... WHEN THE
FIREFIGHTER YOU
LOVE HAS DIED...

Written and illustrated by
HELEN FITZGERALD

Author of
The Grieving Child,
The Mourning Handbook
and
The Grieving Teen

© 2002 Helen Fitzgerald
Permission granted for non-commercial use.
WHEN THE FIREFIGHTER YOU LOVE HAS DIED.

Written and illustrated by HELEN FITZGERALD

Author of
The Grieving Child,
The Mourning Handbook
and
The Grieving Teen
DRAW A PICTURE OF THE PERSON IN YOUR FAMILY WHO HAS DIED.
DRAW A PICTURE OR WRITE A STORY ABOUT YOUR LIFE BEFORE YOUR LOVED ONE DIED.
MAKE A BILLBOARD ABOUT YOUR LOVED ONE WHO DIED LETTING THE WORLD KNOW HOW SPECIAL HE/SHE WAS.
LIST SIX FEELINGS YOU HAVE HAD SINCE YOUR LOVED ONE DIED. PICK ONE AND DRAW A PICTURE ABOUT IT.

1. ________________________
2. ________________________
3. ________________________
4. ________________________
5. ________________________
6. ________________________
WRITE DOWN ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THAT YOU WERE AFRAID TO ASK.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

Why did he have to die? Did he hurt me? Who will help me with scouts? Can I still visit the firehouse?
WORD FIND

Find the words on the left in the puzzle and circle them. If this puzzle is too easy for you, go to the next page and do that one.

If there are some words you don’t know the meaning of, write them in the space below and find an adult who can give you an explanation.

FIREFIGHTER
F I R E U V W X Q W
FIRE
I U V X S Z F W U V
DIED
R X Z W C U U M A D
FUNERAL
E U D V A X N Z W U
CRYING
F W Z I R X E U X Z
SCARED
I W U V E X R Z W Q
MAD
G U V X D D A Z W X
LOVING
H Q V X Z Q L W U V
T X L O V I N G Z W
E Q W Z X V Q W X Z
R X C R Y I N G X Q

Write your words here:
WORD FIND

C A S K E T W R F G R A X I
A M E Q S E T U U H R W L H
N B A B L A C K N I S I N G
D U B W D R D V E J V X E K
L L C P C S O R R O W Y J F
E A F R B E S R A B B I C T
L N D I A F R F L O W E R S
I C E E R S C A R E D Z E H
M E F S H E R O G F U A M G
O G H T Z G F W H I T M A D
U H O R B H Q I U R N B T H
S I P S U I F S G E S C I O
I H E A R S E M S H R E O S
N E F T I J A O F O T L N P
E A U U A K S K E U Q E C I
J V L T L L T E D S P C R T
K E V T Y C P D I E D T A A
L N M O U R N I N G E R S L
M S T O R Y O X C K A I H Y
N M I S S I N G B L T C F R
O P Q Q X N N Y A M H A E R
A N G E L G O D Z N O L D O
A S H E S M M E M O R I E S
WHAT IS MOST SCARY FOR YOU NOW?
WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY, HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO DO INSTEAD OF HURTING OTHERS:

1. Rip up an old magazine and throw it about. Then play “basketball” as you clean up.
2. Pound a pillow or mattress.
3. Run around the outside of your house 4 times.
4. Go into your closet, close the door and yell as loud as you can.
5. Get out a tape recorder and yell your anger to it.
6. Do a “mad” dance.
7. Draw a “mad” picture and share it with an adult.
8. Make a “mad” face in the mirror.
9. Count to 10, slowly and loudly.
10. Talk to someone about your mad feelings.
11. Write the things you are mad about on a balloon and break the balloon creatively.
12. Throw a nerf ball against the wall.
13. Do something funny.
15. Cuddle up with a soft blanket or favorite toy.
16. Clean your room.
WRITE A LETTER TO THE PERSON WHO DIED AND TELL HIM/HER ANYTHING THAT IS ON YOUR MIND.
WRITE A STORY ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE.

You may use the words below to help you get started. Cut them out and put them in a pile in front of you. Pick a word and if it gives you a thought, write it down. If the word you selected doesn’t give you a thought, put it back and select another one. Leave room at the top of your page for a title for your story. Write your story on the next page and draw a picture to go with it.

DIED FUNERAL CASKET COFFIN BURIAL
GRAVE CRYING SAD SCARED HAPPY
FLOWERS GOD HEAVEN FIREFIGHTER
BRAVE HERO REST-IN-PEACE ANGEL SUN
BUTTERFLY PIZZA LIGHT WISH RABBI
PRIEST HEART-ATTACK TERRORIST GUN
HELP DREAMS GOOD-BYE DEVASTATED
PASTOR EULOGY ACCIDENT FIRE-TRUCK
FIRE-STATION FOOD CEMETERY BURNED
TOMBSTONE LIFE FUTURE PROUD
CREMATION MEMORIAL-SERVICE
MY STORY
(The title goes on the first line-draw a picture that can go at the bottom of the page)
WHAT WAS HARD ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL?

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________________________

6. ____________________________________________________________

It's so sad when somebody dies.

I want to help you feel better. Here's a balloon for you.
WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER WHEN YOU FEEL SAD OR SCARED?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE WILL BE LIKE?

5 years from now

10 years from now

15 years from now
WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER KIDS?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE WILL BE LIKE?

The road through life from now

5 years from now

10 years from now

15 years from now
SOME GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS
TO HELP THEIR CHILD THROUGH GRIEF
Prepared by Helen Fitzgerald, CDE
Author of *The Grieving Child* and *The Grieving Teen*

Note to all parents or caregivers: The best thing you can do for your grieving children is to offer loving support. Hugs and touch are so healing. Listen to the child in your care and really hear what they are saying. And create times for your children to feel safe to talk about whatever might be on their minds. The following will also be of help:

As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.

Give your child the facts in a simple manner - be careful not to go into too much detail. Your child will ask more questions as they come up in his/her mind.

If you can't answer their questions, it's OK to say, "I don't know how to answer that, but perhaps we can find someone to help us."

Use the correct language - say the word "dead" etc. Do not use phrases such as: "He's sleeping", or "God took her", or "He went away", etc.

Ask your child questions to better understand what they may be thinking or feeling. "What are you feeling?" "What have you heard from your friends?" "What do you think happened?" Etc.

Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give them permission to cry to. We are their role models and it's appropriate for children to see our sadness and to share our feelings with them.

Use the given name of the deceased when speaking of him or her.

Understand the age and level of comprehension of your child. Speak to that level.

Talk about feelings, such as: sad, angry, feeling responsible, scared, tearful, depressed, worried, etc. Discuss ways to express those feelings.

Read a book on childhood grief so you have a better understanding of what your child may be experiencing.

Read a book on death to your child. Take time to discuss what you have read and relate it to what is happening to you.
Before taking your child to the funeral, talk about the rituals of the viewing and funeral. Explain what happens at these events and find out if your child wants to attend.

Think about ways your child can say "good-by" to the person who has died.
Talk to your child about God, if appropriate, and what happens to people after they die. It is a time to teach your child the religious beliefs you want to instill in him or her.

Invite your child to come back to you if he or she has more questions or has heard rumors that you will help get the correct information.

Talk about memories, good ones and ones not so good.

Watch out for "bad dreams". Are they occurring often? Talk about the dreams or even draw a picture of them.

Watch for behavioral changes in your child both at home or at school.

Friends, family, schoolmates, etc, frequently find solace and comfort in doing something in the name of the person who died – particular rituals or a memorial.

You might see some of the following emotions:

- Tearfulness
- Irritability
- Cling to you
- Whiney moods
- Somatic Complaints
- Unable to concentrate
- Grades may dip temporarily
- More pronounced fears; i.e., of dying themselves, or your dying, of the dark
- Regression in behavior
- Aggressive behavior

These are normal emotions, however, if you ever feel they are more extreme or lasting longer than you think they should, never hesitate to consult a professional.

This booklet is dedicated to all children who have had a loved one die while fighting a fire. Especially those firemen who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 while trying to save others.