



## The Tear Bottle

A helpful compliment to *The Homecoming Box* Activity\*

(\*Subject of the 3<sup>rd</sup> book in the *We Serve Too!*™ series, *The Homecoming Box* by Kathleen Edick and Paula J. Johnson)



### Making and Using a *Tear Bottle*™

- Find a jar, bottle or vase to use as a tear bottle. (Our demonstration bottle is a small clear glass vase with a "lid" made of a 3-inch "diamond" we found at a hobby store.)
- Find something to represent tears
  - Florists have clear glass drops
  - Sea glass would work
  - We found some plastic diamonds (used for decorating tables for wedding receptions) to be our representation of tears.
- Find something small on which to write the tear-bringing tale:
  - Cut strips of vellum
  - White ribbon
  - Sparkly paper, etc.
  - If your token from the box fits, you can use that too.
- How to use the *Tear Bottle*
  - Take one "tear", write or draw a representation of the event that brought the tears to the surface on your special strip of paper or ribbon. Drop the tear and the description into the bottle. These events are not put back into the *Homecoming Box*, but find resolution in the *Tear Bottle*. (That way you can revisit *The Homecoming Box* anytime and enjoy it!).)
  - When a story arises out of *The Homecoming Box* that brings or has brought tears, this is the place to put them.

## First Aid for Heart Hurts—Addressing hurts in their proper proportion

*Much like physical wounds, emotional wounds require different types of treatments in order have a chance to heal properly. Take time to identify the type and seriousness of the wound.*

- For **superficial** bumps and scrapes—***Shake it off!***

These are the little everyday insults and offenses that only get worse with attention. Teach your children to get up, brush them off and resume a happy life. These things do not warrant *Tear Bottle* status.

- For **deep** puncture wounds—***Let it / Make it bleed***

Some wounds are very deep, but hardly show on the surface. These are very dangerous, since they are prone to harbor bacteria and grow into a raging infection. When an event (such as a death of a loved one, a long-held dream, moving away, etc.) brings deep sadness for a child, it is important to grieve those losses well.

The *Tear Bottle* is a useful tool to give proper acknowledgement to the loss by writing about it, creating a picture or a memorial of sorts and ceremoniously placing a tear with a label of the event in the *Tear Bottle*. *(It may need to go in the Homecoming Box first to share again later to let the family visit this sadness together upon reunion.)*

- For **slashing**, bleeding cuts—***Apply pressure***

Sometimes “sticks and stones...and words” can really hurt. Wash the wound with tears, and apply pressure to stop the bleeding. Pressure comes in the form of hugs and gathering-in as a family. It is that safe place where the bleeding stops and the healing begins. A child may ask for a *Tear* to place the bottle to help them move on. Use your parental judgment to evaluate the gravity of this wound.

*These are a good exercises for both parent and child to help learn the art of “genuine” happy living—grieve well and move on. Some things take a lot of grieving and some simply do not.*

- **The inspiration for the *Tear Bottle***

- Psalm 56: 8 “*You, O Lord, keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle.*”
- If faith is a part of your family life, or you would like it to be, you may want to open to this passage and read it out loud at the time when you put the tears away in the *Tear Bottle*. You may also find prayer a welcome comfort at “tear time”.

## Conclusion

- Use *The Homecoming Box* to collect tokens of memories, both happy and sad, for the deployed parent when he returns.
- Use *The Tear Bottle* when a tearful memory comes that you don't want to forget it, but don't necessarily want to be reminded of it over and over.
- When, over the course of many dinnertimes, memory stories of deployment have all come out of the box, all but the tearful memories can go back in the box as a Family keepsake to freely revisit anytime, like you do with your photo albums.
- Keep *The Tear Bottle*, too, but we recommend *parents* be the ones to decide if and when the tears are revisited. Tears are precious treasures—not for everyday use. Keep them where you'll know they are safe.

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