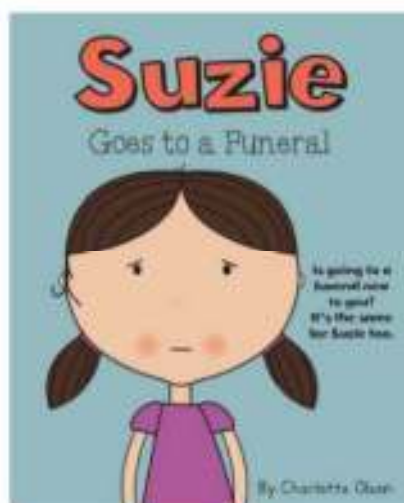


BOOK AND DVD REVIEWS

WE ARE
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READ WHAT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER THINK ABOUT....



Suzie goes to a funeral (2013)

Olson C, Moore N (illustrator).

The Choir Press, 2013.

24pp.

ISBN 9781909300293.

Average star rating 4.3 (out of 5)

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This book is aimed at a young audience so it would be suited to children aged from 3-7. It could help teach adults – parents, carers, and teachers – what to say, how to deal with this, and how to support children. It is even a nice book for adults to read, as it shows a lighter side to the whole situation. It will be most useful as soon as bereavement occurs. Children love to ask questions and even though adults can offer support, it is a very upsetting and stressful time for all; if a child has some idea about what is happening they won't be so scared or nervous. It could also be read three or more months after bereavement, as it explains how Grandma will always be with you every day.

The explanations are very accurate about what happens throughout the day. Each page clearly states what happens on the day – there isn't too much (or even too little) information or any errors. It is easy to understand but an adult may need to explain some words, for example crematorium, priest, coffin, wake and buffet, in case the child can't relate the pictures to the words. A glossary isn't needed though; just someone to explain the 'bigger' words the first time the book is read. The language is suitable for children and younger people and the sentences all rhyme; this will mean that the children can then learn the words and enjoy the poem!

I love the front cover. Suzie's face represents how I and my relatives looked on the sad day of the funeral; it shows confusion and sadness but isn't scary for children. The illustrations will definitely draw the attention of children when looking at the book. They are beautiful and younger children will relate to the crying girl; they may be upset but a cartoon of a person will help them relate to it as they can associate it with something they watch on TV. The funeral car with the flowers is my favourite; it looks so beautiful for something that can cause tears or awe. The rest of the illustrations are also fantastic as they focus on what children may see at a wake, such as lots of people wearing black, nice food, speeches, and most importantly, big hugs.

I like how the sentences are a poem; it reminded me of the hymns in the Bible when I used to go to church with my Nanna and I found that heart warming. The illustrations are also beautiful, well drawn and amazingly true to what really happens without being too 'battered up' or too 'intimidating'; the balance is perfect. I also like the last few pages where it states that 'Grandma will always be there' and 'it's ok to feel sad'.