. If so, you or one of your workers, schedule a time with him outside the church environment and carefully guide him through each chapter. The length of time you spend on each chapter depends upon the needs of the child. It is important not to rush him, but allow him time to absorb each step.

### 3. Support Group

Many churches offer grief support for adults. The children's workbook could be used for the children in conjunction with this class.

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## Elementary Schools

Having been a teacher myself, I realize it is sometimes difficult to insert additional courses into an already packed curriculum. However, consider the following ways to include this study into your school program.

### 1. Chapel Programs

Most Christian schools have a weekly chapel program. Why not use it as one of the chapel programs for several weeks. To generate excitement, have students teach the lesson through skits, followed by an adult leader summarizing the important points. The activities for the chapter taught in chapel could be completed once the students return to their classroom after chapel or taken home to complete with their parents.

### 2. Once a Semester Class

Even in a packed curriculum, often times an extra-curricular course is taught for one semester only. Why not use this course perhaps concentrating on how to deal with every day losses, the emotions involved, as well as how to have Godly behavior in the midst of a situation. This could be an excellent time to deal with bullying and other playground behavior.

### 3. One on One

A principal confided in me that she had a student who needed help in dealing with recent family losses. Not knowing how to help the student, the principal reached to the internet for material to use. *Helping Hurting Children*, not only teaches the basic concepts of grieving, but also supplies activities to be used. When used in this capacity, there is no time period as to how long to spend on each chapter. This is left up to how well the student is progressing through the process of healing.

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## Workshops

Kim Forman, foster parent for over 26 years, suggested the idea to me of teaching a four week workshop from the children's workbook. And thus, I did for four Saturday nights during November, 2013. By teaching the main concepts in each chapter, along with skits, role playing, and discussion, kids began to open up behind those walls they had built.

As a result of that workshop, I have designed lesson plans to cover a 4 week time period that could be utilized by any caring adult in different settings.

Refer to my website, [Helping Hurting Children](http://marthafbush.com) (<http://marthafbush.com>) and click onto **Lesson Plans for Workshop**. They are on PDF and may be printed out and used as a guide for conducting a workshop in various settings.

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