



*Helping teachers work with children when they first return to education following major traumatic or life-changing events*

## **Picture Book & Film Resources for ‘What is Hope?’ Learning Experience**

In preparing this guide, inspiration was drawn from a couple of children’s picture books that are focused specifically on hope, and two others where the characters have begun to lose hope but then find it. A couple of short, animated films were also identified with these being created specifically to prompt children’s thinking about this elusive emotion.

Let’s look at some of these!

1. **“Little Mole Finds Hope”** by Glenys Nellist, illustrated by Sally Garland (Fortress Press, 2020)

Little Mole is sad and “just doesn’t feel good inside”. His mother decides that what he needs is hope. She takes him on a journey through his local area and shares with him examples of where hope can be found. This beautiful book, suitable for young children, uses the conversation between little mole and his mother to explore what hope is. Across its pages, Little Mole is carefully guided by his mother to see that change is everywhere and that change is a kind of hope. She explains that a tree may look dead in the Winter, but in the Spring it will grow new leaves and flowers; that a tulip bulb may look brown and dead, but with water and light it will soon sprout to become a burst of yellow flowers; and that a chrysalis might not look like a living thing, but will soon become a beautiful butterfly. Mother Mole explains to her son that sometimes hope hides in the darkness and is hard to see, but if you look carefully, you can always find it.

2. **“Wisp: A Story of Hope”** by Zana Fraillon, illustrated by Grahame Baker Smith (Hachette Children’s Group/Orchard Books, 2019)

Set in a world where people live without hope, we meet a young boy called Idris. His life is narrow and grim – until one evening, a wisp arrives. Depicted by the illustrator as a small spot of light, the wisp of hope slowly begins to transform people’s lives by returning their memories and the brightness to their eyes. This hauntingly beautiful book would be best for children 6-8 years.

A high-quality reading of the book, complete with inspirational music is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRgqB1VVrhg>

3. **“The Red Tree”** written and illustrated by Shaun Tan (Lothian Children’s Books, 2010)

Within this beautifully illustrated picture book the main character awakes to feelings of despair, with her room slowly filling up with a sea of brown, decaying leaves. To escape this gloom, she leaves her home and wanders through a world where she increasingly feels

trapped and alone. However, hope is always present, with each page including an image of one red leaf. This red leaf symbolises the fact that no matter how difficult life can be, hope is always possible. At the end of the story, the girl returns to her bedroom to discover a blooming red tree of hope.

4. **“Mrs McGinty and the Bizarre Plant”** written and illustrated by Gavin Bishop (Oxford University Press, 1981).

In this picture book, suitable for young children 4-8), we meet a grumpy old lady called Mrs Delilah McGinty. For Mrs McGinty “life is a burden”. She seems to have no friends and is teased by the local children who put stones in her letterbox. But a small plant she purchases soon grows to become a giant bizarre plant that becomes a source of joy for the whole community. Mrs McGinty becomes a celebrity in the town. The bizarre plant has renewed her and brought her friendship and hope.

5. **“Raindance”** by Cathy Applegate and illustrated by Dee Huxley (Margaret Hamilton Books, 2000)

Hope in the picture book entitled “Raindance” is the life and joy that comes from the arrival of rain after a long period of drought. Set in an outback community where livelihoods and homes are at risk, the book explores the excitement and joy of one young girl, her baby sister and mother when rain finally falls. With stunning illustrations that highlight the physical response of joy, this book provides a human example of hope.

6. **“Hope”**

A short animated film about a baby turtle that is confronted by some difficult challenges as it makes its journey from its egg to the sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1P3ZgLOy-w8>

7. **“Never lose hope”**

This short, animated film is about a dog that wants to be a guide dog for blind people. Like the turtle in the “Hope” animation above, the dog has challenging hurdles to overcome to attain his goal, but he never gives up hope and eventually succeeds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAdu-84Q5Nk>