

Books about Death

For Pre-school and Early Elementary School Children

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death, Brown, Laurie Krasny and Marc Brown. This book explains death in a way that pre-school children can understand.

Everett Anderson's Goodbye, Lucille Clifton (Holt, 1988), Afro-Americans, ages 3 – 6, father's death.

My Grandpa Died Today, Joan Fassler (Behavioral, 1971), Jewish culture, primary grades.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney, Judith Viorst (Altheneum, 1971) Ages 4 – 8.
The Happy Funeral, Bunting, E. New York: Harper and Row. This is an exceptionally interesting book about a little girl who participates in the rituals of her grandfather's funeral.

Last Week My Brother Anthony Died, Hickman, M.W. (1984). Abington Press. Told through the eyes of a girl whose infant brother died of congenital heart disease. The story ends on an upbeat note.

Lifetimes. Bantam Books. Mellonie, Bryan and Robert Ingpen (1983). This is a simply written and informative book about the life cycles of all living things. It tells about beginnings (birth) and endings (death) with living in between as natural and inevitable.

Jasper's Day. Parker, Marjorie Blain. Illustrator: Janet Wilson (2002). Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press. A terminally ill dog who has been part of a loving family.

Why Did Grandpa Die? Shook-Hazen, B. (1985). Racine, WI: Western Publishing Co. A little girl's reaction to the death of her grandfather including age appropriate confusion, bewilderment and boredom with the mourning rituals.

A Quilt for Elizabeth. Tiffault, B. (1992). Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. A little girl and her grandmother decide to make a quilt from her father's garments after the father gets sick and dies. It deals with the loss and mourning in a highly creative manner. Highly recommended.

Saying Goodbye to Daddy. Vigna, Judith (1991). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co. A kindergarten girl whose father dies in a car accident. Her mother and grandfather are there to help her with the confusion and denial. Highly recommended. Ages 6-9

What's heaven, by Marie Shriver

Badger's Parting Gifts; Susan Varley; 1984

Sesame Street also has a grief packet you can download www.sesamestreet.org/grief

For Elementary School Children

Good-bye Papa, Una Leavy, ages 5 – 10.

The Accident. Carrick, C. (1976). New York: Houghton Mifflin, Clarion Books. A little boy's reaction to his dog being run over by a truck. The boy's feelings are captured accurately, but the story is limited in scope and time frame (only one day). However, it focuses accurately on the boy's reactions and it portrays the adults as helpful.

Dusty Was My Friend. Claudy, A.F. (1984). Human Sciences Press.

Well-told story of an eight-year-old boy whose ten-year-old friend died in a car accident. This is an excellent book for anyone who has lost a close friend. Ages 8 – 12.

Mustard. Graeber, C. (1982). New York: MacMillan Publishing Co. About the aging and death of a cat. The book is highly recommended because of its realism and sensitivity.

Poppy's Chair. Hesse, K. (1993). New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

This is an excellent story about a little girl who tries to come to grips with the death of her grandfather. The element of fear, an important element of mourning, is handled in a thoughtful manner.

Emily's Sadhappy Season. Lowden-Golightly, S. (1993). Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. A little girl's reaction to the sudden death of her father from a heart attack. The story is realistic and the emotional responses are honest and sincere, unusual in children's stories about painful subjects. Includes helpful tips for children grieving the death of a parent. Highly recommended. Ages 6-10.

A Taste of Blackberries. Smith, D. B. Boston: Thomas Crowell Company.

A little boy whose best friend dies and his struggles to come to terms with the loss. The story is about the events leading up to the death, the loss and the funeral. At the end, with the help of adults, there is some resolution of the loss.

Saying Goodbye to Grandma. Thomas, J. R. (1988). New York: Clarion Books.

A seven-year-old girl attends her grandmother's funeral. The story is nicely told, charming and realistic at the same time. Ages 8-12

Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs, Tomie De Paola; ages 4 – 10, death of grandmother.

A Birthday Present for Daniel, Juliet Rothman, ages 4 – 8, school age sisters remember their older brother.

I'll Always Love You, Hans Wilhelm, ages 6 – 10, death of a dog.

Tear Soup, Pat Schweibert

Badger's Parting Gifts, Frances Varley

"The Fall of Freddy the Leaf," by Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.

For Older Elementary and Middle School Children

Sun & Spoon. Henkes, Kevin (1997). New York: Greenwillow Books.

This thoughtful, well-written book describes how a ten-year-old boy deals with the death of his grandmother in a constructive way.

You Shouldn't Have to Say Goodbye. Hermes, P. (1982). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. A young girl's struggle to deal with her mother's imminent death and of their interactions with each other. There are some tender moments between the parents and the child as the story builds step-by-step to the inevitable end.

Lanky Longlegs. Lorenzen, K. (1983). New York: Atheneum. A Margaret K. McElderry Book. An outstanding book translated from Norwegian after winning numerous prizes, about a girl whose little brother dies and whose dog has pups. Basic questions about life and death are handled in the course

of daily living. The characters are interesting and they experience a range of feelings about each other. Even though this book is about the death of a sibling, it would be good reading for children who experience any kind of loss.

For Middle School Children

Tiger Eyes. Blume, Judy (1987). Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury Press.

A fourteen-year-old girl whose father is shot in a store robbery. Ages 14 to adult.

Puggy Brown Ears' Purr Song. Fausey, Linda (2005). This is a beautifully illustrated story about a cat's loss of his best cat friend, the feelings stirred and attempts to deal with the loss.

This is a good resource for children in late latency and early adolescence who like cats.

Beat the turtle drum. Greene, C. (1976). New York: Viking Press.

The younger one dies after falling out of a tree, the older one (thirteen years old) talks about her feelings in a very honest, sincere and realistic manner. An excellent book for children who have lost a sibling.

Bridge to Terabithis, Katherine Patterson, ages 10 – 14; Newberry Award book.

There are Two Kinds of Terrible, Peggy Mann, ages 12 – adult; 15 year old boy's mother dies of cancer.

For High School Students

A Matter of Time. Schotter, R. (1979). New York: Collins Press.

This is a very moving, beautifully written book about a high school girl, an only child, who is coping with her mother's illness and anticipated death.

NONFICTION

Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to a Child, Bryon Mellonie and Robert Ingpen, ages 4 – 10, non-fiction.

A Kid's Book About Death and Dying By and For Kids, Eric Rofes & the unit at Fayerweather St. School, ages 12 – adult.

Talking About Death; A Dialogue Between Parents and Children, Earl Grollman, adults and children. Good resource to help parents help their children through loss.

The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide, Helen Fitzgerald, adults. Easy to read format, advice to help children in the face of death.

Parenting Through Crisis: Helping Kids in Times of Loss, Grief, and Change, by Barbara Coloroso.

www.griefwatch.com

<http://www.barrharris.org/barbooks.html>

www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html

www.dougy.org