



# Whatever Comes Tomorrow Activity Guide: Managing Worries

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Start by reading aloud *Whatever Comes Tomorrow*. Then follow up with the discussion questions and activities below and on the following pages. We can't control what will happen tomorrow, but we can give children tools for managing how they feel about challenges and uncertainty.

## Talk About Worries

Start the discussion by reading this message by Rebecca Gardyn Levington, author of *Whatever Comes Tomorrow*:

*Have you ever heard someone say that they have 'butterflies' in their belly? It's a way to describe that fluttery feeling in your body whenever you start thinking about all the hard or scary things that might happen in the future. This feeling is called **worry** or **anxiety**. Have you ever felt this way? If so, you're not alone! Everyone feels anxious and has 'butterflies' sometimes.*

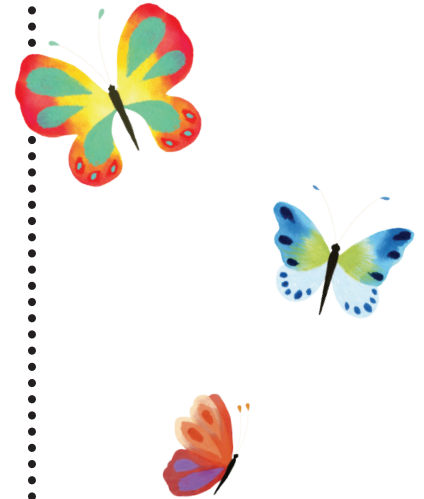
1. What situations did you notice in the book's illustrations that might be hard or scary for kids?
2. Can you think of a time you felt worried in a situation? What was going on?
3. What did you feel in your body when you felt worried?
4. What ended up happening?
5. The book reminds us that we don't know what might happen tomorrow. Does it excite you or worry you (or both!) to not know the future?

**Bonus Question:** How many butterflies can you find in the book's illustrations?



## Whatever Comes Tomorrow

Written by  
Rebecca Gardyn Levington  
Illustrated by  
Mariona Cabassa



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## Calm Your Body

Often when we feel worried, our bodies tense up or we might even get a headache, stomachache or other body pain. This can feel very unpleasant. Here are some ways to calm your body until the anxious feeling passes.

### 1. Notice Sensations

Sit or lie quietly and pay attention to how your body is feeling. If it is comfortable for you, close your eyes. Bring your focus to one body part at a time. Start with your toes, then move up to your legs, your belly, and so on, eventually making your way to the top of your head. Notice what you feel in each area of your body. Try not to judge what you notice as “good” or “bad.” Your only job is to notice how your body feels. Open your eyes. What did you notice during your body scan? How do you feel now?

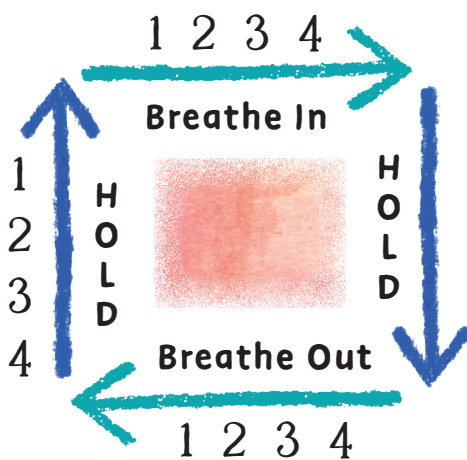
### 3. Breathe

Take some deep, slow breaths into your belly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Or try a breathing technique like square breathing.

### 2. Move Your Body

Sometimes moving your body can help relieve unpleasant sensations. Be sure to stop right away and tell a grown-up if any movement activities make your body hurt.

- Do some quick exercising like jumping jacks.
- Squeeze silly putty or a stress ball.
- Play catch with a friend.
- How else could you move your body?



## Square Breathing

This kind of breathing can help you feel more relaxed. Sit or lie down and follow these steps:

1. Breathe in through your nose, counting to 4 slowly in your head.
2. Hold the breath in your lungs while you count to 4 again.
3. Breathe out through your mouth, slowly counting to 4 as you release the air.
4. Hold for a count of 4 before breathing in again.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 as many times as you like.



## My Worry Plan

If you think a certain situation may cause you to feel worried, it can help to have a plan for what to do in that moment. Write down or draw the answers to these questions (with the help of a grown-up if needed). Keep your Worry Plan in your pocket and pull it out next time you are in this situation. You can make a Worry Plan for any situation that makes you feel anxious.

1. What is the situation?

*Example: I'm worried my parent or caregiver won't pick me up on time.*

2. I feel anxious about this when:

*Example: I'm at school.*

3. A grown-up I can talk to about this feeling is:

*Examples: my teacher or my parent*

4. Greet your feeling.

*Example: "Hello, Anxiety. I see you."*

5. Something I can say to this feeling is:

*Example: They are usually on time. But if they are late, my teacher will stay with me until I get picked up.*

6. Some things I can do to calm my body and mind until this feeling passes are:

*Examples: do square breathing or use my fidget toy*





## Take a Break from Worries

Sometimes we wish we could take a break from anxious feelings. Here are some ideas for distracting yourself until the feelings pass.

- Read jokes or ask someone to tell you a joke.
- Sing a song or dance to music.
- Play a game inside or outside, with a friend or on your own.
- Play with a pet.
- Call someone you like to talk to.



Draw a way you would like to try to take a break from worries.  
Choose from the list above or add your own idea!





## Make Worry Dolls

Originating in Guatemala, **muñecas quitapenas** (*moon-YAY-kas kee-ta-PEN-as*) — “worry dolls” or “trouble dolls” — are tiny dolls children can put under their pillows when they sleep. According to a Maya legend, the dolls take your worries from you and help you sleep peacefully.

### You'll Need

- thick paper (standard letter or A4 size)
- fabric scraps
- yarn / wool
- thin-tipped marker
- glue
- scissors
- tape



### Activity Steps

1. Cut a strip of paper about 2 in (5 cm) wide and 12 in (30 cm) long.
2. Roll the strip of paper into a tight cylinder to create the doll's body. Tape down the end of the roll so it doesn't unfold.
3. Wrap small pieces of fabric around the body for clothing. You can tie, glue or tape them on. Then glue on yarn for hair.
4. Draw on the eyes and mouth with a thin-tipped marker.
5. One sheet of paper makes about four dolls. Give the dolls out to your friends, letting them know that you are thinking about them and care about their worries.



### Using Your Worry Doll

Take your doll to bed with you at night. Tell it the worries you would like it to take away. As you put the doll under your pillow, try the tradition of rubbing its tummy a few times so that your concerns don't hurt it. Before you go to sleep, tell it some good things too — try to remember three specific things you were grateful for that day.

