

# READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

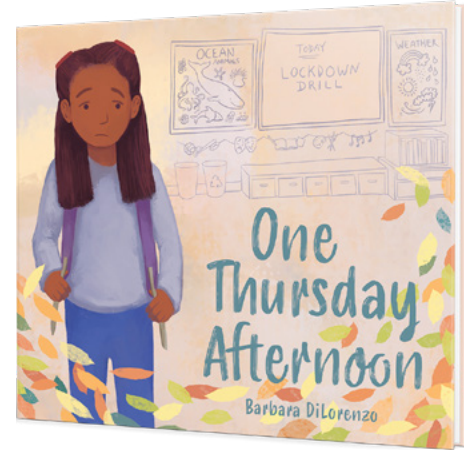
## A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

### One Thursday Afternoon

By Barbara DiLorenzo

At first glance *One Thursday Afternoon* may look like a book you want to pass by—a worried girl and a classroom note with the words “Lockdown Drill.” However children do encounter and experience scary things, including lockdown drills. This book provides a framework for talking about—and not talking about—things that may frighten us. The actions of Ava’s grandfather provide a model for engaging your child when their feelings may be running deeply within them and they are hesitant to talk. This book shows how giving space for feelings to emerge through engaging in an activity together, such as art, can be an effective path for honest communication about difficult topics.

Read “A Note from the Author/Illustrator,” located at the back of the book. It offers insights into Barbara DiLorenzo’s hopes for this story. She reminds us in Granddad’s words, “even though the world is scary, it is also a beautiful place.”



### ★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- What are your first impressions about this story from the cover and the first several pages?
- What does Granddad do, and what does he not do, to help Ava with her fears?
- How do the illustrations in this story make you feel? How might being in nature, or observing it, help calm fears?
- For Ava, painting outdoors with her Granddad was a comforting activity. What do you like to do and who do you like to be with when you feel unsure or afraid?
- Read the dedication across from the title page. How does that make you feel? How do you know you are not alone?
- When is a time that you have been brave?

### ★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Go to a park or place where you can experience nature together. If this is not possible, do a YouTube search for “nature videos,” choose one, and imagine yourself there. Look around you. Listen to the sounds. Pay attention to your feelings, your body, and your breathing. After some quiet time, talk together about what you observed.
- Choose an activity that you like to do together. It may be art, playing a sport, making music, cooking, taking a walk, or something else. How does this activity connect you with one another? When you are relaxed with one another, how can deeper conversations happen?
- Draw a picture, write a story or poem, act out a skit, create a song, or move your body to depict something that causes you fear. How does expressing and sharing that fear with someone you trust help calm those fears?

### PRAY

Gracious and loving God, thank you for being with us at all times, especially when we are afraid. Thank you for people in our lives that we can share our fears with and know that with them and with you, we are never alone. Amen.



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## ★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

Unfortunately, lockdown drills, as well as natural disaster drills, are a part of the school life of our children. They can definitely cause fear and anxiety in children and in us. Teaching your children mindfulness and coping strategies for times such as these, as well as other stressful moments in their lives, will help them in these and other situations they encounter. First, as parents and caregivers, there are strategies you can use:

- Provide reassurance that their feelings are normal and real.
- Emphasize your child's strengths in a situation while not avoiding or denying their fears.
- Be willing and take the time to listen.
- Model healthy coping strategies so they can see them in practice.
- In an age-appropriate way, share a fear you have and how you cope with it.

Second, teach and practice mindfulness exercises together. Do an internet search for "mindfulness exercises for children." Here are a few suggestions:

- Pay attention to your body. Stress and fear create tension. Starting with the toes, squeeze the muscles tightly, count to five, and then release. Move up the body repeating this practice. Notice how your muscles feel.
- Breathing can quicken when fear raises stress. Pretend to blow out a candle, breathing in and then blowing slowly. Or pretend to smell a flower, breathing in through the nose, and then blowing bubbles, exhaling.
- Be present with your senses with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. That is, 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste.

Third, learn about the drills that your school district uses and engage in conversation with the appropriate groups to emphasize preparedness and pay attention to collateral trauma that the drills may produce. Encourage your school to practice stress-reducing activities following a drill rather than immediately resuming school lessons as if nothing significant happened.

## MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

### ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES FOR ONE THURSDAY AFTERNOON

- Download the [Discussion and Activity Guide](#)
- Download the [Educator Guide](#)
- Download the [Drawing Guide Video](#)

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE & EXPLORE EMOTIONS

- [My Elephant Is Blue: A Book about Big, Heavy Feelings](#), by Melinda Szymanik and Vasanti Unka
- [Simon and the Big, Bad, Angry Beasts: A Book about Anger](#), by Ian De Haes
- [Grandpa's Window](#), by Laura Gehl and Udayana Lugo
- [Sidney the Lonely Cloud](#), by Tim Hopgood
- [What in the World Is Wrong with Gisbert?](#), by Jochen Weeber and Fariba Gholizadeh
- [Max and the Purple Worry](#), by Kitty Black and Jess Rose

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](https://www.pcusa.org/aroundthetable)" ([pcusa.org/aroundthetable](https://www.pcusa.org/aroundthetable)).



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