

## About the Author & Illustrator



**Mary Joslin** wrote *The Goodbye Boat* when she needed a way to talk with her children about saying goodbye after her children's much loved grandfather died. She is a children's book editor at Lion Publishing and has written a number of books for children, including *Do the Angels Watch Close By?* and *The Good Man of Assisi*. She currently lives in an Oxfordshire village with her family.



**Claire St. Louis Little** studied illustration at Falmouth College of Art. When she was just fresh out of art school, she was delighted to be asked to illustrate *The Goodbye Boat* but found the job emotionally draining because the book is so sad. She drew on her own sadness over the loss of a friend to cancer and of her dog who had to be put to sleep halfway through the project. She currently lives and works in Oxford.

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### THE GOODBYE BOAT

Written by Mary Joslin, illustrated by Claire St. Louis Little

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9¼" x 8½" • 28 pages • All ages

Full-color illustrations throughout

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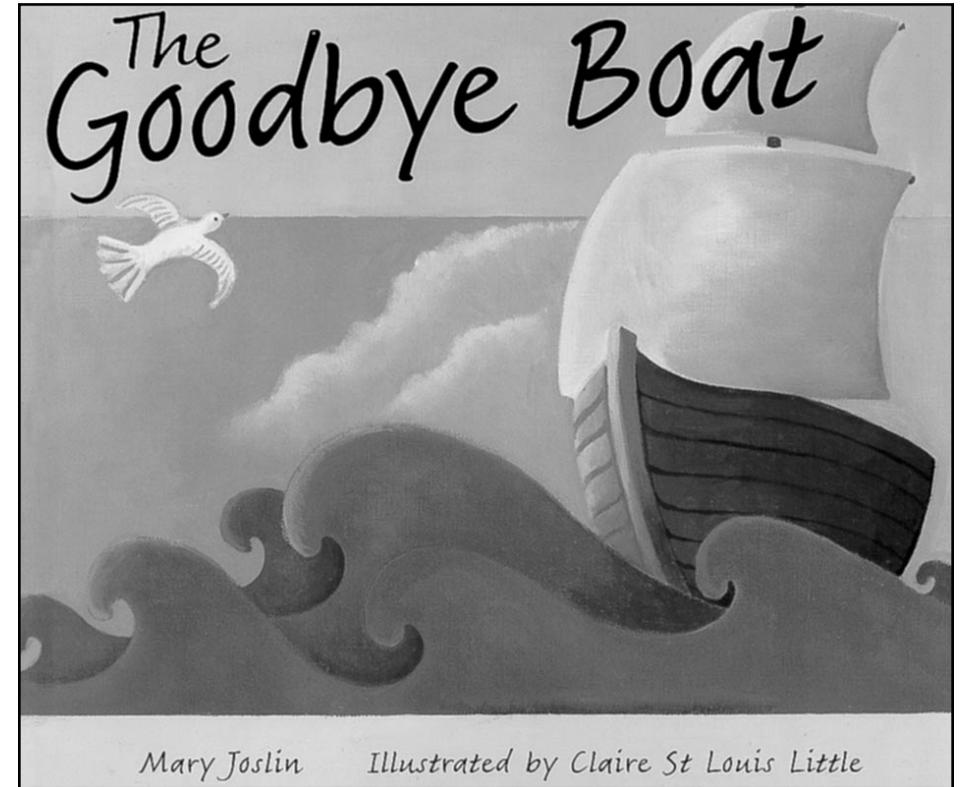
If you have suggestions for using *The Goodbye Boat* with children, please send them to us at the address below.



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## An Eerdmans Discussion Guide



# The Goodbye Boat

by Mary Joslin, illustrated by Claire St. Louis Little

Saying goodbye to someone you love is always hard. Saying goodbye when someone you love dies is perhaps the hardest thing of all. *The Goodbye Boat* uses thought-provoking text and evocative illustrations to open discussion with readers of any age who have had to say goodbye to someone they love. This story provides a message of hope that sadness will ease and that death is not the end.

## Notes on Reading THE GOODBYE BOAT



- *The Goodbye Boat* explores the pain and grief of saying goodbye through the use of simple text and evocative illustrations. While reading, think about the meaning behind each word and the changes in the illustrations' colors from page to page.
- Some older children may want to read this book alone and may be open to talking about it with an adult later. But children of all ages — from the very young to even young teenagers — may

find it comforting to read *The Goodbye Boat* out loud with a trusted adult. Take your time and read it slowly and thoughtfully. Often a second or third reading is needed before some children feel ready to talk about the book and their own feelings.

### Discussion Openers: Questions to Think About

- Discuss friendship with the child. What qualities do good friends have? What does it mean when a good friend or someone else you love dies? How would this make you feel?
- What will help the boy with the tear say goodbye to the older woman? Do you feel ready to say goodbye to people you know and love? What would make you ready to say goodbye?
- Discuss where the boat might be sailing. Where is the somewhere new? Why might there be fruit on the trees in the somewhere new?



- Who will take care of the older woman in the somewhere new? Do you think the older woman will like the somewhere new?
- Will we ever get on the Goodbye Boat? How do you feel when you think about getting on the boat? Scared, sad, happy, curious? Where will you go on the boat? Who or what will you find in the somewhere new?

## Some Activities for Exploring THE GOODBYE BOAT

### WRITING

- Ask the child to write a story about someone they love who has died or moved away. The child might want to incorporate a form of transportation — like the boat in *The Goodbye Boat* — into his or her story. To start the child thinking, ask some questions — Where did the person go? How did you feel when he or she left?

### ART

- Notice with the child how the colors change in *The Goodbye Boat*, depending on the mood of the scene. Encourage the child to create a picture using colors that show how he or she is feeling right now. Talk about the picture together when the child has finished it. Ask the child how the mood of the picture would change if different colors were used.



### DRAMA

- Have the child create two puppets using socks or paper lunch-bags. Let one puppet represent the child and the other one the person that he or she said goodbye to. Encourage the child to have the two puppets talk to one another. What would they like to say? (Or the child could pretend that the person who is gone is sitting in an empty chair and talk to the invisible person in the chair.)

### MEMORY BOX

- Invite the child to make a “memory box” of the person he or she is missing. Ask the child to name some of his or her best memories of the person — favorite things they did together, qualities he or she especially liked about the person. Help the child think of things to put in the memory box to help him or her always remember those “best things.” The objects to go in the box might be photos, drawings, writings, or other items that symbolize the child's good memories of the person.