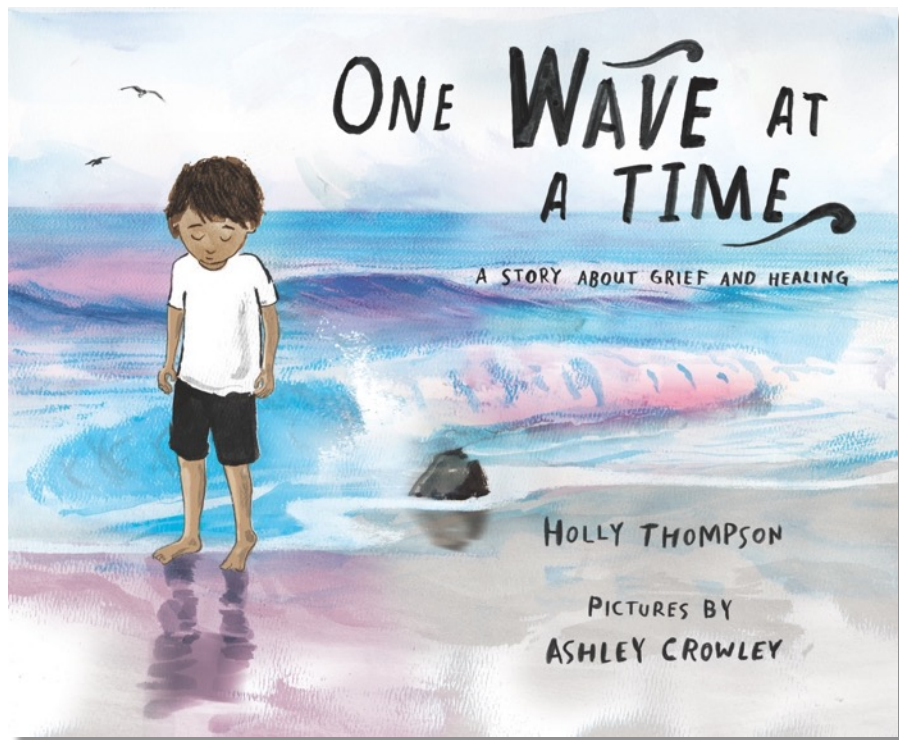


One Wave at a Time: A Story About Grief and Healing

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written by Holly Thompson and illustrated by Ashley Crowley



Published by
Albert Whitman & Company



Holly Thompson
Author, *One Wave at a Time*

Holly holds degrees in biology and English. She writes poetry, fiction, and nonfiction for children, teens, and adults, often tackling difficult subjects such as grief, loss, and bullying. A native of Massachusetts, she is a longtime resident of Japan and author of various picture books and the verse novels *Falling into the Dragon's Mouth*, *The Language Inside*, and *Orchards*. She teaches writing in Japan and the U.S. and visits schools worldwide. Visit her website at www.hatbooks.com.

Ashley Crowley
Illustrator, *One Wave at a Time*

Ashley has loved art since he was a child. So much so that he continued to study it in college, earning a Bachelor's degree in graphic design and a Master's degree in children's book illustration. His first picture book was published in 2015, and he has since illustrated several others. The subject matter of *One Wave At A Time* had a personal significance for him, and he hopes the book provides some level of comfort to children who have experienced loss in their lives. Ashley lives and works in Warwickshire, England. Visit his website at www.ashleycrowley.com.



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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *One Wave at a Time* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *One Wave at a Time* into English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

Book Information



One Wave at a Time

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After his father dies, Kai experiences all kinds of emotions: sadness, anger, fear, guilt. Sometimes they crash and mix together. Other times, there are no emotions at all—just flatness.

As Kai and his family adjust to life without Dad, the waves still roll in. But with the help of friends and one another, they learn to cope—and, eventually, heal.

A lyrical story about grieving for anyone encountering loss.

"Moments are represented like pictographs, making this offering seem like a handbook or guide... The text's acknowledgement of the various emotions and slow healing process is much needed." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"This is the BEST book on the death of a parent I've ever read. Why? Because it really captures what kids go through as well as how parents support kids in their grief."
—*Imagination Soup*

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The Wave Pages (by illustrator Ashley Crowley) are for writing (or drawing) memory stories, sharing stories about feelings, writing poems, or any other activities related to *One Wave at a Time*.

English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *One Wave at a Time . . .*

Help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

Front Cover:

- Describe what you see.
- Who is the character? What is the character doing? Where is he?
- How do you think he is feeling? Using evidence from the illustration, explain why you think that.
- With a partner stand up and pretend to be the boy in the illustration. How does it make you feel?
- Can you guess what the story might be about?

Back cover:

- Describe what you see.
- What is the character doing? Where is he?
- How do you think he is feeling? Using evidence from the illustration, explain why you think that.

Title page:

- Describe what you see.
- How is this illustration different from the front cover and back cover?
- Read the title. Then read the words on the back cover. Now, what do you think the story is about?

Front flap:

- Read the front flap. What is the main character's name?
- List some additional information about the story that you learn from the front flap copy.

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- What big change has Kai recently experienced?

- Name things that remind Kai of his father and the fact that he is no longer alive.
- Why does Kai go under the bed? What does he take with him? Why might he choose to take each of these items with him?
- What does Kai do to the guitar? Why do you think he does this? Do you think it makes him feel better?
- List the different feelings Kai experiences.
- What do Kai and the other children do in the group? What kind of group do you think it is? (support group, specifically a grief/bereavement support group) How is the group helpful to Kai?
- What do they talk about in the group? What activities do they do?
- List some of the changes the family makes back at home. How might each of these changes help them in their grief?
- Is the family different at the end of the story? How do you think Kai feels? Why?

Let's talk about the people who made *One Wave at a Time*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Take a close look at the illustrations throughout the book.

- How does Ashley Crowley show that Kai's dad is not there anymore?
- Many of the illustrations include waves. What colors are the waves? What feeling goes with each colored wave? Why do you think Ashley chose each of those colors to symbolize the emotion? Would you choose different colors for fear, sadness, or anger?
- How do the illustrations show the emotions the characters are feeling?
- Look closely at the spread of Kai's first time at the group. Describe what you see.
- How do the illustrations towards the end of the book show the family's healing journey?

Now let's look at the words.

- Explain that *One Wave at a Time* is really a poem—a long poem.
- What is a poem?
- Share with the class what you already know about poems.
- Why do you think the author wrote the story as a poem?

Now let's look at the back matter.

- Where is the back matter located?
- What is back matter?

- Read all or parts of the Author’s Note and show the list of resources to students (included on pages 18 and 19 of this guide).
- Why do you think the author added the back matter for this book?

Writing Activities

The Wave Pages (by illustrator Ashley Crowley) found on page 20 and 21 are for writing (or drawing) memory stories, sharing stories about feelings, writing poems, or any other activities related to *One Wave at a Time*.

Feelings and Color

As a class, discuss the feelings and emotions mentioned in *One Wave at a Time*.

Make feeling charts.

- List feelings from *One Wave at a Time* in the Feelings column (sad, mad, fear, flat, happy).
- Add other feelings to the chart that might not have been mentioned in the book (nervous, guilty, anxious, worried, excited, glad, bored, grumpy, disappointed, lonely, jealous, relieved, etc.).
- Have children choose a color for each feeling and explain why they are choosing each color for each feeling.
- Then, in the “When I Felt That Way” column, students should write about a time they felt that feeling.

TIP: It might help some students to hold a talking stick (below) when sharing about feelings.

FEELING	COLOR	WHEN I FELT THAT WAY

- Look closely at the illustrations for sad waves, mad waves, fear waves, flat waves and happy waves.
- Choose one of the situations in the “When I Felt That Way” column and illustrate it using the color included on the chart. Students can either use a wave to represent the emotion or something completely different.

Writing Poetry

One Wave at a Time is a poem, and poems often include figurative language, like metaphors, similes and personification. Help students identify figurative language in

One Wave at a Time (metaphor: feelings as waves; simile: "I'm like a robot," "unpredictable / as the sea"; personification: "happy waves too / slip in to tickle / and tackle").

- Why do you think the author chose to use metaphors, similes and personification in the story? Do these elements help you better understand the story? How so?
- Choose one emotion or feeling and create a poem describing that emotion, using at least two similes, one metaphor, and one phrase of personification.
- Do not use the name of the emotion in the poem.
- Then, create a lift-the-flap feeling poem. Clearly write and illustrate the poem. Include a flap in the design so that the feeling will be revealed when lifting the flap.

Example:

hides sometimes
shows off sometimes
quivers like an earthquake
but when it starts to rumble
tremble and jump . . .
watch out!
ANGER

Memory Story

Think about a memory you have of spending time with someone who is or was special to you.

- Who is the special person?
- What happened in that favorite memory?
- How does the memory make you feel now?

Write your memory like a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Beginning	Middle	End
<p>Introduction of your special person. Describe them and who they are to you.</p>	<p>Describe, in detail, a memory you have of a time you spent with this special person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was this? 2. Where were you? 3. Was anyone else there? 4. What happened? 5. How did it make you feel at the time? <p>Use your five senses and other descriptive language, when possible, to make the story come alive.</p>	<p>Thinking back on the memory, how does it make you feel?</p> <p>What was the best part of the memory?</p>

Share your story with that special person or people who knew that special person.

Language Activities

Metaphors

A metaphor is a literary comparison that compares two objects, but does not use like or as. A simile is a literary comparison that compares two objects, but uses like or as.

Metaphor: When sad waves roll in . . .

Simile: I'm like a robot.

Guide students through writing metaphors or similes about themselves.

1. How do you feel?

Example: I feel as lazy as a cat on a hot summer's day.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. How do you look?

Example: My hair is like porcupine quills.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. How do you act?

Example: I am a rabbit, hopping fast across the grass.

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Pick one of your metaphors or similes and explain its meaning. What are you comparing yourself to? Why did you choose this particular thing to compare yourself to?

Mixed up Feeling Jars

Using clear wide-mouth plastic jars, create some mixed-up feelings jars.

Provide students with slips of paper, each including the name of a feeling on it.

Students should color each feeling in whatever color they think fits. And on the back of the paper students should write why they feel this way. Then put the papers into the jar.

- Explain to students that sometimes we feel several different feelings all at once (pull a few feelings out of the jar and hold in your hand).
- Then with the lid on the jar, shake the jar. Explain to students that sometimes, especially at times of big changes and loss, we may have mixed-up feelings. Having mixed-up feelings can be confusing so it is helpful to talk about our feelings.
- Shake the jar again. Ask the students to predict what three feelings you will pull out of the jar with your eyes closed.

- Pull three feeling papers out of the jar. Were the predictions correct? Explain that especially in a time of grief or big change or stress, feelings can be unpredictable—like the waves in the story: “unpredictable as the sea.”

New Vocabulary

One Wave at a Time is a book about one boy’s grief experience after the death of his father.

What is grief? See the first three paragraphs of the Author’s Note in *One Wave at a Time* (included on pages 18 and 19 of this guide.)

In the story *One Wave at a Time*, Kai says,

waves of all kinds
tumble in
one after another

in no special order
unpredictable
as the sea

Besides waves in the sea, can you think of other things that are unpredictable?

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *One Wave at a Time* to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills.

Feelings

Post the names of feelings in different colors for everyone to see. Use the talking stick (see below) and let children choose a feeling to make a sentence about that feeling.

“Today I feel excited because we have pizza for lunch.”

“Last week I felt lonely because my brother went away.”

“Yesterday I felt worried because I lost my jacket.”

Talking Stick

Talking sticks are used in many indigenous cultures and are helpful communication tools in the classroom. (See [First Nation Talking Stick Protocol](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/first-nation-talking-stick-protocol): <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/first-nation-talking-stick-protocol>)

Create a talking stick for the classroom by decorating a 12-inch length of dowel or branch.

With students sitting in a circle, explain that only the person who is holding the talking stick can talk. When the talking stick is put down again, the teacher/classmates respond to that student, then the stick moves to the next person to talk (a volunteer or the former talker can pull a name from a basket).

Use the talking stick for sharing sentences or personal stories about feelings (see ELA section, Feelings and Color).

Mime

Mime a feeling with gestures and facial expressions. Then have others try to guess that feeling. For a variation, have children draw the feeling from a “hat”—a basket/box/bag.

Mirroring

Have students stand in pairs. One person will be the actor. The other will be the mirror. The actor will make different movements slowly; the mirror must try to do the exact same movements at the same time as the actor—just like a mirror. Then switch places. Discuss the experience. Then change partners. Was the experience the same? different? How?

Math

Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at the “*we join other families tumbled by waves*” spread in *One Wave at a Time*.

Describe where the people are sitting.

[examples: in the blue room, on the striped mats, in front of the wall of emotions]

Describe where Kai is.

[examples: beside his mother, in the blue room, in front of the door, next to the circle of people.]

Describe where the word "Pain" is.

[examples: on the blue wall; in between "sad" and "strength"; underneath "memories"; behind the girl in the red pants.]

Have students choose another illustration in *One Wave at a Time* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

A *One Wave at a Time* Board Game

Math will never be boring when students use their creativity to transform their favorite board game into a math experience.

How?

- Choose a board game that includes a journey to a destination. Candy Land, Life and Sorry make excellent math games.
- Review the rules of the game.
- Write the new "math" instructions that will help players with their adding, subtracting or multiplication skills. Make sure they are simple and easy to understand, but also clear.
- Create your own version in which each player must solve math problems on his journey through the waves of grief and emotion. Be sure to include obstacles and traps. (i.e. "Sad wave rolls in, curl up in bed—lose one turn." "Sad wave, write in a journal—move forward two spaces." "Mad wave crashes down, break a toy—move back three spaces." "Mad wave, inhale slow—move forward one space." "Flat waves—watch others play and lose one turn." "Score a goal—move forward one space." "Share happy memories—move ahead three spaces." "Make a comfort kit—move ahead 3 spaces.")
- Create the board, playing pieces, and cards out of paper/cardboard/etc.
- Label all game pieces or add things to make them look interesting.
- Place the game in a box or large envelope. If you have small pieces, place them in a bag. Label your box with the name of the game, who made the game, and a picture in the background to decorate.
- Present the game to the class, along with the playing instructions, and enjoy!

Science

Waves

What is an ocean wave? What causes ocean waves? This activity will attempt to answer those questions through experimentation and prediction.

You will need:

- A large shallow pan
 - Water
 - A paper fan
 - An electric fan
 - A notebook for recording observations
1. Fill the pan with about two inches of water.
 - a. Ask students to predict how to create waves in the pan and to record their predications in the notebook.
 2. Hold the paper fan at one end of the pan and use it to fan the water.
 - a. Ask students to describe what they see.
 - b. Were their predications correct? How or how not?
 - c. Ask students what they predict will happen if the electric fan is pointed at the water at low speed.
 - d. Record their predictions in their notebook.
 3. Point the electric fan at low speed at the water.
 - a. Ask students to describe what they see.
 - b. Were their predications correct? How or how not?
 - c. Next, ask what they predict will happen with a higher fan speed.
 - d. Students should record their new predictions in their notebooks.
 4. Increase the fan speed.
 - a. Ask students describe what they see. What is happening?
 - b. Students should record their observations.
 - c. Students should propose a theory on how ocean waves are created, based on this experiment.
 - d. Theories should be recorded in the notebooks.
 5. Explain that most ocean waves are created by wind; energy from the wind is transferred to the water creating waves.

Wave Bottle (reference: <http://thisistrix.blogspot.jp/2013/02/ocean-in-bottle-science-for-kids-in.html>)

Take a clear plastic bottle with a tight-fitting lid.

Fill it halfway with water.

Add blue or green food coloring and mix.

Fill the bottle the rest of the way with vegetable oil.

Put the lid on.

Gently tilt the bottle (don't shake!) and observe what happens.

What causes these waves? Explain that these waves are caused by movement.

Tsunami

In *One Wave at a Time*, Kai describes anger as mad waves:

along with sad waves
come mad waves
towering and strong

crested
like tsunamis
and crashing ashore

Ask students if they know what a real tsunami is? What causes a tsunami?

- A tsunami is a seismic sea wave. A tsunami is created by an underwater disturbance like an earthquake, volcanic eruption or landslide.
- A tsunami wave can travel at high speed across an ocean. When a tsunami reaches shore, the wave grows in height and can travel far inland.
- A tsunami can be extremely destructive, so tsunami warning systems are important in coastal areas, especially around the seismically active Pacific Ocean.

Why do you think author Holly Thompson chose to describe anger as a tsunami? Use the above information, and any other researched information regarding tsunamis, to support your answer.

Living or Not Living—How do we know?

Gather a variety of objects (or photos of objects), both living and not living and set them on a table for students to observe.

(examples living: plants, animals, carrot with its greens attached, seeds; examples nonliving: cooked carrot, item made of wood, insect casing, snake skin, key or metal object, rock, plastic object, paper, water, etc.)

Through gathering of evidence and observation, students will determine which items are living and which are not.

Use the following line of questions about some of the characteristics of living things to determine whether the object is alive.

- Does it grow and develop?
- Does it get and use energy (such as food, or the sun to photosynthesize)?
- Does it sense and respond to stimuli (touch, light, sound, temperature, smell)?
- Does it reproduce?
- Does it move (possibly very slowly, or internally)?
- Is it made up of cells

Students should record their findings in a chart, like the one below. Then discuss as a class.

Object	Is it alive? (Y or N)	Evidence to prove your classification

Social Studies

First Aid Kits/Comfort Kits

A First Aid Kit is helpful in emergencies. First aid kits hold bandages, ointments, tweezers and other things that are helpful if someone is physically hurt.

Another kind of First Aid Kit can be used for situations when people are hurting emotionally—as in grief, or homesickness, or moving—or for comfort when they are nervous or anxious. These types of kits are sometimes called Comfort Kits and they may contain objects that soothe—a piece of soft cloth, putty, photos, etc.

- What things did Kai put in his Grief First Aid Kit?
- Why do you think he chose those items?

Decorate a small box to create your own Grief First Aid Kit or a Comfort Kit. Fill it with items that make you feel good, that provide comfort, or remind you of happy things.

- What sorts of comfort items did you put inside?
- Explain why you chose each item.
- Where will you keep your kit?
- In what situations do you think your kit will be helpful?

Tracking Changes in Your Community

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus once said, "The only thing that is constant is change." Change happens all around us, all the time. The older someone is, the more change they have seen.

Interview three older members of your community about the neighborhood or city in which you live.

- What are some changes you have seen to the community over the years?
- What has been added to the community?
- What has disappeared?
- What do you miss most?
- Name something about the changes that you like.

Then, using a map of the community, record the changes that you learn about from your interviews.

Gathering Memories

Interview a family member or someone in your school or community about favorite memories about people who died.

- Have you ever known someone who died?
- Who was it?
- How did you know the person?
- Can you describe that person?
- What is a favorite memory of that person?

Write down the memory. Thank the person for sharing that memory.

Collect the memories gathered by the class and create a vibrant memorial to those who have died, using the information in the memories to help decide what to include in the memorial.

Memory Flags

Cut out squares (about 10 in. or 25 cm. square) of lightweight plain colored cotton fabric. Lighter colors work best.

On paper, have students write a memory of someone who died—their own memory or the memory of a person they interviewed (above).

Then, using marker pens, have students write the memory (or draw a picture of the memory) on a cloth square to create a colorful memory flag.

Tie, stitch or staple the flags to a ribbon or string and drape them in the classroom to create memory flags for remembering.

A Grieving Child or Children in the Classroom?

Visit the grief support resources listed in the *One Wave at a Time* back matter below and in the book.

The Dougy Center has extensive resources, including the podcast *Grief Out Loud*, and these key sections in *How to Help a Grieving Child* (<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/how-to-help-a-grieving-child/>) and advise the following:

- Answer the questions they ask, even the hard ones.
- Give the child choices when possible.
- Talk about and remember the person who died.
- Respect differences in grieving styles.
- Listen without judgment.
- Hold a memorial service and allow for saying goodbye.
- Take a break.

One Wave at a Time Author's Note

You may have experienced the death of someone close to you. Or a friend or relative may have experienced a death.

When someone close to us dies, we grieve. Grief is “all of the thoughts, feelings, and reactions we have when a special person dies.” Grief may include many different feelings—sadness, anger, guilt, hurt, fear, regret, worry, relief, numbness, shame, and exhaustion. These feelings may be all mixed up, and they may hit us in waves. Grief feelings and reactions may come to us soon after a person dies, or they may come to us much later. Grief is like a journey, sometimes a long, difficult journey. But grief is a natural and healthy response to death.

Everyone grieves in their own way—some of us cry often; some of us cry very little. Grief takes time—months and years. Grief feelings can disappear and then return. Grief can make us feel tired or anxious. Grief can give us a headache or stomachache. After someone close to us dies, we may feel alone in our loss—even when we are surrounded by friends or people we love.

People die in many different ways. Some people die from an illness, such as cancer. Some people die suddenly from a heart attack or in a car accident. Some people die from violence in a shooting or war. Some people die from a drug overdose or by suicide, which is when a person kills him- or herself. Most people who have died by suicide had a mental illness that confused the brain and made that person feel hopeless.

A grief journey is a difficult journey no matter how a person died. And after a person close to us dies, there are many changes. Adapting to change can be confusing and upsetting.

When someone dies and we are grieving, it can be helpful to talk to a teacher, a school counselor or a social worker. It is also helpful to spend time with others who have experienced a death. A grief support group can help us cope and heal. In a grief support group, we can talk, listen, do activities together, and support one another.

Grief support groups, or bereavement groups, can be found in most communities. If someone important to you or close to you has died, speak to an adult you trust about finding a grief support group near you. No one should have to be alone in grief. Being together with others who have experienced a death can give us strength, hope, and tools for coping during the difficult grief journey.

Grief Support Resources

The Dougy Center (www.dougy.org) in Portland, Oregon, offers programs, professional training, activities, extensive online grief resources, and a search system for finding grief support groups throughout the United States and some other countries, including Japan.

The Children's Room (www.childrensroom.org) in Arlington, Massachusetts, offers on-site programs and online resources.

Hello Grief (www.hellogrief.org) offers information, including resources listed by state, and was started by Comfort Zone Camp (www.comfortzonecamp.org), which runs bereavement camps for children ages seven to seventeen, year-round, throughout the United States.

The National Alliance for Grieving Children (childrengrieve.org) is a network of support programs. NAGC has many online resources, including webinars and a child-caregiver activity book.

Note: Some activities in this guide were adapted from activities in *Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children* by Liana Lowenstein (Champion Press, Toronto, 2006).



