Bearable Moments
Written By: Christopher M Judd

Goal: Bearable Moments is a book to share and read over and over. It helps a child understand that they are not alone during deployment and even if it is a long time, the book shows they are still loved and missed by their parent. It gives a view of one little boy’s way of staying in touch with his mother and the comfort measures his father used to make the separation easier on his son.

1. Show the cover of the book and ask the children to read the title.

2. What does the cover show us?

3. Read the story stopping from time to time to ask:
   a. Why was Blake sad at the airport?
   b. Why wasn’t there many presents under the tree at Christmas?
   c. What could we do to make Christmas happier for Blake?
   d. How old was Blake’s Mommy in the picture they found in his Grandmas attic?
   e. What was Blake’s Daddy looking for in the attic?
   f. What was missing off the bear?
   g. What did Blake name the bear?
   h. What helped to cheer Blake up?
   i. What did Blake do to help keep his Mommy from missing him?
   j. What did Blake’s Mommy call Blake?
   k. What did Blake’s Mommy tell him on the telephone?

4. What does the story teach us?

Activity:
- The youth need to sit in a circle. Inform them that they are a camera and our eyes. They will look at something you would like to remember, for example, Blake used his Mommy’s face. We can have it in our memory to think about and see again and again. The youth will face each other. Tell them to sit and stare at the person across from them for a few minutes. Instruct the youth to close their eyes, see their friend in their mind, remembering as many details as possible. They have used their camera eyes. Now, the youth will have a picture of their friend in their mind for a long time to look back on.

- Have you heard of The Guardian Bears? You can have one sent to you if you have a serviceperson like Blake that is deployed. He comes with his own vest that has a secret pocket that you can have your loved one place a note in just for you. Bears are available from the IL National Guard Child Youth Services.

- The youth could do a bear drive to help the Guardian bear project. They would bring in an old or new bear 10-18 inches long that can be donated. The youth could also organize a Bear Drive at the armory. The youth will need to decorate a large box and make posters to advertise the great cause.

- Miss you chain. The youth make a paper chain of how long the servicemember will be gone. They need to make a link for each day. If it is a year, the chain will be very long. So, you may want to use weeks. Each day that they are gone, the youth will break off one link from the chain and write on the link what they missed most about the servicemember that day. For example, today, I missed your smile, or today, I missed you at football practice. Then, send the links once a week to your servicemember. They can put the chain together on the other end. They will know how much they are missed and loved, and as the chain gets shorter on the youths end, it is getting closer to the servicemember coming home.

Lesson Plan written by:
Anne Kessler – Illinois National Guard Child/Youth Services Coordinator
22979 N. Bowmen Ave. | Danville IL. 61834 | (217)-622-0143