



**Self Guided
Spring Grief Booklet**

A Moment of Mindfulness

Have you noticed the air is warmer, the days seem longer, birds are returning, the plants are turning green and the snow has gone away? These are all signs that spring is here! Spring is a time for optimism and looking forward to what may be ahead. It is also a time for planning, nurturing and growth.

Let's take a few moments to reflect on where we've been and what goals we have for the future. To start this exercise, create a quiet, comfy space within your room or home where you can calm down, connect and express your feelings through writing or drawing. You can even set up a space outside if the weather is nice. A rolled up beach towel works great for a quick, on-the-go seat! Don't forget to bring a pencil!

Once you find the perfect spot where you feel comfortable, safe and can concentrate, take a moment to look around... notice what you see, can smell, touch, taste and hear? Place one hand on your heart and the other on your stomach and feel the air enter and exit your body as you breathe. Doing this when we're worried can help us to feel calm.

Consider each of these thoughts:

What are you looking forward to this year?

What goals do you have?

Is there something new you'd like to learn or try?

What is one thing you want to forgive yourself for?

What is one bad habit you would like to get rid of?

How has your loved one who passed away help shape you into the beautiful person you are?

Did any of these thoughts reach out to you or make you feel different? Choose one or two that you'd like to write or draw about. Using the lines below, write what comes to mind. On the back of this paper, draw a picture about it.

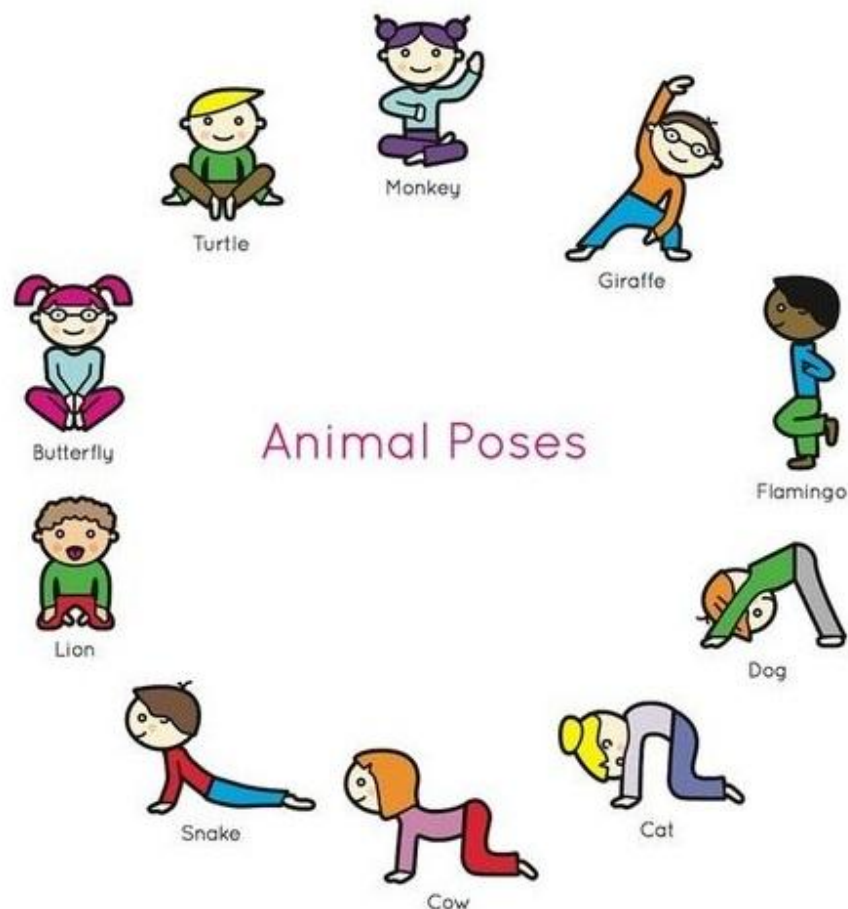
A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for drawing or writing.

Activity: Shifting our internal feelings to the outside

Journaling can be a helpful way to take the feelings we experience in our minds and relocate them onto paper. When we place those heavy thoughts somewhere else, it gives our minds a break and a chance to rest.

Sometimes we may also experience big thoughts and emotions in our bodies. This may feel like a headache or stomach ache, we may feel anxious, sad or numb, and we may even become sweaty, really tired or cry.

All of these feelings and body responses are a normal part of grief. It's not easy when someone we care about dies. Just like journaling gives our minds a chance to rest by relocating feelings onto paper, exercising can help relocate physical feelings. Going for a walk, playing a sport, jumping rope, swimming, hiking or doing yoga are all examples of exercise that can help move the heavy feelings of grief outside of our bodies. Here are a few fun yoga stretches you can try to do when your body begins feeling heavy.



Craft: Clay Nature Nests

Materials Needed (Choose one recipe):

DIY Playdough Recipe	DIY Clay Recipe
2 cups cornstarch 1 cup inexpensive hair conditioner Food coloring (optional)	4 cups of flour 1 1/2 cups of salt 1 1/2 cups of water

Instructions:

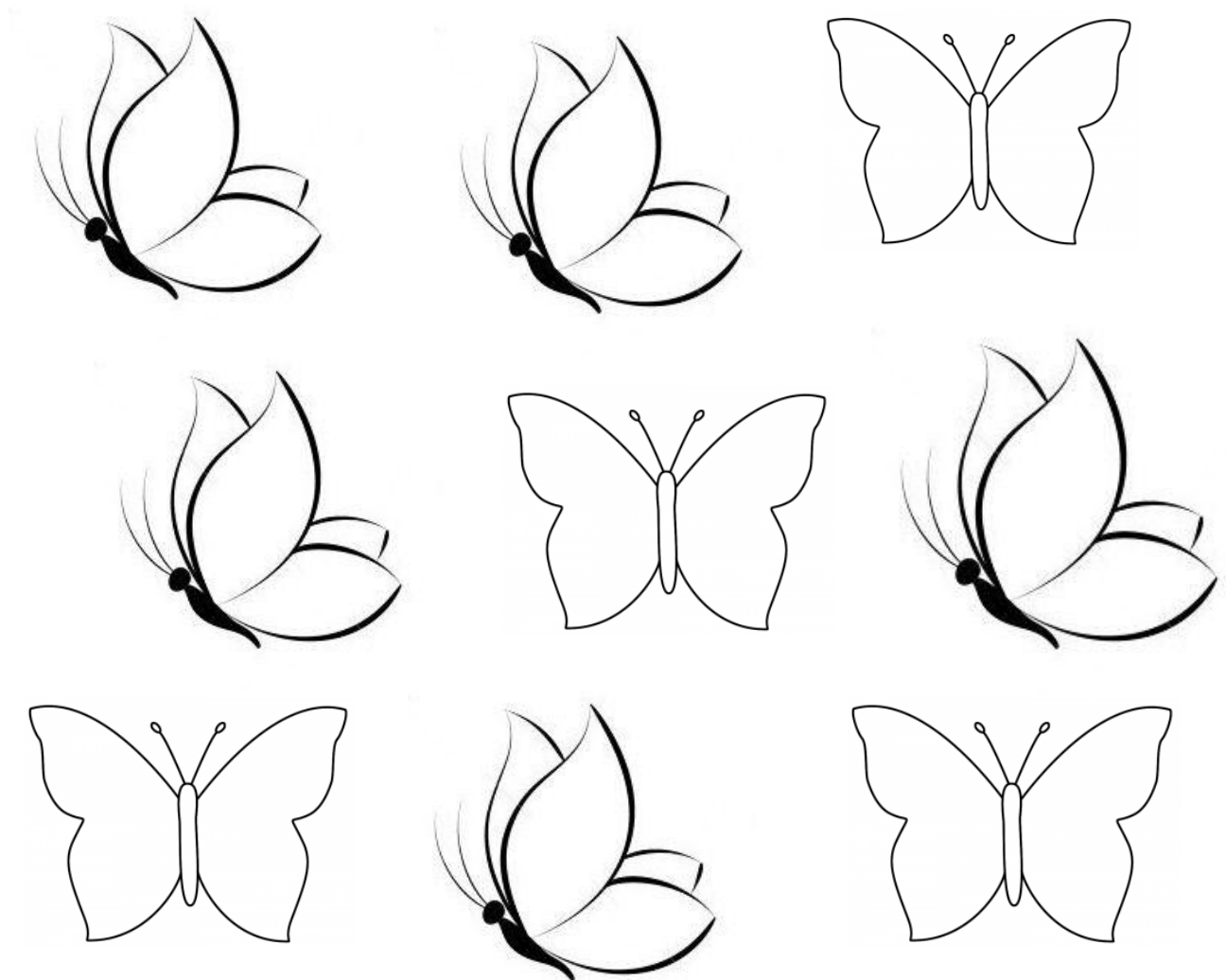
1. Choose one of the recipes above.
2. Mix the ingredients together in a bowl, using your hands to blend until smooth.
3. Take a handful of clay or playdough and flatten it between your hands, so it looks like a pancake.
4. Then cup your hand and use the other hand to mold the clay into the shape of a bird's nest.
5. Take your nest outside and find items in nature that appeal to you- perhaps the item is a certain color you like, it may have an interesting texture, or maybe it has a special smell you enjoy.
6. Gently press these small items into your nest.
7. Once your nest is full of special items, set it in a safe place and allow it to dry.
8. This nest can serve as a safe keepsake to hold special items, hopes and dreams in.



Butterfly Feelings

Take a few quiet moments to think about your loved one who passed away. As you recall different memories or thoughts that arise, notice what types of feelings you experience. Do you smile and laugh at silly memories? Do you feel hurt and guilty when you remember arguments you had? It's ok to feel this way. It is very common to have feelings of regret and sadness or be upset that your loved one died. It is also very common to find joy and happiness when you think about your loved one and how close you once were.

In each of the butterflies, write a feeling or emotion you experience when thinking about your loved one. Then carefully cut out each butterfly. On the next page, glue, tape or place each of the butterflies inside or outside of the jar. If the feeling is something you want to hold onto, place the butterfly inside the jar. If it is a feeling you're willing to let go of and release, place the butterfly outside of the jar.





Family Activity: Building a Sunflower House “A Time for Growth”

Materials Needed:

One or two packets of sunflower seeds that will grow at least 6 feet tall

An open space that gets a lot of sun!

Instructions:

1. Decide and mark off where you want the sunflower house to be: Your house can be any size or shape, but should be at least 8 feet across. Use sticks to mark the perimeter which makes up the “walls” of the house.
2. With a small shovel, make a trench along the marked perimeter. Clear the weeds and grass in a 6 to 12 inch wide area along this perimeter to form a planting bed. Dig down or till about a foot deep to loosen the soil. Leave an un-dug portion on the perimeter wide enough to walk through; this will be a doorway.
3. Note: If you do not have the space to build a full house, you can easily plant seeds in a homemade container, old shoe, tin can or coffee mug.
4. Plant the sunflower seeds 6 inches apart and 1 inch deep. For thick walls, plant two rows of seeds.
5. Water your seeds every day and keep the soil moist, especially when the seedlings are small. The seeds should start to sprout in about a week. Sunflowers usually reach their full height in about 10 weeks.



Pay close attention to the care that goes into growing your flowers. You must learn to nurture them, water them, and protect them from weeds; very similarly to how our family members, neighbors, teachers and friends take care of each of us. Share your time and love with these flowers. If you end up with a full grown sunflower house, they make great spots for journaling, meditating, resting or hiding out!

Craft: Natural Bird Feeder

Materials Needed:

Peanut Butter, bird seed, a pine cone or empty toilet paper roll and string

Instructions:

1. To make a natural bird feeder, first cover your pine cone or paper roll with peanut butter. You will want to make it thick enough for bird seed to stick inside of it.
2. Roll the cover pine cone or paper roll in bird seed until fully covered.
3. Tie a string around the feeder.
4. Find a place to hang your bird feeder where you can watch it from your bedroom or a room you like to spend time in.
5. Using the string, hang the bird feeder and then go back inside, get ready and watch for birds!



Bird watching can be a peaceful activity that helps our bodies and minds feel more relaxed. It is fun feeding animals and knowing that you've done something nice for something else. It may take a day or two before birds find your feeder. As they begin visiting your feeder, be mindful of how this experience makes you feel. Then write about it here:



Breathing Exercise:

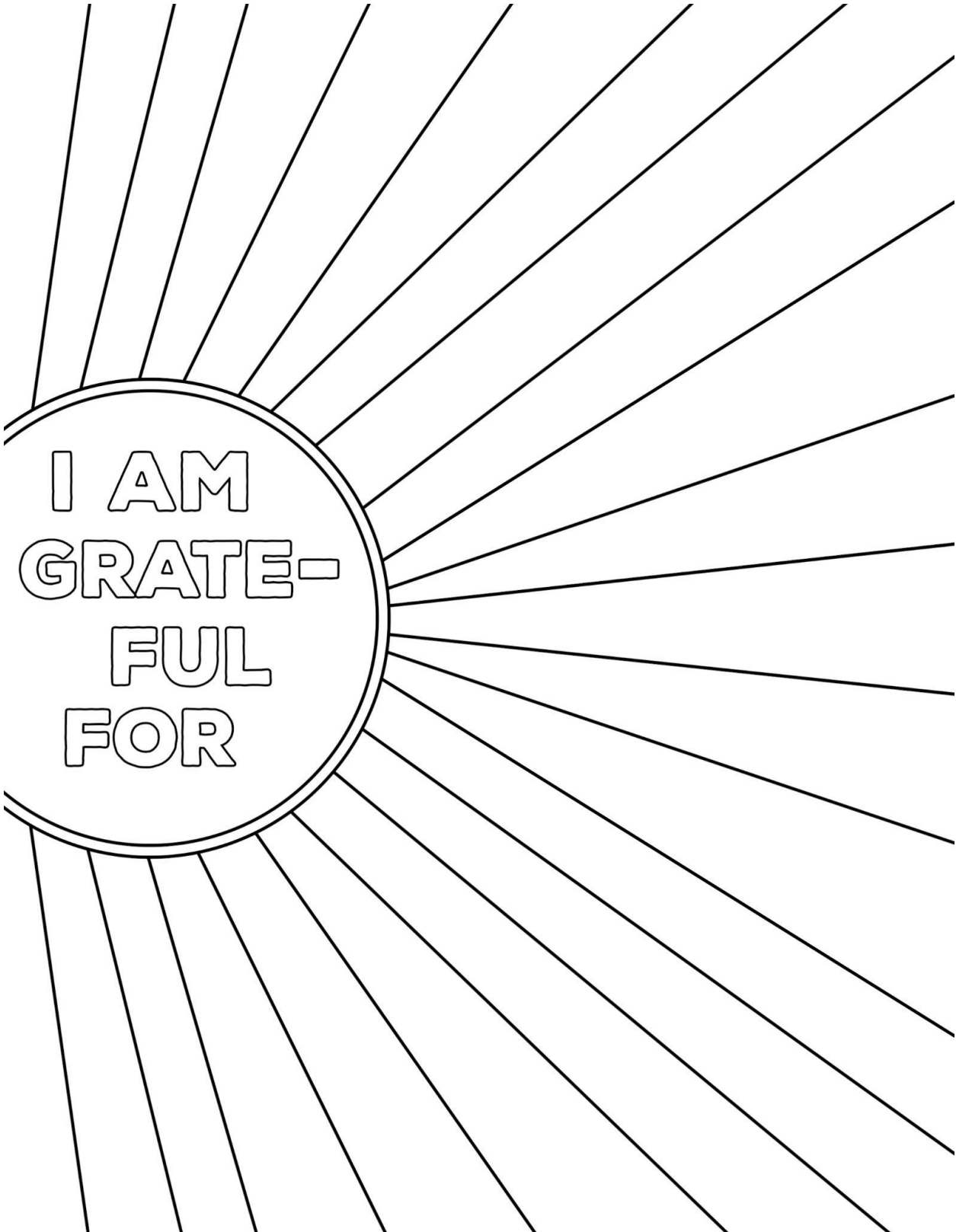
If you're feeling scared, angry, upset, worried or stressed, following this mountain breathing exercise may help you feel more safe and calm.



While sitting or standing in a comfortable, safe place...

- Inhale through your nose and raise your arms high above your head.
- Bring your palms together above the top of your head.
- Imagine you are as tall as a mountain!
- Ground your feet into the floor. Imagine your feet are like roots and you are strong, sturdy and tall.
- Exhale through your mouth and bring your palms together in front of your chest.
- Repeat this sequence 5 times.

Journal: Gratitude



I AM
GRATE-
FUL
FOR

Journal: When I Feel Confident

Sometimes my grief is very challenging and makes me feel _____
and _____. I think what helps me to feel strong and
confident again is _____.

I know I am very good at many things. One of my talents that make me feel proud is
_____. I know I am good at
this because _____.

Some people who know I am good at this are _____
_____. Sharing my talents
with others makes me feel _____.

I am unique and special and perfectly me. When my loved one died, I felt _____
_____. Today, I feel _____.

There are other people who have also experienced the death of a loved one similar to
me. I wish I could tell them _____
_____. I would like if someone else could tell me _____
_____.

because that would make me feel _____. I
know when I am feeling confident, I am better able to help myself and help others.
Being around these people makes me feel safe, special and loved: _____
_____.

_____. I know I am unique and special and
perfectly me. One thing I want to tell myself is: _____
_____.

Activity: Homemade Bubbles and Bubble Breathing

Materials Needed:

Bubble Solution	Nature Bubble Wand
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 4 cups warm water● ½ cup sugar or 1/2 cup corn syrup● 1 cup dish soap● A shallow, flat bowl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A stick about 1 foot long and 1 centimeter wide● A pipe cleaner, shoe string or small vine that can be twisted into a loop

Instructions:

1. In a bowl, mix the corn syrup or sugar with warm water. If using sugar, whisk the mixture until the sugar dissolves.
2. Add the dish soap and whisk to combine.
3. Create a bubble wand by creating a small loop (approximately two inches wide) with the pipe cleaner or vine and then wrapping it on the end of the stick. If using a string, create a small loop and tie it to the end of the stick.
4. Dip the loop into the bubbles and blow! If using a string, you may need to hold the wand with one hand and pull the sting loop open with the other hand.
5. Challenge yourself on blowing different sizes of bubbles; small and big.
6. As you take a breath, imagine the air flowing down into your lungs and stomach.

Then imagine the hair flowing back through your body and into the bubble. Notice how taking a deep breath will produce a larger bubble.

7. Taking deep breaths and paying attention to our breathing can help us to feel calm and confident.



Letter To Myself:

Dear Me,

After the death of _____, my world changed in many ways. I have been trying very hard to find ways to deal with my many emotions. I am trying to heal.

Some things that help are: _____

These things help me to remember my loved one: _____

I know I can talk to these people when I'm having a hard day: _____

I know I will always miss my loved one. They always treated me this way: _____

We used to love doing this together: _____

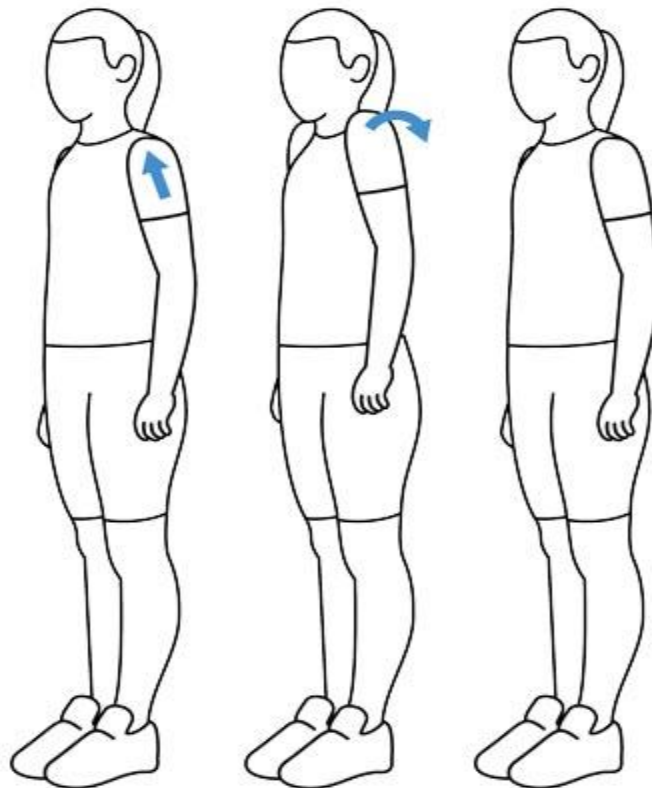
This summer I hope to do these things to honor my loved one: _____

Breathing Exercise:

If you're feeling scared, angry, upset, worried or stressed, following this shoulder roll breathing exercise may help you feel more safe and calm.

While standing up or sitting down...

- Take a deep breath in through your nose and relax your entire body.
- Now roll your shoulders up to your ears as you inhale deeply for a count of 3.
- Breathe out through your mouth and roll your shoulders down and back (as far away from your ears as you can get) as you exhale for a count of 4.
- Repeat slowly in a continuous movement of shoulder rolls, while breathing in and out.



Hello camper,

I hope you enjoyed this spring booklet. Over the past few weeks, you've probably noticed the weather is warmer, the environment is more colorful, there are more sounds and smells in the air and we feel very differently as well. As the seasons change from winter snow to spring flowers, we may experience changes, too. Depending on which season is your favorite, Spring may make you feel excited and optimistic, or you may feel anxious and frustrated. When someone we love dies, we experience a wide range of emotions as well. Sometimes we feel sad or upset and other times we feel silly and energetic. If this happens to you, it is completely normal. Grief is just strange like that. Please know that YOU are perfect just as you are and you're not alone! At Camp HOPE, your grief is understood and respected. You are a very important part of our camp and we're happy you joined our Camp family! If you made any of the crafts listed in this booklet and would like to share them on our website, please email pictures or write to us at camphope89@gmail.com We look forward to hearing from you.

Have a safe, healthy and happy spring!

Vicky Wittman
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www.camphopeforkids.org

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