

My Catholic Guide Through Grief



Illustrated by
Mary Joseph Peterson,
FSP



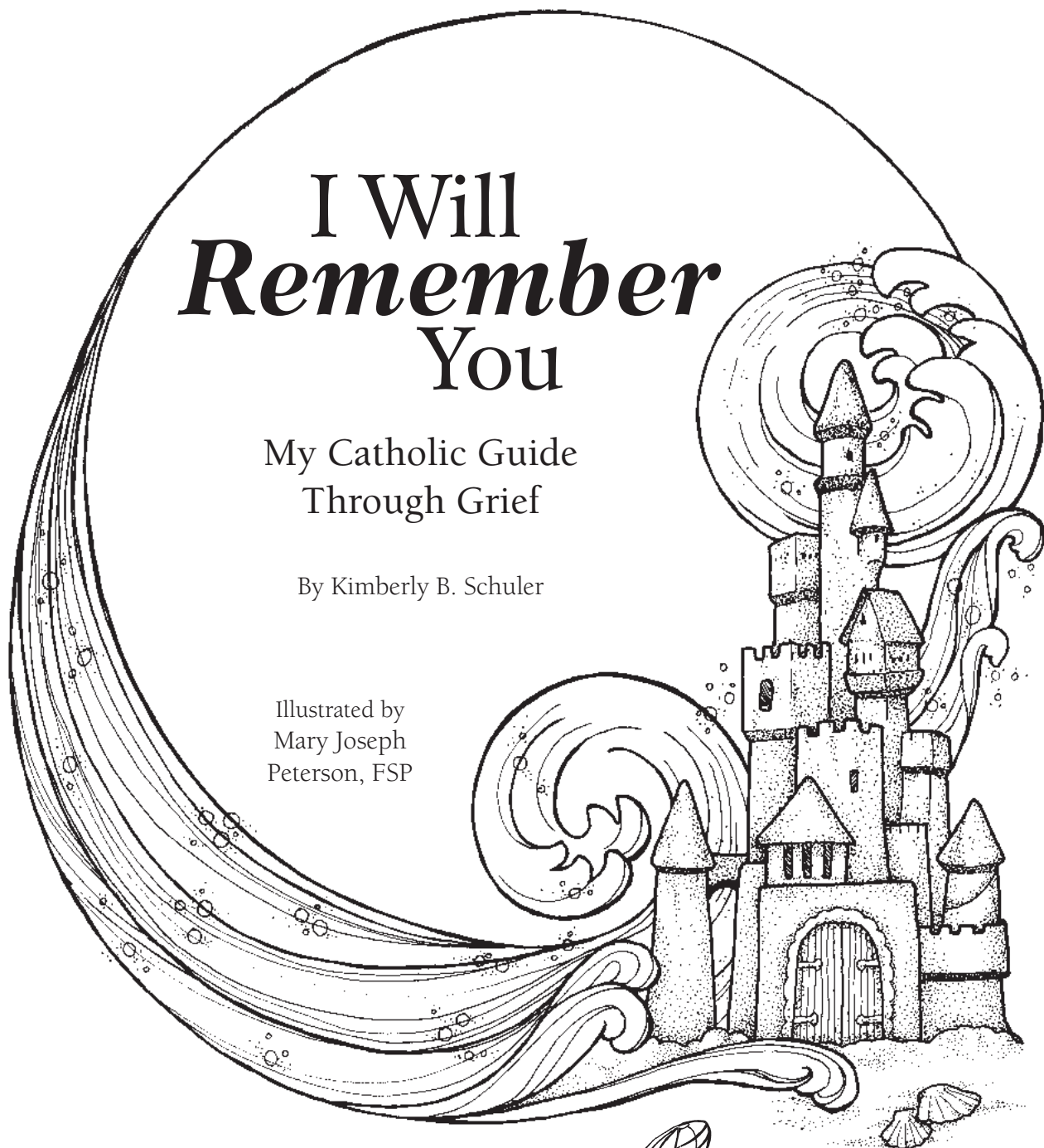
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I Will *Remember* You

My Catholic Guide
Through Grief

By Kimberly B. Schuler

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For My Parent or Guardian to Read

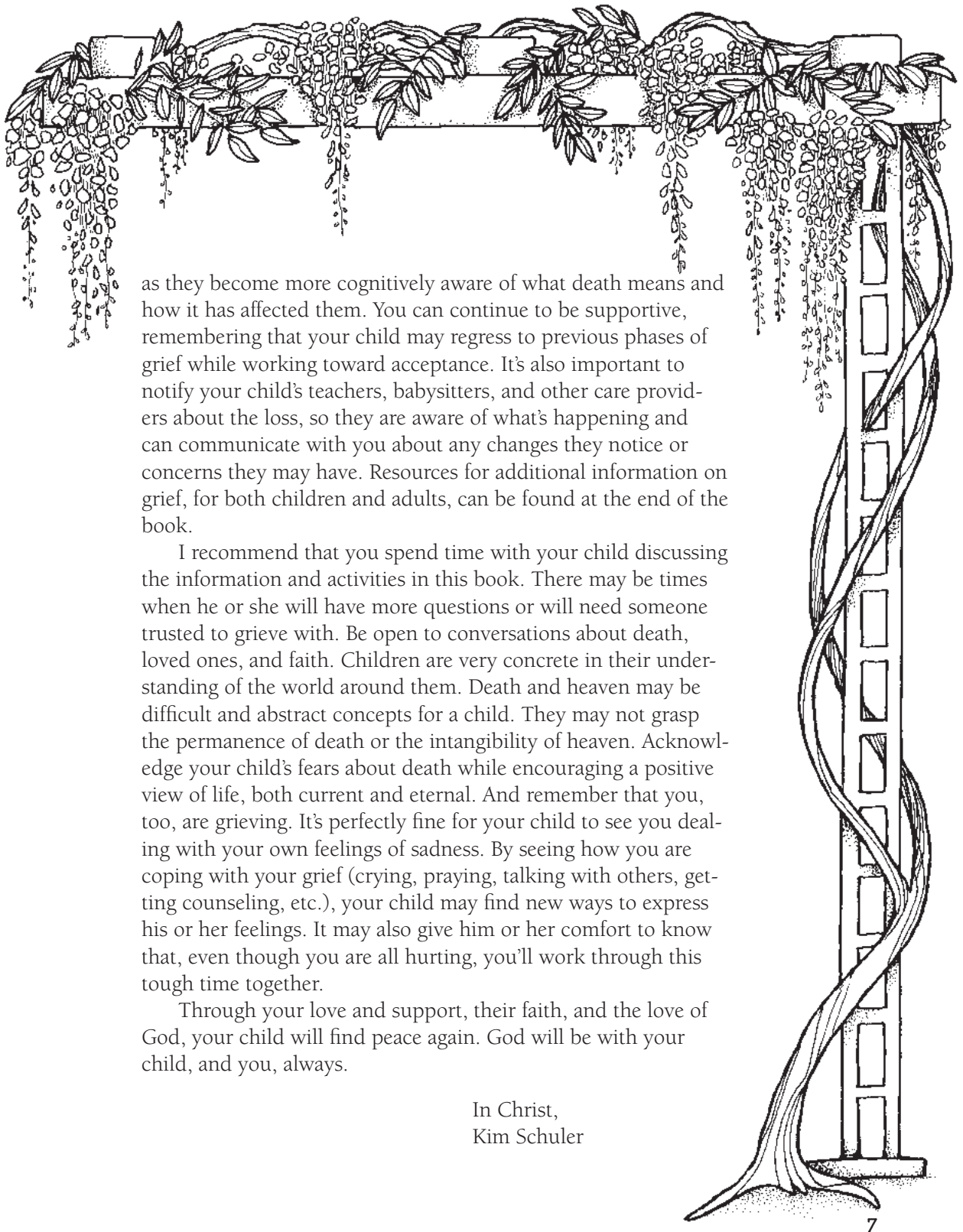
Dear Parent or Guardian,

Someone your child loves has died.

It may have been a parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, unborn child, or friend. It's a very sad time for adults and children alike. Sometimes it's too easy to forget the impact that death and grief can have on a child. It can be an overwhelming, confusing, and scary time. Their world has drastically changed, and they are struggling to make sense of all that has happened. They are in need of adult guidance and support to navigate this path.

This book, intended for children of elementary school age, can assist your child through the grieving process while helping them to honor the memory of their loved one. In child-friendly terms, *I Will Remember You* addresses death, grief, and how God and our Catholic faith can help your child through this sad time. It includes activities to allow your child to better understand grief and to remember his or her loved one in their own special way. There's also a "Special Days" section at the end of the book that focuses on holidays and special occasions, including the six-month and one-year anniversaries.

Grief is a unique and deeply personal experience; it has no timeline. Each child will progress through this difficult experience in her or his own way and own time. Developmental ages and stages also play a role in each child's movement through grief. Sometimes children revisit a loss months or even years later



as they become more cognitively aware of what death means and how it has affected them. You can continue to be supportive, remembering that your child may regress to previous phases of grief while working toward acceptance. It's also important to notify your child's teachers, babysitters, and other care providers about the loss, so they are aware of what's happening and can communicate with you about any changes they notice or concerns they may have. Resources for additional information on grief, for both children and adults, can be found at the end of the book.

I recommend that you spend time with your child discussing the information and activities in this book. There may be times when he or she will have more questions or will need someone trusted to grieve with. Be open to conversations about death, loved ones, and faith. Children are very concrete in their understanding of the world around them. Death and heaven may be difficult and abstract concepts for a child. They may not grasp the permanence of death or the intangibility of heaven. Acknowledge your child's fears about death while encouraging a positive view of life, both current and eternal. And remember that you, too, are grieving. It's perfectly fine for your child to see you dealing with your own feelings of sadness. By seeing how you are coping with your grief (crying, praying, talking with others, getting counseling, etc.), your child may find new ways to express his or her feelings. It may also give him or her comfort to know that, even though you are all hurting, you'll work through this tough time together.

Through your love and support, their faith, and the love of God, your child will find peace again. God will be with your child, and you, always.

In Christ,
Kim Schuler

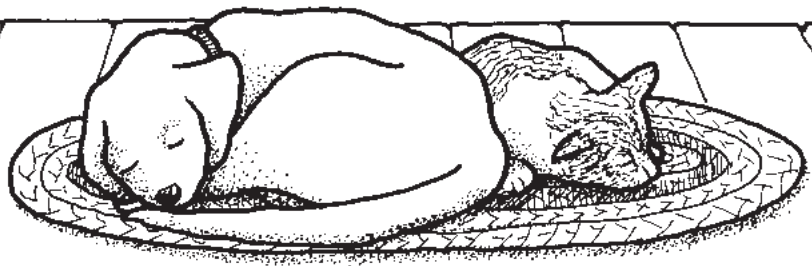


For Me to Read

Dear Reader,

Your parent (or another adult) has bought this book to help you during a very sad time. Someone you love has died. That person may have been a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, or a cousin. It might have been a neighbor or a friend. It may even have been a sister, a brother, or one of your parents.

Lots of different things are happening around you. Many feelings are coming and going. It can be a very confusing time. But here's something to remember: What you're feeling is normal. It's called grief (pronounced GREEF). You're sad and hurting that someone you love is no longer here with you. It might be hard to believe right now, but in time you'll feel better. That doesn't mean you'll forget your loved one. It's just that as time passes, it won't hurt as much or make you feel as sad.





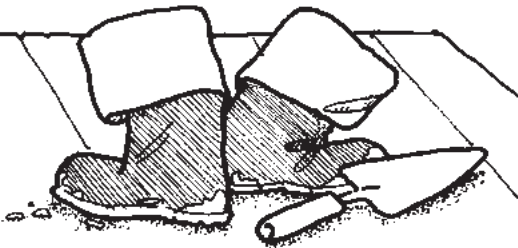
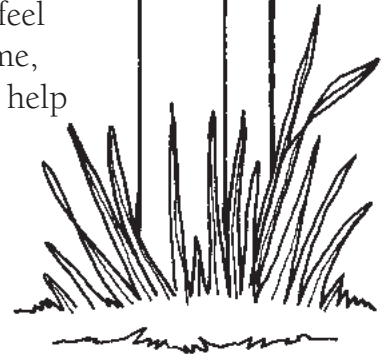
The chapters and activities in this book can help you through this sad time. You'll learn about death and about how to understand the many feelings you may have. You'll have a chance to be reminded of how much God loves you and how your Catholic faith can help you heal. It's also a place where you can remember your loved one—and how much they mean to you—in your own special way.

You don't have to work on the pages in order. You can skip around, reading and completing pages however you'd like. You'll work on some pages when a special event (like a holiday) comes around. You may decide not to work on other pages until later. That's up to you!

I Will Remember You was designed so you can color the illustrations yourself, using colored pencils, crayons, or water-based markers. Your work will make the book personal and beautiful. When you complete this book, you may want to keep it as a way to remember and honor your loved one.

Always remember that God and all the loving people in your life care about you. They want you to feel happy again and to have fun. It may take some time, but it will happen. God blesses us always. He will help you to find peace again.

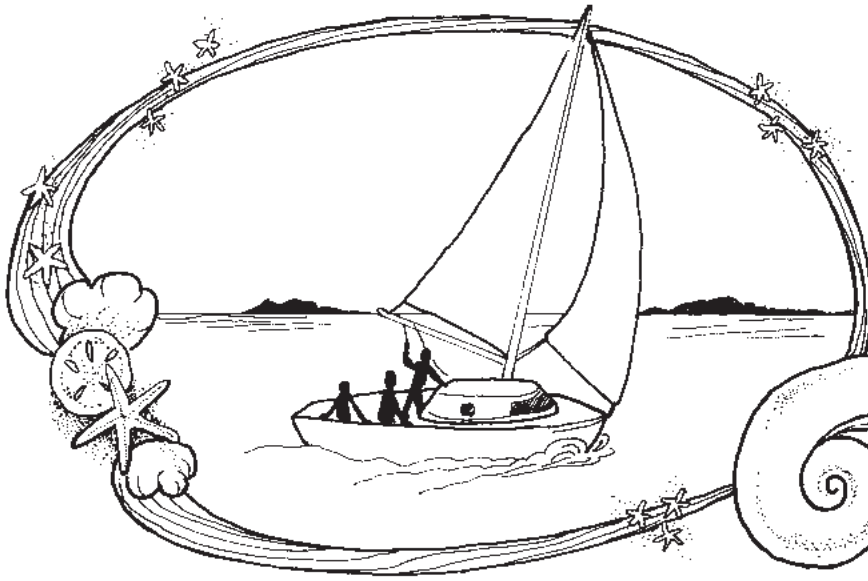
Your friend,
Kim





Grieving . . .

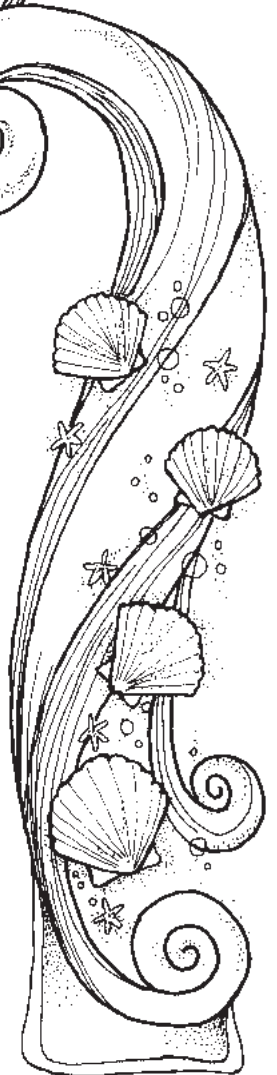


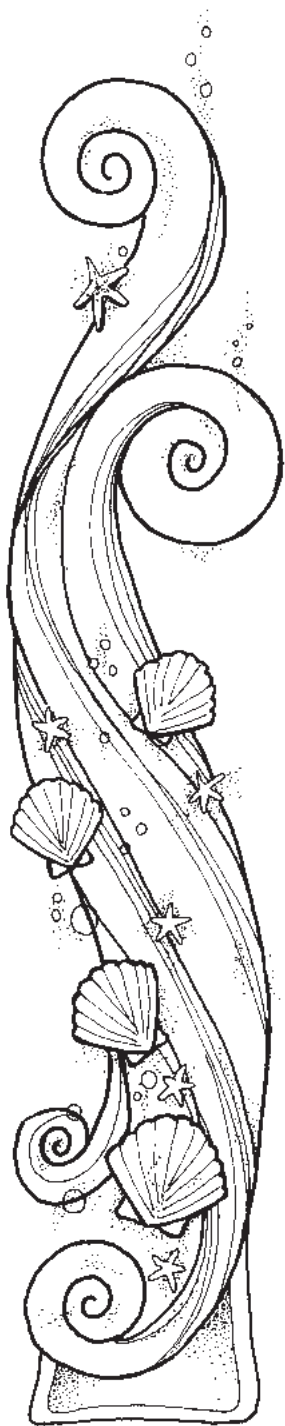


What Is Grief?

By now, you've probably heard people use the word "grief." Grief is another way of saying you're very sad that someone has died. Other words you may hear are "sorrow," "heartache," and "bereaved." These are all ways to say that you're sad and that you miss your loved one a lot.

Grieving and mourning (pronounced MOR-ning) are words used to describe someone who is expressing their sorrow. When people are grieving, they may act in lots of different ways. For example, some people cry, others seem angry, and some may get very quiet or want to be alone. It's even okay to feel like crying one minute and then want to play a few minutes later.





Things I've Noticed

What things have you noticed in the way people around you are mourning? Circle the things you've noticed others doing. Put a star next to the things you've done yourself as you grieve. Write or draw a picture for any words you don't find listed.

Crying

Daydreaming

Sniffling

Being cranky

Keeping busy

Acting distracted

Being quiet

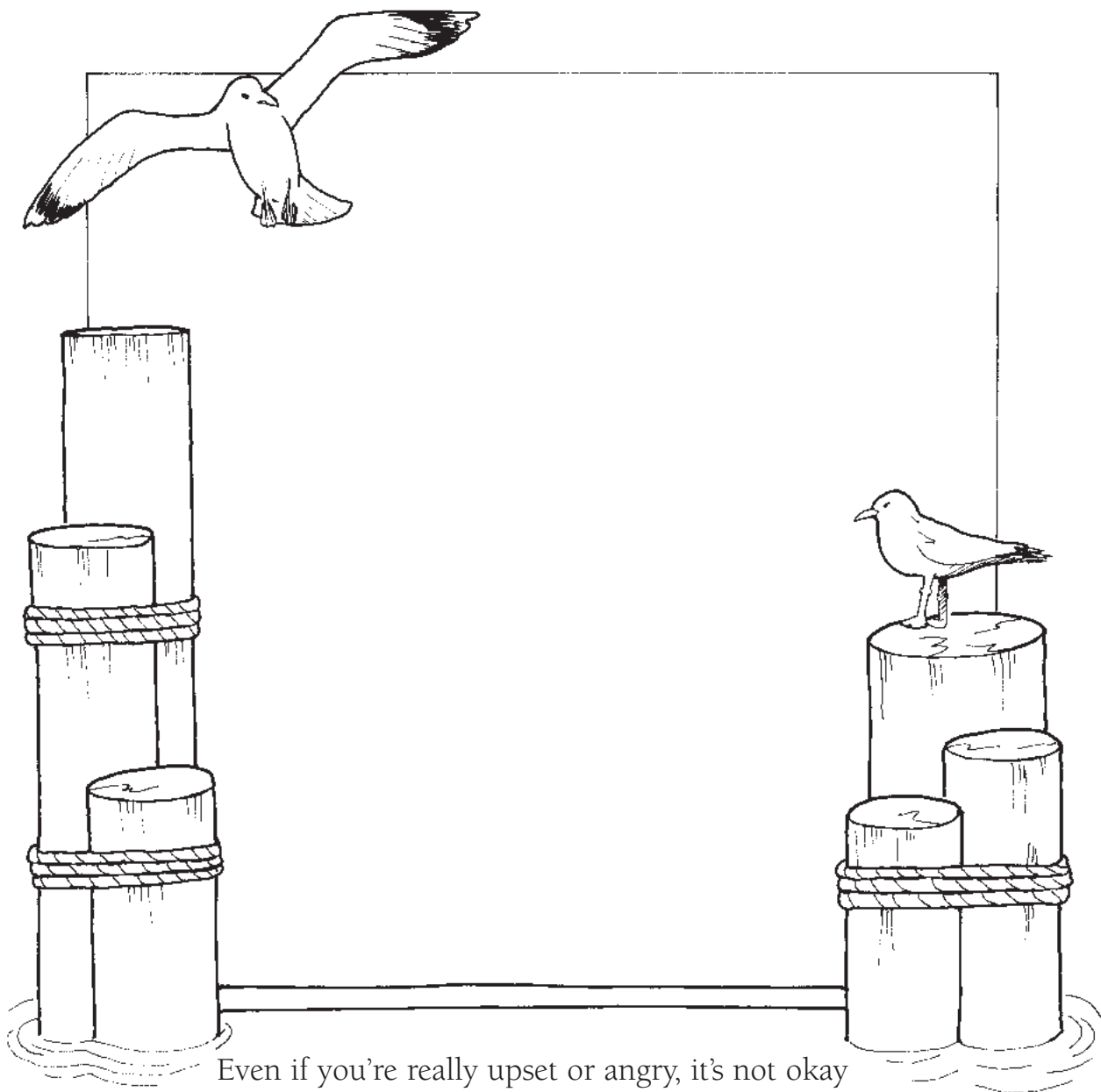
Staying alone

Acting nervous

Pretend-smiling

Praying

Having a hard time
sitting still



Even if you're really upset or angry, it's not okay to mourn by breaking, throwing, or hitting things. If you feel like showing your grief by doing something that might hurt you or someone else, you really need to talk to a trusted grown-up about what you're feeling.