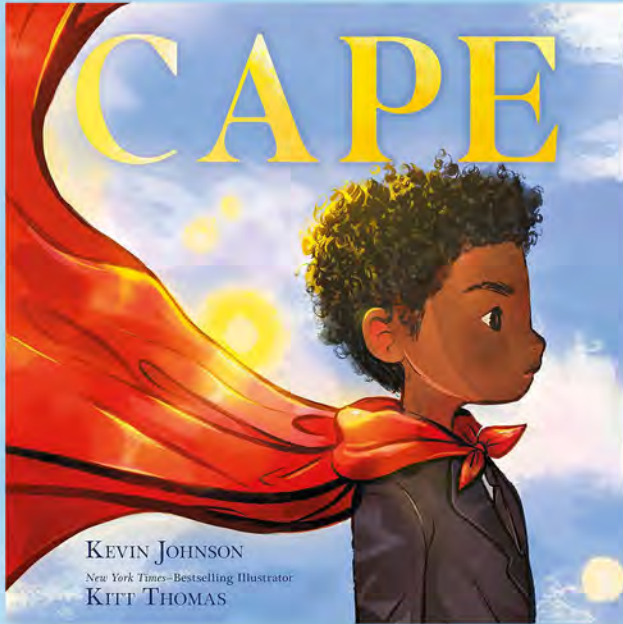


# HIGHMARK CARING PLACE

## Resources for Grieving Students

KEVIN JOHNSON & KITT THOMAS



# CAPE

A child learns that even superheroes hurt too in this story about loss and love. When the child loses the person in his life that he loves more than anything, he uses his cape as protection from his grief.

On the day of the funeral, he uses it to block out the pictures and stories people share, refusing to acknowledge the memories that keep bubbling up. He won't think about them. He doesn't want to.

He avoids the memories, until he no longer can. He remembers then... their laugh, their smile, the moment they gave him the cape. The cape transforms, becoming a source of comfort and strength as the child navigates the sadness and joy that these memories bring up.

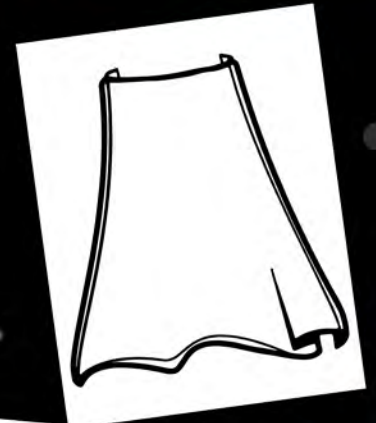
### MAKING YOUR OWN CAPE

As we see in the story, the cape transforms over time. In the beginning, the cape helps the child protect himself from his painful feelings. Later on, it helps remind him of so many memories. In this activity, you can design your own cape, deciding on the ways you would most like to use it.

### PAPER CAPE OR FABRIC CAPE

You can use the attached coloring sheet, or a blank piece of paper if that's easier, to give each person an opportunity to draw their cape.

An alternative would be to purchase and then decorate fabric capes that can be worn. (These can be found at craft stores or online.) This option allows students a larger space to be creative in, and a more realistic prop for their imaginations to immerse themselves even further into their own uses of the cape, both while designing it and then while sharing about it.







## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

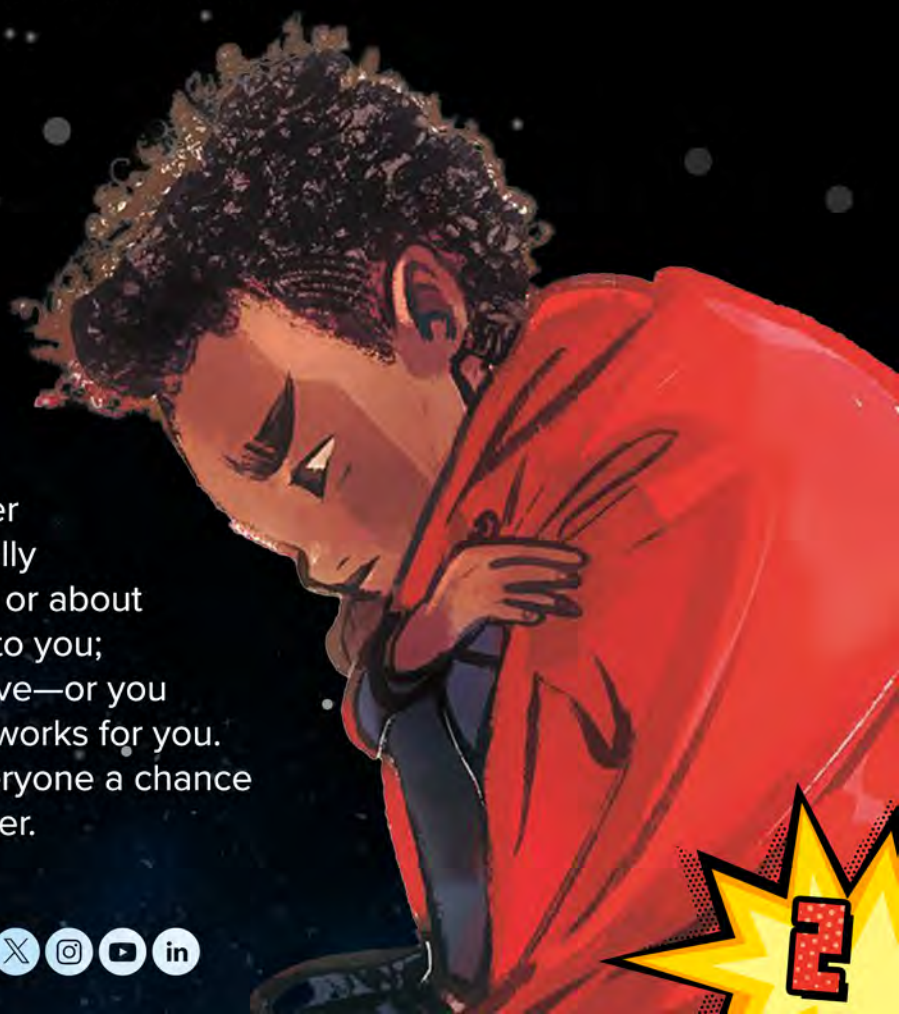
- Cape book
- Paper (coloring sheet or blank)
  - or Fabric Capes (Optional)
- Pens, pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils

## **DISCUSSION**

- How do you think the child in the story is feeling? Have you ever had emotions or thoughts that felt too big to handle?
- Who can help when you have big thoughts or emotions?
- Do you have some special memories?
- What would your cape look like?

## **ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Read *Cape*.
- Talk about the story and use the discussion questions to engage the group in conversation.
- Create your own cape, using either the paper or fabric. Adding colors, symbols, or words will make each one unique; you can also use stickers or other items. You can make your cape specifically about a person in your life who has died or about any person in your life who is important to you; you can make it about a memory you have—or you can decorate your cape in any way that works for you.
- At the conclusion of the activity, give everyone a chance to share what they made with one another.







## **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**

This activity can be used as a classroom lesson, in a peer-support group, or individually with a student. As usual, once the activity is completed, each child can choose whether they want to share with the group.

Although grief that's related to a death can be a challenging topic to address with children, doing an activity like this can allow grieving students to recognize that they're not alone, and to share their feelings in a safe environment. It can also empower the students as they cope with the difficult moments and feelings in their lives.

It's important to have additional supports available in case a student needs more time to transition out of their emotions and back into the school day—or you find that they need more support in general.



