



Talking points and Questions to Help the Conversation

In this section you will find questions that we have created (from the different sections of *Sammy Found a Treasure*), that can be used as starting points to discuss the themes of death, grief and bereavement with a child. Before approaching this, it would be helpful to be familiar with the information we have included in the “Bereavement” section of the website on how to approach the concept of death with a child, and with “The Story” section of this website, to learn more about the underlying ideas which we wanted to convey in the book.

The First Readings

- A good starting point is to check what the child knows about death. You can ask them to explain what happened to the character’s mum, to tell you what their thoughts are about this, how they feel about it, and what concerns they may have. The most important thing about a first reading is to listen to what the child says, their questions, their fears, and anything that arises from reading the story.
- This will give an idea of the knowledge that they have, their doubts, concerns and worries. By listening and being attentive to where the child is, we can also better capture the emotions that arise as we read the story with them. We will know more clearly what they still need to learn and assimilate on an emotional level.
- We can let **the children be our guides** because they will show us the base at which they start and what their needs are. This will be more helpful than following an agenda imposed by us. Otherwise, we run the risk of bringing our own ideas to the conversation.
- It is not necessary to cover all of the questions we have included below, but whichever ones the children may need. They mightn’t be ready to talk about certain things yet. They can show us where they want to begin and the speed they are ready to go at.
- These talking points **ARE NOT for use on a first reading** of the story, rather to use little by little, and after several readings.

Quantity or Quality?

- It is not necessary to exhaust all conversations in one sitting. Children assimilate things little by little and they will ask questions many times. It is good to talk about the topics and address different questions and topics that arise at different times.
- Our recommendation is to read the story with the children many times and at different moments. In each reading, different topics and new concerns may arise depending on the age of each child and their internal processes.

- This is NOT a reading guide. We have incorporated many questions, but you don't need to use them all. Perhaps just one or two may suffice. You can chat about a particular aspect that the child is finding difficult or that may do them good, or just see where the conversation leads.

Adapt the conversation to the age and reality of the child

- The child's age will influence the type of questions that we will ask and the topics to be discussed. It is also important to adapt the questions / conversation to the age and the specific circumstance of each child.
- Remember to be honest and empathic at all times. After all, the child is grieving even if they don't always show it. They have lost someone they love and nothing will replace that person.

Initial questions

It may be good to start the conversation in a general way to sense what they think about all of this and grasp where they are at, as well as what are their main concerns at that moment. For example:

- Did you like the story? Why?
- How do you feel after reading it?
- What are the parts of the story that you liked the most? Why?
- Was there something you didn't like? Why?



Talking Points Page by Page

Pages 4-5

- What is the treasure that Sammy found?
- Why does Sammy see this present as a treasure?
- Sammy says that maybe his story might help other people find their own treasure. Do you think this is true? What is your treasure? Whose name is written in your heart?
- How do you think Sammy's mum wrote her name in his heart? (With a hug, with a kiss, with her hand, all at once or little by little over a long time?)
- Sammy toys are present in almost every page of the book; they are with him all the time. Do you have a toy or an object that keeps you company or that you look for when you are sad?

Pages 6-7

- How do you think Sammy's aunties realised that he was feeling sad? (Was he crying? Was he not playing as usual? Was he finding it difficult to visit other people's houses or to return to his own house?)
- How do you know when someone is sad?
- Why was Sammy sad?
- Is it wrong to be sad or is it normal to sometimes feel low?
- What do you do when you are sad? What things help you to feel better?
- What other feelings do you think Sammy must have experienced?
- Why do you think Sammy's mum would have liked to go back in time or freeze it?
- What moments would you like to return to or what situations would you like to be able to freeze? Is there a special moment?
- What are your favourite memories of _____?



Pages 8-9

- Why do you think Sammy's mother gave him this present and not any other, a toy for example? What is special about this present?
- Is it a good present?
- Is it possible to give such a present?
- Do you have a name written in your heart?



Pages 10-11

- Do you think that Sammy might have been worried that his seal of love could fade away or disappear?
- Is there a way that it could be erased?

Pages 12-13

- What is Sammy's seal made of?
- What would happen if it was made of pencil or playdough, clay or some other material?

Pages 14-15

- Why does Sammy sometimes still get angry and sad?
- And yourself, have you ever been angry since _____ died?
- Do you get sad sometimes? Is there a particular place or time where this usually happens?
- What else does Sammy discover the day that he discovered this present?
- What would the seal of love look like in your own heart? Would you like to imagine/draw it?

Pages 16-17

- Does Sammy like to have that name written in his heart or do you think he would rather not have it?
- Do you think it would hurt to have it?
- How does Sammy feel when he is alone or when he is with many people? And you?

Pages 18-19

- In what moments of your life do you miss _____ the most?
- Will Sammy be able to face the journey ahead? Will it be easy/difficult?
- Who will accompany Sammy on this journey? And you?



Pages 20-21

- What does Sammy do to remember his mother?
- What do you like to do to remember _____?
- Do you like people to show you photos of _____ and tell you about them, or would you rather they didn't?
- Who talks to you the most about _____? Why?
- What things would you like to be told more about _____ or would you like to ask about?

Pages 22-23

- When someone dies, there is an empty space left inside of us. What do you think this means?
- When Sammy remembers his mum, he feels as if the seal of love fills him inside. What does this mean? Does it restore him and give him warmth?
- Having his mother's name written in his heart gives him strength. How does it help you?

Pages 24-25

- How does Sammy feel when he sees the mothers/ families of his friends? What can he do in those moments?
- Does Sammy's present seem valuable to you? Why?



Pages 26-27

- Why did Sammy's mother leave her name written in other people's hearts as well? In whose heart do you think she also left this mark?
- Why is Sammy happy when he discovers this? Would you be happy to discover this? Why?
- In your case, in whose heart do you think _____ also wrote their name?

Pages 28-29

- How does Sammy know that this mark of love is inside of him if he cannot see it or touch it? How do we know that we were loved by someone? What were the things that they did or that they said that help you to know that?

Pages 30-31

- What has changed in Sammy's life now that he knows about the present that his mother gave him? Do you think that it makes any difference in his everyday life?
- Do you think that knowing this can help his heart to heal?
- Why do you think Sammy wants to share his discovery with other children?
- From your experience, is there anything you would like to tell Sammy that helped you to cope after losing _____?
- Is there something that did not help you and you would like to tell Sammy about, so that he doesn't make the same mistake or waste his time?

Related Activities

We invite you to visit our "Activities and Resources" section, where you can access resources to discuss different themes related to death and help those who are going through a bereavement process.

