The poem, *The Squeeze*, was written in 2004 by poet and bereavement specialist, Deb Kosmer, expressly for the Center for Grieving Children. It is an important part of our Family Night closing ritual. For many families, the Center can be a ‘time-out’ for grief and it is comforting to close our evening, every session, with passing the candle and a commemoration. This serves to link us our hearts and hands together; to the past and to the future, as we live and love.

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**THE SQUEEZE / By Deb Kosmer**

What does it mean?
We stand in a circle with hands joined,
Waiting for the moment it comes to us,
Then quickly pass it on.

The Squeeze can mean:
I’m not alone, Someone cares,
Come back again, We’re in this together,
It’s okay to be sad, It’s okay to be mad,
It’s ok to be happy, It’s okay to be me.

And when I’m alone, I can give my own hand a squeeze and remember standing in a circle,
With people who care, and
Remember it’s okay to be me.
When dealing with loss sometimes it can be a challenge to remember all the positive things about ourselves. There can be a feeling of fear about the future without our loved one in it. Insecurity can step in because life, after the death of a loved one, has been drastically altered. Sometimes there is a feeling of helplessness because we were not able to prevent the death. The grief experience can be hard on our self esteem. Support is needed!

At Family Night on April 26th, we explored our strengths, talents, and proud moments in the metaphor of a custom-made pizza.

Here are some of the strengths that kids identified:

- Accepting, Adaptable, Awesome, Believing in Yourself, Brave (x2), Caring (x2), Confident (x2), Cool, Creative, Follows Rules, Forgiving, Fun, Good Listener (x3), Happy, Hardworking, Helpful (x2), Honest (x2), Hugs, Kind (x3), Loving, OK Making Mistakes, Good at Making New Friends, Can Memorize Lyrics, Outgoing, Patient (x2), Persevering, Positive, Respectful, Responsible, Smart (x2), Smiling, Strong Willed, Supports Others, Understanding.

That’s some pretty cool pepperoni!