



HELPING CHILDREN CREATE THEIR OWN WAYS TO REMEMBER

*Giving Children Choice and Creativity in
Memorializing Someone They Love*

Children often benefit from having ways to remember someone who died, especially when those activities reflect their own interests and relationship. Remembrance does not need to be elaborate. A drawing, playlist, recipe, photograph, story, garden stone, memory box, or private ritual can help a child express connection in a way that feels personal.

REMEMBRANCE WORKS BEST WHEN IT IS CHOSEN

Adults may have meaningful ideas, but a child's preferred way of remembering may be different. Offer several possibilities and allow the child to accept, change, postpone, or decline them. The activity should support the child rather than become another expectation.

WHAT YOU MAY NOTICE

- Wanting to save ordinary objects that adults might not consider important.
- Creating art, stories, music, videos, collections, or rituals connected to the person.
- Changing their mind about what they want to keep or how they want to remember.

GENTLE REMINDER

The value of a remembrance is not measured by how beautiful, public, or permanent it is. A small private ritual can carry enormous meaning.

OFFER IDEAS WITHOUT TURNING THEM INTO ASSIGNMENTS

Ask, "Would any of these feel good to you?" rather than, "We are going to make a memory book." A child may prefer an activity that does not look like traditional grief work, such as cooking, building something, playing a sport, or visiting a favorite place.

WORDS THAT CAN HELP

Try: "There is no right project to make." "You can keep this private if you want." "We can stop and come back another day." "What is something about her that you never want to forget?"

MEMORY BOXES AND KEEPSAKES

A box can hold photographs, letters, ticket stubs, clothing, recipes, drawings, small objects, or written memories. Let the child decide what belongs inside. Avoid discarding meaningful belongings too quickly when the child may want them later.





CREATIVE AND ACTIVE REMEMBRANCE

Children may plant flowers, make a bracelet, create a playlist, decorate a stone, write a letter, record a story, make a photo book, bake a favorite food, participate in a charity event, or continue an activity the person enjoyed.

REMEMBRANCE CAN ALSO BE PRIVATE

- Not every child wants a public memorial or family ceremony. Quietly keeping an object, thinking about the person at bedtime, using a private phrase, or visiting a special place can be equally meaningful.
- REMEMBERING DEVELOPMENT MATTERS
- A remembrance created at age six may not fit at age sixteen. Let children revise, replace, add to, or set aside memorial activities as they grow. Their relationship with the memory is allowed to change.

A THOUGHT TO CARRY WITH YOU

Give children materials, possibilities, and permission - then let their relationship with the person guide the way they remember.

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

If this child could choose any way to remember without worrying about what adults expect, what might they choose? What materials, time, or permission would help?

WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY HELP

If remembrance activities consistently trigger overwhelming distress or become rigid rituals that significantly interfere with daily functioning, consider additional support from an appropriate professional.

A GENTLE CLOSING

The most meaningful remembrance is often the one that belongs to the child. Choice allows memory to become a source of connection rather than another task grief requires them to complete.

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