



pets in the
classroom

Saying Goodbye

Adapted from	https://petsintheclassroom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Saying-Goodbye-to-Bobalou-Abrams-PreK-2nd-Reptile.pdf
Pet: Bearded dragon	Class: PK -2

Brief Overview: This lesson aims to guide kindergarteners through the difficult subject of the death of their classroom bearded dragon while promoting empathy and healthy coping mechanisms. This lesson is adaptable to any classroom pet.	Lesson Breakdown Lesson 1: Sharing Memories Lesson 2: Saying Goodbye
Essential Question How can we care for each other and celebrate [Bearded Dragon's Name]'s life while feeling sad?	

Subjects <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> ELA <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> STEM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	Stem Connections Science: Technology: Engineering: Math:
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Performance Expectations/ Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CASEL Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills• National Health Education Standards: Mental and Emotional Health
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I CAN statements

- express my feelings about [Bearded Dragon's Name] using words and pictures.
- listen to and respect the feelings of others.
- remember happy memories of [Bearded Dragon's Name].
- find ways to show care and support to my classmates.

Materials

- Coloring supplies
- Colored rocks (optional)

Teacher Background

Before news breaks:

- Prepare yourself: Take time to process your own emotions before sharing the news with students. Consider talking to a colleague or school counselor for support.
- Gather resources: Research age-appropriate books, activities, and online resources about grief and loss in children.
- Plan communication: Decide how you want to share the news with parents and families. Consider sending a written note or holding a brief meeting.

Sharing the news:

- Choose a calm and quiet time.
- Be honest and direct. Use simple language and avoid euphemisms like "went to sleep forever." Explain that the pet died and won't be coming back.
- Validate their feelings. Let students know it's okay to feel sad, angry, or confused.
- Focus on positive memories. Share happy stories and photos of the pet with the class.
- Create a safe space for communication. Encourage open discussions about the pet's death and answer their questions honestly.

Supporting your students:

- Provide opportunities for expression: Offer materials for drawing, writing, or creative play to help children express their emotions.
- Read age-appropriate books: Share stories about loss and grief that can help children understand their feelings.
- Offer individual support: Be available to talk to students who are struggling or need extra attention.
- Include families: Encourage parents and families to talk to their children about the pet's death and provide additional support at home.

Remember self-care: Take time for yourself to process your own grief and seek support if needed.

Additional resources:





The Dougy Center: <https://www.dougy.org/>

Sesame Street: <https://sesameworkshop.org/topics/grief/>

National Association of School Psychologists: <https://www.nasponline.org/>

Be patient, compassionate, and focus on creating a safe and supportive environment for you and your students to grieve.

Lesson 1: Sharing Memories

Time	Materials	Activity
15 mins		Circle Time: Start with a sharing circle, allowing students to express their feelings about [Bearded Dragon's Name]'s death using simple words ("sad," "miss you") or drawings. Encourage active listening and respectful communication.
15 mins		Reading Time: Read age-appropriate books about loss and grief, such as Something Very Sad Happened by Bonnie Zucker: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHaspeyGYFQ I'll Miss you Mr Hooper By Norman Stiles  Classic Sesame Street: I'm Sure Gonna Miss You, Mr. ... I'll Always Love You by Hans Wilhelm:  I'll Always Love You by Hans Wilhelm Mr. Rogers: Death of a Goldfish 1101-1105 - Mister Rogers' Neighborhood When a Pet Dies, Fred Rogers   KIDS BOOK WHEN A PET DIES BY FRED ROGER... Discuss the emotions and actions presented in the story and relate them to the students' experience.
15 mins	Coloring supplies	Allow the children time to write and draw their memories. Provide materials like construction paper, crayons, and photos (if available) to create a collaborative collage of happy memories with [Bearded Dragon's Name]. Share the collage as a way to celebrate their life.

Lesson 2: Saying Goodbye

Time	Materials	Activity
45 mins	Rocks, paint supplies, newspaper	Have the children decorate colored rocks and place them in a circle or heart around the spot where the pet is buried. Have a ceremony where the students place their rocks and share stories or sing songs.

Differentiation

For students who need additional support:

- For students who struggle to express their feelings verbally, offer alternative means like drawing, music, or movement.
- Provide additional support and guidance to students who seem particularly impacted by the loss.

For students who need additional challenges:

- Encourage the students to find alternate ways to honor their pet

Extension

- Plant a flower or small tree in memory of [Bearded Dragon's Name].
- Create a "Caring Classroom" project where students brainstorm ways to show support and kindness to each other throughout the day.