



Episcopal  
Relief & Development

U.S. Disaster Program

# Ministering to Children After a Disaster

## Resources for Grades K-5



Episcopal Relief & Development wishes to thank the following, who reviewed and provided input for these materials:

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## Introduction

If your congregation has just experienced a crisis or disaster – within the community, in the world, or even within the church itself – the church can serve as a place of listening and of grieving, but also of resilience as well. As you minister to children immediately after a disaster, you can share these qualities of Christian hope and presence with them, including:

- A calm presence.
- A listening and attentive community where those affected may share their experiences, along with their grief and their pain and frustrations.
- A sense of resilience and hope for the future.

This resource contains a number of options you may use in ministering to elementary-aged children (grades 1 to 5) in the days immediately following a disaster, either in a regularly scheduled church school experience or in a specially designed event. These activities may also be used at other times. All are based on traditional Christian spiritual disciplines and are designed to assist children in coping with the stress, confusion, sadness, and anger they may feel after a disaster has impacted their homes, their communities, or the world.

Choose the options that you feel comfortable using and that work with your group of children. At the same time, young children often derive great comfort from familiar routines.<sup>1</sup> If you are weaving these activities into a regular church school time, make sure to include rituals and practices that the children are already familiar with.

Following are ideas for:

- Gathering and Welcoming the Group
- A Presentation and Discussion on Jesus, the Good Shepherd
- Response Activities
- Prayer Time
- Tools to Take Home

Additionally, the following handouts for parents and teachers are available at the end of this resource. Use these as part of your preparation for working with children after a disaster. Make copies available to parents and teachers, as well.

- *Tips for Working With Children and Youth After A Disaster* (for distribution to teachers and others working with children)
- *Tips for Parents in Helping Children and Youth Cope with Disaster* (for distribution to parents)
- *Tips on Praying with Children* (for teachers and parents)
- *Helpful Books for Children and Youths*

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<sup>1</sup> Kinsel, John D. "Working with Children and Adolescents after a Disaster" *Disaster Spiritual Care, Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional and National Tragedy*. Stephen B. Roberts and Willard W.C. Ashley Sr., eds. Skylight Paths Publishing. Woodstock: 2008, p 276.

## Gathering and Welcoming the Group

**Estimated time: 5 minutes**

Materials:

- Name tags
- Paper and crayons or markers for all (optional)
- A candle to light if your space allows

As children arrive, make sure they have a name tag. Additionally, make sure you have the names of parents or caregivers and a way to reach them if a child needs to be with family. After a disaster, young children may be more reliant on parents and caregivers, and need to know that they are nearby and can be reached if the child needs them. Parents can be invited to stay with their children during this time.

As you welcome children to this time together, be sure to greet each child warmly and “check in” to ask how they are doing. Have sheets of paper and crayons available for those who might like to draw quietly while waiting for all the children to arrive.

**Opening Prayer:** Consider beginning with a familiar and comforting song, especially one that the children in your group know well. If your space allows, light a candle. Invite the children to pray with you.

*The Lord Be With You! (And also with you!)*

*Dear Lord, be with us this day as we gather together to comfort and support each other. Help us find Your guiding words and presence in those around us. Help us find listening ears and kind words as we seek to bring our thoughts and prayers to You. In Christ's Name, Amen.*

### **Words of Welcome:**

*We've had a rough week (or weeks). It's so good to see you all here, and to be with you. When we have rough weeks like this, one of the best things we can do is gather together at Jesus' house, to play together and to pray together and tell stories together and talk about how things are going. And maybe we can help one another feel a little better. So we're going to do that during our time together. And we'll invite Jesus to do those things with us. Because He's been with us all through our rough week. He's happy to welcome us to his house. And his house is filled with people who know us and love us and are there for us. In fact, many of those same people need our love and care as well.*

## Presentation and Discussion on the Good Shepherd

### Estimated time: 10 to 15 minutes

Begin with a scripture or children's story on the theme of God as a shepherd. For very young children, you might use a children's Bible with simple language for young listeners or a story book on the theme. Suggested Scriptures include the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm or John 10:14.

The following notes may be read or told in your own words as a brief lesson.

*God's people have long thought of God as a shepherd who leads them and guides them in good times and in bad. Jesus even called himself the Good Shepherd, saying that he knows his sheep and they know him. In the same way, Jesus knows each of us by name, and he cares for each one of us. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus shows us the way to green grass and clear water, even though sometimes it may take a while to get there. He takes care of us all along the way.*

*Sometimes there are dark places in our lives. Sometimes we do not know what will happen to us. Sometimes we struggle to even see where the clear water and the green pasture might be.*

*We remember that Jesus the Good Shepherd is with us, even in the dark places in our lives. Jesus finds us, even when we feel lost and alone. Jesus is with us and will lead us in finding safety in His own sheepfold. Because Jesus is so near, we can talk to him any time we want. We can tell him how we feel, even if we're angry and upset. We can ask for Jesus' help. We can ask him to send his love to people in need.*

This presentation may be expanded and adapted with resources available in Godly Play® or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, if available. You might also use a picture, photograph, or sculpture of a Good Shepherd to serve as a visual aid to your presentation.

### Questions for Discussion

The following questions are worded to allow children to imagine their responses. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a time for adults to provide correction. Thank children for their responses as they share them. Allow children to freely express themselves or silently reflect.

- *I wonder what it means for Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.*
- *I wonder if any of us have felt like we were walking in a dark valley, or needed a friend to be with us this week.*
- *I wonder how Jesus finds us when we feel lost or alone.*
- *I wonder how Jesus leads us back to safety.*

## **Response Activities**

**Estimated time: About 10 – 30 minutes, depending on the age and needs of children.**

Children who have experienced disasters need to express their thoughts and feelings about the incident in ways that they are comfortable with. They benefit from a sense of feeling in control of their situation and appreciate the opportunity to make choices about how to participate,<sup>2</sup> or whether to participate at all. Drawing a picture, using building blocks, writing a poem, reading a book or working with simple craft materials are all good ways for children to explore and express what they experienced and how they feel after the event. If you have space, consider setting up a few different response stations that children can choose to work in. Make sure children feel supported and understood if they decide they do not want to participate at all.

Every 10 minutes provide children the opportunity to choose different activities if they like. Older elementary children (grades 4 and 5) will respond to a little more structure, and will especially appreciate art and service activities.

### **Art Station**

Set out a variety of art supplies that children can use to create art that helps express their thoughts and feelings. These might include blank sheets or large rolls of paper, markers, crayons, and pencils, paint, construction paper, magazine pages and glue. Modeling clay can be particularly useful as children can punch and shape it. Make sure that you have smocks and drop clothes on hand so that messes can be easily managed without stress or concern. Allow children to create whatever they feel like making, whether it seems to relate to the disaster or not.

### **Creative Play Station (most appropriate for ages 3-5)**

Building blocks or other construction toys, rescue themed toys, dolls, kitchen sets, sandboxes and water tables all allow children to respond creatively to their situation. The capacity to respond creatively can help protect children from stress reactions that can be debilitating.<sup>3</sup>

### **Story Station**

On a book shelf or table, set out several books for children to read or look at on their own. Provide pillows and carpet squares for comfortable reading and relaxing. Set out paper for them to write or draw responses if they like. Adults may also make themselves available to read a few books aloud to a small group of children. A list of children's books that are helpful after a trauma or disaster is included at the end of this resource.

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<sup>2</sup> Kinsel, 273

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## Writing Station

Set out lined paper and pencils for children to use to write poems or stories. Providing sheets printed vertically with the first letters of an acrostic poem can be a nice way to prompt lines of poetry. These might spell short positive words such as “love”, “hope” or “comfort”.

## Giving Station

Children may find it helpful to take some action to help their families, their community, or others affected by disaster. Taking action may aid children in feeling more confident and able to cope with the disaster. Simple actions might include:

- Drawing or decorating prayer cards to distribute to those affected by the disaster, showing that they are kept in prayer by your congregation. Please be mindful and respectful of the diverse faith traditions and beliefs of people who will receive your cards or gifts.
- Making a banner showing your support for your community.
- Collecting canned goods to resupply food pantries in your community.
- Collecting coins for donations to agencies supporting those affected by disaster in your community or elsewhere.
- Creating, decorating and delivering care packages of snacks and thank-you cards for relief workers, police and firefighters, or others who are working hard to help your community.
- Creating bags of small notebooks and crayons for children in your community directly affected by the disaster, so that they will be able to express their emotions and have something to do while parents cope with the aftermath of the disaster. Before starting this sort of project, make sure that the intended recipients have the capacity to receive it and distribute it, so they are not unduly burdened by the “gift.”

Please note: Often one of the first responses of people who are responding to a disaster from a distance is to send goods, clothing and other items to the affected community. This is not recommended. It can actually be a tremendous burden on the community and those impacted by the crisis, as it can overwhelm the recipients’ ability to store, use or disburse the items. And, the recipients may not need what is being sent. A better approach is to send checks or gift cards to reputable and credible organizations, which allow them to purchase what is needed.

## Prayer Time

**Estimated time: 5 minutes**

Set aside time to pray with children during your time together. Be sure children are given an opportunity to make prayer requests and express their own concerns. Additionally, providing children with a few simple “Centering Prayer” techniques to quiet themselves prayerfully can be very useful as they negotiate the ongoing stress of a disaster. Tips on praying with children can be found at the end of this resource.

Opening the Prayer Time: The leader may start with a brief prayer, such as:

**We thank you, Lord, for this time together. Help us to know that You are with us always. Help us to feel your love and your presence with us here today. In Christ’s name, Amen.**

Inviting Prayer Requests:

- Invite the children to close their eyes and think of people they know who need God’s love right now. They might think of friends, family, strangers, pets or even themselves. Or they might imagine requests that they have for God.
- After a moment, tell them that they can share their prayer with the group, or keep in it their hearts, where it’s just between them and God.
- The adult leader might begin by making a prayer request, such as, “I pray that people who have lost their homes will find shelter.”
- Listen attentively to each prayer request. You might repeat the request by saying, for example, “We pray that Will’s family is able to replace their roof soon.”
- Children should not be compelled to offer a prayer request. You may, however, respond by saying, for example, “we pray for Catherine and her family.” Or you might say “we pray for the people in Catherine’s heart”. If the child later indicates that he or she would like to make a prayer request, please return to that child when appropriate.

Closing Your Prayer Time:

- Close with a spoken prayer that acknowledges the situation and conveys a sense of hope for the future. If you are able to remember each child’s request, please repeat these prayers in your own closing prayer. A familiar religious song might also be sung by your group.
- You may also close with the Going Forth Prayer below.

***Dear Lord, be with us today and always. Give us strength to face all challenges with love and with courage. Be with us as we heal in a hurting world. In Christ’s name, Amen.***



## **Tools to Take Home**

**Estimated time: 5 minutes**

As children prepare to leave or wait for parents to arrive, encourage them to try some of the day's activities at home – and especially at times when they might feel sad, confused, anxious, angry, or overwhelmed. You might ask children to reflect on these questions:

- What activity did you do during this time together that helped you feel calm and peaceful?
- When is another time that you could do this activity again?
- What would help the next time you feel sad, scared, or stressed?

A take-home sheet, “**Tips for Parents in Helping Children and Youth Cope with Disaster**” is located at the end of this resource and may be duplicated and distributed to parents.

## Tips for Working with Children and Youth after a Disaster

If you are teaching children soon after a disaster, your main mission is to comfort, listen, and point children towards a path of resilience. Familiar relationships with kind, consistent adults are very important for children coping with a disaster. Familiarize yourself with these tips as you prepare to respond to children in the weeks after a disaster or trauma.

- Listen and share a sense of compassion, and serve as a calm presence.
- Don't try to "fix" problems; just try to help children find a place of serenity and security.
- Allow children to express their thoughts and feelings about the disaster, but don't force them to do so.
- Using simple materials of plain paper and markers or crayons, allow children time to freely draw or write their thoughts and feelings.
- Allow parents to accompany their children in this class if they are feeling insecure. Also appreciate that parents may need their own time to process their thoughts and feelings with other adults.
- Try to set a tone of hope in your time with the children. A sense of hope at this time will help children in finding resilience.
- It is common in times of sorrow for children (and adults) to express anger at God or doubt in their faith. Children might be comforted in knowing that these reactions are indeed typical. Again, don't try to talk children out of these reactions; just give them a safe space in which they may express themselves at this time and reassure them that they are not alone.
- If possible, ask adults with good pastoral care skills, trauma specialists or who have training in mental health services to attend group meetings with children. Emotions of sadness, fear, and grief may be expressed by the children during your time together. Adults with good pastoral care skills may be helpful in speaking with children about these emotions. Make sure that any adults working with children have the appropriate background checks and have attended Safeguarding God's Children trainings.
- If you are able, you might lead children in taking an action to help their community or others. Such an activity can help children feel more confident and able to cope with the disaster.

(More on next page)

## Tips for Working with Children, continued.

### Typical Reactions to Trauma by Age Group

Caregivers can provide much-needed comfort and security to children and youth affected by trauma. Many of their reactions will stem from the event, their history of crisis, their age and developmental stage, their support system and their perception of the event. Below is an outline of typical responses by age group.

#### **Preschool children**

**Reactions:** Shorter attention spans, confusion, loss of appetite, overeating, bowel/bladder problems, sleeping disturbance, nervousness, anxiety, fearful reminders, clinging, disobedience, thumb sucking, bedwetting, re-enacting trauma.

**Need:** To establish safety and security and self-control.

**Response:** Provide physical comforts, assure and provide adult protection, let the child sleep where he/she feels safe, clarify the event as well as misconceptions and misunderstandings and, most importantly, stay calm.

**Time:** Caregivers providing psychological first aid to pre-school/kindergarten age children should not spend more than 15 to 20 minutes at a time working with the child.

#### **Elementary school children**

**Reactions:** Confusion, inability to concentrate, headaches, stomachaches, vision problems, itching, sleep disturbances

**Need:** To relieve guilt, to re-establish productivity, to feel safe and to build self-esteem.

**Response:** Encourage children to talk about their feelings, validate their reactions, reinforce age-appropriate behavior, provide structure, clarify misconceptions and provide opportunities for the child to succeed and feel good.

**Time:** Crisis response strategies should not take longer than 30 minutes to an hour for each session.

#### **Junior/Senior high youth**

**Reactions:** Problems concentrating, headaches, skin rashes, loss of appetite, depression, anxiety, withdrawal, antisocial behavior, drug or alcohol abuse, survivor guilt.

**Need:** To be reassured about normalcy, to understand direction in life and meaning of event, to receive help with stress reduction, to prepare for additional reactions, to clarify information

**Response:** Encourage discussion, validate reactions, provide opportunity for positive action, provide guidance and future contact, provide opportunity to conceptualize the incident and reactions to situations.

Sources: *School Crisis Management*, Kendall Johnson, Ph.D., Hunter House, 1993.  
Jayne Crisp, Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists

# **Tips for Parents in Helping Children and Youth Cope with Disaster**

These are tips for talking with young people in your family about disasters and helping children to find resilience in overcoming stressful events in their communities and in the world. Although in the short term, children may show signs of stress, young people often are able to find resilience in responding to disaster situations when they are well supported.

- Be honest. Do not sugar-coat a situation or tell a child “everything will be fine” unless you can realistically say this. Give your child age-appropriate information about what has happened without overdramatizing the situation. Even the youngest verbal children need a simple explanation so they do not imagine or envision things that are even worse than they are.
- Reassurance is key! Tell your child often that you will do everything you can to keep him or her safe. Keep all promises you make to your child during the crisis. In other words, do not make promises you cannot keep. It is important that your child can count on you when all else is in chaos.
- It’s okay to tell your child that you don’t have all the answers to his or her questions. Validate their thoughtful questioning. Be honest and accurate about the facts before giving answers to specific questions.
- One of the most important needs after a trauma is to talk about the event—often. It may be difficult for you to hear about, or you may tire of hearing the same story, but talking is a crucial part of recovery. Silence can make children feel isolated, and may convey the message that they should limit their grieving.
- Be supportive and sympathetic, but avoid overreacting. Don’t try to make it okay; let them express fears, thoughts, and worries. Sharing can be very healing for everyone. At the same time, don’t force them to share; let it come naturally.
- Allow the child to express all the emotions he or she is feeling. Children need to know that their feelings are normal grief feelings even though they might not be normal feelings under other circumstances. If feelings such as anger or guilt persist for many months, professional help might be necessary to help them resolve those feelings.
- Practice patience. Children who have experienced disaster-related stress often regress in their development. Small children may even regress in their potty training. Outbursts or tantrums may occur. These are typical reactions. Be understanding and stay calm.
- Encourage teens and older children to check in with their friends. Social interaction with friends will help teens find comfort and stay connected with their peer group. Give liberty to teenagers around how they make themselves feel better, i.e. turning the stereo on loud, talking on the phone more than usual to their friends. Allow them privacy (both in physical space and to deal with their feelings) if they need it.

## Tips for Parents, Continued

- Spend time with your child. Hold and hug your child. Tell your child how much you love him or her and that you will get through this situation together. Perform small acts of kindness and generosity.
- Encourage expression. Drawing a picture, telling a story, or acting out a drama or engaging in creative play may assist your child in emotionally coping with the disaster. Don't be judgmental of these expressions. Try to respond by asking the child to tell you about the picture or other artistic expression, and listen attentively. Encourage teens to write in journals, draw, or play music to express their emotions.
- Turn off the television news to prevent overload of disturbing images. Also, monitor your child's conversations with other children and be prepared to gently correct misinformation.
- You likely will need time to process and cope with the disaster yourself. If you can safely do so, allow another adult to care for your child while you give yourself time to seek support from others or even attend to clean-up or paperwork resulting from the disaster. Consider swapping out babysitting duties with friends or neighbors.
- Try to follow typical routines and daily schedules as much as you are able, in order to give your child a sense of familiarity and security.
- Pray. Pray with your children. Pray for your children. Practice your faith and model resilience in the face of hardship.
- Address death concretely and factually. Death in a child's life is inevitable and means different things to children at different ages. Young children (ages 1-5) grieve for the threat to their security, while children six years of age and older grieve more for the actual loss.
- If bereaved children indicate in any way that they want help or counseling, get it for them immediately. Most children are hesitant to ask openly for formal counseling, so if this happens, consider it a blatant cry for help.
- Don't expect your child to take care of your fears, i.e. don't keep your child home from school because you are afraid to be separated from him or her. Find help to cope with your fears.
- Review family safety procedures. If your family doesn't have safety procedures for fire, storms, etc., take this time to establish new ones and get everyone involved in the process. Check out the following website to help your family make a safety plan: [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan).

Source: Includes material compiled by Jayne Crisp, CTS, CVAS. Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists.

## **Tips for Praying with Children**

Prayer is a familiar and essential part of the faith formation experience. Group prayer allows children to voice and share their concerns with a supportive community. And practices such as centering prayer are calming techniques that children can use on their own in stressful situations. The following are tips for using prayer sensitively in the religious education classroom or group setting.

### **Welcoming Children's Prayer Requests**

Please allow sufficient time for all children in your group to make prayer requests if they wish. This is not a time to rush, but a time of quiet presence with God and with each other.

- Ask children to sit in a circle (if they are not doing so already), preferably on the floor, where everyone can see each other. This method usually reduces excessive squirming or talking and promotes a reverent tone within the group.
- Adult leaders should sit within the circle on the same level as the children.
- Serenity on the part of the adult leaders is key! If adult leaders are calm and prayerful, children will take their cues from these leaders as examples for their own behavior.
- At least two adults should assist with this prayer circle. If a child becomes squirmy or disruptive, an adult helper – not the leader – should quietly attend to the child. Children who do not want to participate in the prayer time should be able to choose another quiet activity.
- Be aware that you might hear some fairly serious prayer requests, as well as many more typical requests concerning pets and family members. Please acknowledge each request in a respectful manner, taking each child's prayer request seriously. Reply by praying for the person or pet named. For example, you might nod and say, "we pray for Jack's dog Max."
- If you hear of a very serious concern, such as something that affects a child's health, safety or wellbeing, mention it to the appropriate pastoral staff person or youth leader, so that they can follow up. Otherwise, please keep the prayer request confidential. The purpose of this prayer circle is to provide a safe place where children might offer their most heartfelt prayers to God. Also, don't try to "fix" problems at this time. You will best minister to children at this time by simply listening and validating their fears and concerns.
- It is common for children to express doubts or anger towards God in reaction to loss, sorrow, or disaster. Again, your ministry at this time is to simply listen. You might reply by saying, "sometimes we do feel anger at God or wonder where God is. This is common after something bad happens."
- Close with a prayer that includes the children's request. Pray for each child as well.

## Centering Prayer Techniques for Children

Centering Prayer is a silent, meditative prayer form that focuses on placing oneself in the presence of God. The following Centering Prayer techniques may be used with children or teens who experience stress in a post-disaster situation. They can be used both within Christian formation classes and at home or school. The goal of teaching these techniques is to give children tools for prayerfully coping with stress and finding a sense of calm and serenity.

The time for this activity should be about **one minute**. Try only thirty seconds for early elementary-age children or for those who are new to silent prayer. Older children might be able to maintain up to three minutes of prayerful silence.

Please be aware that if a disaster has struck recently, children may express emotions of sadness, grief, or even fear during or after this time. This is common. If possible, ask adults with good pastoral care skills, who know the children and have worked with them previously to attend your group time and be available to assist with any child who might need extra attention.

### Tips for leading children in Centering Prayer:

- Ask children to make a circle on the floor, either by sitting or by forming a circle with chairs. The adult leaders should take positions within this circle as equal co-participants.
- Children should be asked to sit up straight, with shoulders relaxed, and feet on the floor (or crossed in front of them if they are sitting on the floor).
- Ask children to close their eyes OR choose a specific point to focus on. You might light a candle or place a religious-themed picture or photograph or cross in the center of the circle upon which children might focus.
- Tell children this is a time for them to simply be with God. Ask them to listen to God in silence.
- Ask children to take deep breaths, filling up their lower bellies first, then their rib cages, and finally their upper chests. Exhale slowly.
- Ask children to see how long they go without talking or squirming. You might use a chime, bell, or other sound to indicate the time to start and end this time of quiet.
- If a child is squirmy, an adult might sit beside the child or gently place a hand on the child's shoulder to calm the child. If words are necessary, simply whisper, "let's be quiet and calm, just for a few minutes."
- Model calm, serene behavior during this exercise. You will likely find that if you are very calm during this time, children will be calm as well. Let a second adult keep watch for any disruptive behavior and deal with any problems. This second adult might also serve as a timekeeper.

## **Sharing Time after Centering Prayer:**

- When children's quiet time has concluded, ask children to open their eyes. Ask children, "what did you experience?" or even "what did you hear?" Children often have profound spiritual experiences of hearing God in these times of silence. Take their comments seriously! Acknowledge each child's experiences by thanking them for sharing their experiences with you.
- Suggest that when children feel sad, stressed, confused, or overwhelmed, they might try taking a few moments of Quiet Time at home, at school, or while playing.
- As with any small group, please keep these shared thoughts within the group. Don't try to "fix" problems; just listen attentively. If you feel a child needs special attention as a result of thoughts or feelings expressed during this time, please consult your pastoral staff or youth leader.
- End your quiet time together with a prayer for each child, including their prayer concerns. A familiar song or hymn might also be sung.



## **Books for Children and Youth Experiencing Loss or Trauma**

*Blackout* by Anne Rockwell. Grades K-3. In this story, a family works together to weather a power blackout.

*Carolina Hurricane* by Marian Rumsey. Stranded on an island off the Carolina coast, a boy and his dog struggle to survive the fury of a hurricane.

*Earthquake* by Matt Christopher. Grades 4-6. A boy and his horse experience an earthquake.

*Downwind* by Louise Moeri. Grades 4-8. An accident at a nuclear power plant forces a family to face their fears and each other's.

*Euphonia and the Food* by Mary Calhoun. Grades K-3. Euphonia puts her motto, "If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well" to the test as she and her pig ride through a flood, rescuing animals whether they want rescuing or not.

*A Horse Came Running* by Meinder Dejong. Grades 4-6. The story of a boy who was home alone when a tornado came, and the challenges he faced in coping with both the storm and its aftermath.

*Little Toot on the Mississippi* by Hardy Gramatky. Grades Pre K – 3. Little Toot becomes a hero as he rescues animals on the flooded bayou.

*Michael* by Liesel Skorpan. Grades K-3. Michael's concern for a baby rabbit left outside in a thunderstorm helps him overcome his fear of storms.

*Sometimes I'm Afraid* by The Menninger Clinic. Grades Pre K-1. Early childhood fears are identified and normalized in gentle text and pictures.

*Teetoncey and Ben O'Neal* by Theodore Taylor. Grades 5-7. After a shipwreck along the Outer Banks, a young girl works through her fears.

*The Big Rain* by Francoise Seignobose. Grades Pre K-4. A girl has to help move her family's belongings and make sure her grandmother is safe when a flood threatens her town.

*The Big Wave* by Pearl S. Buck. Grades 3-6. A child is the sole survivor after a tidal wave sweeps away his village.

*The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judy Viorst. Grades Pre K-2. Barney the cat dies. In the process of holding his funeral, his owners face their feelings and sadness and loss.

*The Terrible Wave* by Morden Dahlstedt. Grades 5-9. One girl's experience during the Johnstown, Pennsylvania flood.

*Trapped in Slickrock Canyon* by Gloria Skurzynski. Grades 5-9. An exciting and very human story of cousins who are caught on a trail by a flash flood.

Source: *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Region and National Tragedy* edited by Rabbi Stephen B. Roberts, BCJC and Rev. Willard W.C. Ashley Sr., DMIN, DH, 2008. Permission granted by SkyLight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, VT, [www.skylightpaths.com](http://www.skylightpaths.com).

## Additional books for younger children

*The Tree that Survived the Winter*, by Mary Fahy, Paulist Press. 1989. (All ages through adult)

*Take Time to Relax!* by Nancy Carlson, Puffin Books, 1991. ISBN # 0-14-054242-6. Ask for soft cover edition.

*The Knight Who Was Afraid of the Dark* by Barbara Shook Hazen, Dial Books for Young Readers. ISBN: 0-8037-0667-7. Ask for soft cover.

*There's Something in My Attic* by Mercer Mayer, Dial Books for Young Readers. ISBN # 0-8037-0414-3. Ask for soft cover edition.

*There's a Nightmare in My Closet* by Mercer Mayer, Dial Books for Young Readers. ISBN #. 0-8037-8574-7.

*I Hear a Noise* by Diane Goode, Dutton Children's Books (Puffin Unicorn Book), NY. 1988. ISBN # 0-525-44884-5.

*When Someone Very Special Dies* by Marge Heegaard. Woodland Press, 1988, ISBN#0-96-20502-0-2.

*When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death* by Laurie Krasny Brown and Mark Brown, Little Brown and Company, 1996.

*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story for All Ages* by Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D. 1982. SLACK Inc. ISBN# 0-943432-89-8, or Henry Holt and Co. ISBN 0-8050-1064-5.

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