

The Missing Piece Classroom Guide

Clear language around death, optional participation and respect for different ways of grieving.

AGE AND READINESS

Suggested for ages 5–9. Consider readiness, recent bereavement and the support available around the group.

The boundary

This guide supports conversation. It is not therapy, assessment or a replacement for the DSL, SENCO, pastoral team, healthcare services or an individual support plan.

Four principles

- Participation and answering stay optional.
- Use story characters before personal examples.
- Allow passing, drawing, moving or listening quietly.
- Follow safeguarding procedures if a concern is shared.

Before you read

Preparation protects choice and makes follow-up possible.

1

Read the book and consult bereavement and safeguarding procedures.

2

Consider recent deaths and known family circumstances without naming a child to the group.

3

Use clear words such as 'died' and 'death'; avoid describing death as sleep.

4

Arrange a quiet alternative and known adult for children who step out.

What the session may support

Cautious intentions, not guaranteed outcomes or formal curriculum claims.

- Recognise that grief can include many feelings with no fixed sequence.
- Explore remembrance without requiring personal disclosure.
- Notice helpful forms of quiet, company and predictable choice.
- Respect different cultural, faith, family and individual approaches to death and memory.

Optional read-aloud prompts

Ask one or none. Do not turn the story into an interrogation.

1

What changed for Fuzz after Grandpa died?

2

How did Miss Oakwood offer help without making Fuzz speak?

3

What did Bertie do when words were not needed?

4

Why might the empty puzzle space still belong in the picture?

5

What are some ways story characters could remember somebody?

Optional activities

Use fictional examples and make participation genuinely optional.

1. Memory stars

Use memories belonging to a fictional character, community figure or a child's own choice. Blank stars are allowed.

2. A choice of remembrance

Offer drawing, a word, an object, music, silence or no activity.

3. Quiet-corner review

Ask what makes a pause space supportive rather than like exclusion.

4. Stories we carry

Adults may model a brief, bounded memory without inviting comparison.

Follow-up and safeguarding

Keep the route around the child after the book closes.

- Check in privately and without leading questions.
- Coordinate with family, pastoral staff or the DSL where appropriate.
- Keep routines predictable while allowing flexibility.
- Use existing bereavement or healthcare routes when specialist support is needed.

Safeguarding note

Never ask a child to describe a death to the group. If a child discloses harm, fear or a safeguarding concern, follow the setting's procedure.