

Dear Grief Care Professional:

I'm writing you on behalf of the Pediatric Chaplains Network regarding a therapeutic play kit we have helped develop with the Wilbert Foundation. The Bertie Bear kit is available to grief care providers and other therapeutic care professionals, for free, through the generous work of the Wilbert Foundation.

Each Bertie Bear kit comes with the bear in a fold out "home", magnetic white board, coloring book, stickers, and more. The activities are appropriate for children ages 4 and up and can provide them different modes of expression depending upon what is needed on a given day. In vetting this kit, chaplains have used this tool in situations ranging from coping with chronic illness to traumatic loss.



We believe Bertie Bear may be helpful to you and hope you will look into ways of utilizing this functional and well-constructed therapeutic play kit. Information on ordering sets of Bertie Bear can be found on the Wilbert Foundation website at <http://www.wilbertfoundation.org>. I am also happy to help connect you or provide you with useful guidance on implementation.

Warmest Regards,

Lavender Kelley

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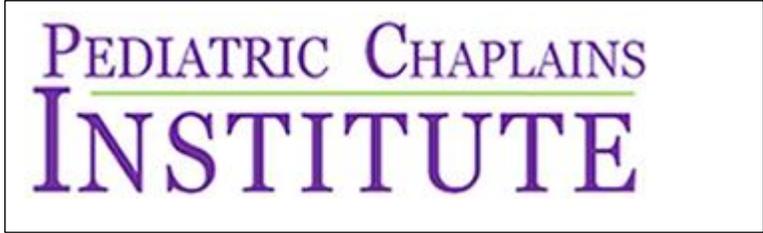
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The Wonderful World of Bertie Bear

About 10 years ago the Wilbert Foundation began to work with the Pediatric Chaplains Network to Develop the Pediatric Chaplains Institute, a training program for professional chaplains newly hired into pediatric settings. The Institute has been an exciting and successful undertaking. Many of you benefitted from Wilbert's generous tuition scholarships when you participated in the Institute.

A few years ago, Wilbert wanted to develop a care item that could directly benefit the children for whom our chaplains care. Over time they developed Bertie Bear and now his kit – his apartment and belongings.

There are some wonderful resources in the Bertie Bear kit. As chaplains, you can choose several ways to use them with your patients/families. Bertie himself is soft and comforting – a great size for any child, including adolescents. You might consider giving the individual parts of the kit one at a time, especially if you will be working with a child over time; conversely, presenting the entire kit at once allows you to explore each item and use at the moment what might be most appropriate.

The kit is designed largely for the toddler to school age child.

As you open the kit you will notice that it is decorated to be Bertie's living room, bedroom, and kitchen. Stickers accompany the kit so that children can decorate it as they want. Other Bertie stickers are available for them to decorate their environment. You might want to encourage children to stick them on something

that will go home with them – most hospitals have some hesitation about stickers on hospital equipment: when they do not come off easily they become sites for germs to linger!

A small jigsaw puzzle of Bertie can be used as entertainment, but you might want to think of other ways to use it. For instance, does the child feel as if she or he is in “pieces” because of all that is going on? What does s/he need to feel whole again? You could have a discussion similar to this as you are working together on the puzzle.

A finger labyrinth is included. These are fun and simple, and might be used with children while saying a simple prayer, or naming people they love, or identifying a worry they would like to release.

The crayons and coloring book are normalizing activities, and might give you an opportunity to talk with a child about things they like to do, special people in their lives, special moments in their day.

The journal and magnetic white board are wonderful ways to encourage children to express what they are feeling about what is happening in their lives. The Journal permits them to write, or draw, about it in private ways. The magnetic white board allows them to place a feeling word at the top so that people can see at a glance what the feeling of the day, or the hour, is. They can choose to write or draw the reason or not.

The small spiral notepad can be used for many things: private prayers, questions for the doctor, or something else you come up with out of your creative spirit!

We encourage chaplains to work with these resources in companionship with their young patients. We are so grateful to Wilbert for this resource. Many blessings as you learn how you and Bertie can work together to bring comfort.

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