

Held in Hope – Maya Goes to Hospital, Josh stays in Hospital, Sam and his Special Book and Jesus Still Loves Joe

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Held in Hope is a new series of books aimed at children who are in hospital or bereaved, relating Christian faith to their experiences. The stories are about a girl who is scared about a hospital stay, a boy who has to stay in hospital over Christmas, a boy who is life limited and a boy whose sister has died. Each child goes through an emotional journey, feeling sad or afraid about their situation before being reassured by the fact that Jesus is with them, and the existence of Heaven.

The stories are sweet and the images are both appealing and suited to young children, with full page colour and some crayon-drawn looking thought bubbles. While some of the situations are very emotive from an adult's perspective, as the stories revolve around children and illness or mortality, the focus on Jesus and the positivity of the endings stop the stories from being too sad. The straight forward way they are presented would make them supportive for children in those situations and informative for other children.

Although the books are designed for family use, they would also be very good for an investigate group either with or knowing a child facing a similar issue. Each book has a "For Parents" section at the back, which has a bible verse and short prayer that could be used in devotions. There are also some suggestions for activities and discussion, which could be adapted for group use, and a list of some other resources.

Each book is priced at £5.99, and all four are available from the Christian Education shop, on shop.christianeducation.org.uk. Orders can also be placed over the phone on 0121 472 4242, by email to shop@christianeducation.org.uk and by post to Christian Education, 1020 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LB.

The series is accompanied by eight free videos on the Paediatric Chaplaincy Network website, with the stories narrated by mountaineer and author, Bear Grylls. The web address is www.paediatric-chaplaincy-network.org, and each book has two of the mini-films, one with interactive questions to help children to engage with the story.