

The Elf Who Didn't Believe in Children

By Sara Madden and Illustrated by Hayley Helsten

Educator & Librarian Resource Guide

Overview

This story explores belief, empathy, illness, and emotional courage through the journey of Flossy, an elf who learns that some of the most important things in life cannot be seen — only felt.

It provides a gentle way to discuss:

- Doubt and belief
- Emotional growth
- Compassion
- Illness and recovery
- Hope and resilience

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explore empathy and emotional awareness
- Practice expressing feelings through writing and art
- Understand belief as emotional growth
- Discuss illness and care in age-appropriate ways
- Develop compassion and perspective-taking

Discussion Questions

1. Why didn't Flossy believe in children at first?
2. What changed her mind?
3. How did meeting Cardon affect her?
4. What does it mean to believe in something you can't see?

5. How do we show kindness when someone is scared or sick?

Social-Emotional Learning Connections

Skill	Application
Empathy	Understanding others' feelings
Self-awareness	Recognizing emotions
Compassion	Responding with care
Resilience	Facing difficult moments
Reflection	Learning through experience

Classroom Activities

1. The Belief Wall

Create a classroom wall where students post:

- Something they believe in
- Something they hope for
- Something that makes them feel safe

2. Letter Writing Station

Students write:

- Encouraging notes
- Get-well messages
- Letters of kindness

Optional extension: mail them or display them.

3. Feelings Through Art

Students draw:

- What fear looks like
- What kindness feels like
- What courage means to them

Cross-Curricular Connections

Subject	Connection
ELA	Character analysis, theme
SEL	Emotional awareness
Art	Symbolic drawing
Health	Coping & resilience
Social Studies	Community & care

A Gentle Note for Educators & Families

This book touches on illness and uncertainty in a soft, supportive way. Some children may relate deeply; others may simply enjoy the story.

Allow children to:

- Ask questions
- Sit quietly
- Draw instead of talk
- Share only if they wish

All responses are valid.

Suggested Use

- ✓ Classroom read-aloud
- ✓ Library story time
- ✓ Counseling sessions
- ✓ Family reading
- ✓ SEL curriculum support

Author's Intent

The Elf Who Didn't Believe in Children was written to help children understand that:

- It's okay to question
- It's okay to be afraid

- And it's okay to believe again

Sometimes the bravest thing we can do is care.