

## The Broken Bowl Project

Source: Adapted from The School Counselor Life By Laura Smestad, MA, LPC, NCC

### Goal:

To allow family members to see how life has changed since a death and that life can be put back together.

### What You Need:

- A ceramic bowl (this can be a bowl that is old and no longer used or a cheap bowl purchased from a thrift store) OR a sturdy plastic plate that has been cut apart to resemble broken pieces (a better option for younger children)
  - If using a ceramic bowl, you will need a plastic bag and a hammer to break it in to large pieces (outside recommended)
- E-6000 Quick Dry Glue or clear tape for paper plate alternative
- Decorating materials:
  - Markers
  - Paint
  - Stickers

### What You Do:

As a family talk about how the broken pieces of the bowl might represent your life following the death of your person. Encourage family members to identify ways things were different and things that may feel “broken”. Have each family member take a piece or two and decorate them. Children can decorate their piece however they like, but encourage them to use feelings and pictures that remind them of their person or represent their feels about their person.

Next, after each family member has had a chance to complete their pieces, take a moment to share how you choose to decorate your portion with each other. After each person has had a turn, the parent or guardian may start gluing the pieces back together. Take some time while the glue is drying to discuss what it means that you are putting the pieces back together.

### Process the activity as a family:

Ask family members to share parts of the broken bowl that they decorated.

- Does anyone feel comfortable sharing something that they put on their piece?
- Did you notice any similarities between family members?
- Did someone put something on their piece that you didn't think of, but you think would apply to you too?
- What's your favorite thing about your portion of the bowl?
- How are some ways as a family that you could help “put the pieces back together” after the death? What about individually?
- Where will you keep your bowl once it finishes drying?



Broken Bowl Examples:

