



## **Books for Children on Dealing with Death**

By Lynnette Lowrimore

*Lynnette Lowrimore is a retired Air Force intelligence officer who, intent on teaching full-time, returned to school to obtain her master's degree in elementary education, when her two daughters made her a grandmother five times over. Juggling grandchildren, long-term substitute teaching, and volunteer endeavors brought her immense satisfaction. But tragedy struck in March 2012 when her youngest grandson, Barrett, died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).*

*Lynnette now dedicates her time to volunteering on projects that promote SIDS education, research, and fundraising to honor Barrett's memory. As part of this effort, she partnered with the National SUID/SIDS Resource Center to produce this bibliography, in collaboration with other center staff. The center is grateful to Lynette for her unique perspective and valuable contribution.*

### **Introduction**

The death of a baby from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is devastating for the entire family. Such a loss is particularly difficult for children. Daily routines are interrupted, the adults in their lives are sad and emotional, and a beloved sibling is gone. It is difficult to explain the tragedy to children—particularly very young children—who have no understanding of the permanence of death. It is a struggle to know how much information a child can process about death and the rituals associated with saying goodbye.

In explaining the death of a baby brother or sister, experts urge parents to avoid euphemisms (like the baby “went to sleep”); not dodge questions; explain grief in brief, simple ways; and acknowledge emotions. Not all children’s questions will come up immediately after the tragedy; some may emerge days or months later. Early conversations are likely to generate questions about death, heaven, or other related topics.

When the unthinkable happened to us, we struggled to find appropriate picture books to read to our then 2½-year-old granddaughter to help her cope with the loss of her brother.

We couldn't find much in our local stores, and online grief resources were often not suitable for very young children.

This bibliography is intended to help parents or caregivers navigate children's questions that are likely to come up after the death of a younger sibling from sudden infant death. The books are divided by category.

The books listed here are intended primarily for children ages 2–5, who may not be able to completely verbalize their questions. For children older than age 5 who are more verbal, these books are a useful means to start a dialogue. Some books could be placed in more than one category; they are listed under the category where there is the most emphasis. A list of books suitable for older children appears at the end of the bibliography. Also included is a list of books that deal with the loss of someone other than a younger sibling.

While this is not an exhaustive list of all available children's books on dealing with death, it is a compilation of those most recommended and will serve as a useful resource for families. Ideally this bibliography will be used in conjunction with the services of professionals such as therapists, clergy and other religious leaders or spiritual guides, counselors, and trained support group facilitators.

### **Books About the Death of a Brother or Sister from SIDS**

Only a few books that deal with this subject are written for young children. Following is a list of books in print that specifically talk about a SIDS loss. They accurately portray the types of situations my own family confronted and are written and illustrated in a child-friendly way. These books are a logical starting point for parents and caregivers faced with explaining the loss of a brother or sister to a young child.

#### *Flying Hugs and Kisses*

Sample J, Pandey LK (illus.). 2006. *Flying hugs and kisses*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press. 32 pp.

This book helps parents teach children to understand their experiences after the death of a brother or sister from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The book describes five siblings who creatively support each other while showing their individual feelings about the SIDS death of their baby brother. During the story the children are told that their baby brother is in heaven. Ages 4–8.

#### *Missing Hannah: Based on a True Story of Sudden Infant Death*

Kane D. 2006. *Missing Hannah: Based on a true story of sudden infant death*. Bloomington, IN: Author House. 50 pp.

This book is written in first person from the perspective of a sister describing the excitement of having a new baby in the family and then losing her to SIDS. Illustrations are by school-age children and are especially appropriate for young children. Ages 4–8.

### *Stacy Had a Little Sister*

Old WC, Friedman J (illus.). 1995. Stacy had a little sister. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman. 32 pp.

This book tells the story of an older sister who experiences the death of her baby sister from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The book shows how the older sister's feelings change throughout the grief process, how her parents and other family members react, and how her questions are answered. Ages 3–8 (parent reading).

### **Books That Deal with Death from Non-Religious Perspectives**

For those who prefer to explain death as a natural part of the cycle of life, the following books are appropriate. They use experiences in nature that young children can relate to but still answer children's questions.

### *The Dragonfly Door*

Adams J, Gibson BL (illus.). 2013. The dragonfly door. Maple Plains, MN: Feather Rock Books. 40 pp.

This picture book explores the transformation of a water nymph into a beautiful dragonfly through the story of Lea and Nym. The book also describes Nym's struggles when her friend disappears from their underwater home. Nym realizes that some day she will see her friend again in a new world. This book can be useful for parents who want to explain death in cycle of life terms to their young child. The book also offers information on the life cycle of dragonflies.

### *The Fall of Freddie The Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages*

Buscaglia L. 1982. The fall of Freddie the leaf: A story of life for all ages. Thorofare, NJ: Slack Incorporated. 32 pp.

This book uses the life cycle of a leaf as metaphor for human life and death. It tells the story of living through the seasons and what to expect when winter comes. It helps parents who want to explain death to their child from a natural cycle of life perspective vs. a religious one. Ages 5 and up.

### *Lifetimes: A Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*

Mellonie B, Ingpen R. 1983. Lifetimes: A beautiful way to explain death to children. New York, NY: Bantam Books. 37 pp.

This book discusses the cycle of life for all living things, using examples of plants, animals, and people to explain death and to relate it to the universality of the life cycle. Ages 5 and up.

*Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children*

Stickney D, Nordstrom RH (illus.). 2010. Water bugs and dragonflies: Explaining death to young children. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press. 32 pp.

This picture book for young children explains death from a cycle of life perspective using the example of water bugs who turn into dragonflies and cannot return to their underwater lives in a pond. It is suitable for parents looking for books not written from a religious perspective. Ages 4 and up.

**Books That Deal with Death That Include a Religious Perspective**

For families that have a faith tradition, the loss of a baby is often explained in religious terms, including that the baby is now in heaven. This is a very abstract concept for very young children and will likely result in many questions (for example, where is heaven and what is it like?). Even for those who are comfortable with their faith, these concepts are difficult to explain in ways that young children can understand. The following books aid in those conversations. It is not unusual for children to ask the same questions over and over. Having these books available can be handy for re-addressing questions as they arise.

*God Gave Us Heaven*

Bergen L, Bryant LJ (illus.). 2008. God gave us heaven. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press. 40 pp.

This picture book provides young children with an explanation of heaven, as told by Father Bear, in answer to questions posed by his bear cubs. The book describes heaven as the destination for both young and old, a place without pain, suffering, or tears. Ages 3–7.

*I Wonder What You Do on Your First Day in Heaven*

Welsh P, Welsh T (illus.). 2005. I wonder what you do on your first day in heaven. [Kirkwood, MO]: Phoebe Welsh Publishing. 70 pp.

This picture book tells a story of a child who dies and how his friends and family wonder what he does in heaven. It describes feelings of grief and then of hope and peace and portrays the child as healthy and happy in heaven. All ages.

*Someone I Loved Died*

Tangvald CH, Kennedy A (illus.). 2012. Someone I loved died. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cooke. 36 pp.

This book leads children through grief within the Christian tradition after the death of a loved one. Interactive resources allow children to write and draw to create a memory

book of the loved one's life. Tips for parents are provided to encourage discussing feelings of loss. Ages 4–8.

*What Is Heaven Like?*

Lewis B, Querin P (illus.). 2006. What is heaven like? Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers. 32 pp.

This picture book addresses questions children ask most often about heaven. It discusses the loss of a grandfather and includes quotations from the bible. The final page offers suggestions for parents and Christian educators. Ages 4–8.

*What's Heaven?*

Shriver M, Speidel S (illus.). 2007. What's heaven? New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. 32 pp.

This book answers a question often posed by children in response to death—what is heaven? The mother in the story uses the example of the loss of a great-grandmother to answer specific questions relating to heaven, such as where it is and how we get there. It also discusses remembering the person who has died. The book is written from a nondenominational Christian perspective. Ages 5 and up.

*Where Do People Go When They Die?*

Portnoy MA, Haas SO (illus.). 2004. Where do people go when they die? Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Publishing. 24 pp.

This book for young children offers answers to children's questions about death and where people go when they die. Answers are from religious, naturalistic, and other perspectives. The book includes an afterword with suggestions for how parents can talk to children who have experienced the death of a loved one. Ages 5 and up.

**Books That Explain Death Rituals in Our Culture**

Most adults have experienced loss and have attended funerals and burials. So we have some frame of reference about what to expect after a death. But children usually don't have this type of experience, so customs and rituals may seem alien to them and can be traumatic if not explained.

Experts differ on whether young children should attend funerals, but even if they don't attend, they will hear adults planning and talking about funerals. The following books provide a good starting point to avert misunderstandings and misconceptions that can add to a child's grief and trauma after a death.

*A Complete Book About Death for Kids*

Grollman E, Johnson J. 2006. A complete book about death for kids. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. 46 pp.

This book helps children understand the death of pets or loved ones and the feelings they may experience over time. The “death” of toys is also addressed. The book talks about common arrangements and experiences at funerals, cemeteries, or cremations. Ages 6 and up.

*Tell Me, Papa: Answers to Questions Children Ask About Death and Dying*

Johnson M, Johnson J, Blake AC (illus.). 2005. Tell me, papa: Answers to questions children ask about death and dying. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. 29 pp. This book portrays a grandfather telling children what death is, what happens before and during a funeral and burial, and what cremation is. The book also describes different families’ beliefs about dying. Illustrations show people of different races, as well as animals. Ages 4 and up (parent reading). Ages 8 and up (independent reading).

*What Happens When Someone Dies: A Child’s Guide to Death and Funerals*

Mundy M, Alley RW (illus.). 2009. What happens when someone dies: A child’s guide to death and funerals. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press. 34 pp. This book explains to young children what they may see and experience at a church funeral and graveside. Written with children’s questions in mind, it covers many topics that parents and other adults might not realize children are not familiar with. Written from a religious perspective, the book shares tips for talking with children about this subject. Ages 4–8.

**Books That Deal with Emotions and Grief After a Death**

Telling a child that a loved one has died is difficult for a parent or caregiver who is dealing with shock, pain, and grief too. But parents or caregivers dealing with their own grief need to be sensitive to how the loss is affecting their child, who is often unable to verbalize pain.

Experts report that some common signs of mourning in children include anxiety, difficulty sleeping, sadness and longing, anger and acting out, guilt, difficulty focusing, and physical complaints like headaches and stomachaches. Children need to be reassured that what they are feeling is a normal reaction to sadness and encouraged to verbalize and express what they are feeling. Parents should not be afraid to talk about their feelings or to cry in front of their child during these discussions.

Some children believe they contributed to the death or feel guilty for a small slight or thought that occurred before the death that becomes magnified in their minds afterwards. Also, children pick up on cues from their parents, who are understandably sad and hurting, themselves. The following books help children recognize that their feelings are normal and help them verbalize what they are experiencing. Parents can read the books to their child again and again as the child moves through various stages of grief.

### *After the Funeral*

Wunsch JL, Keating P (illus.). 1995. *After the funeral*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. 32 pp. This book offers several scenarios in which young children lose someone important. It explores feelings that children have after the funeral of a loved one is over. The book briefly mentions heaven and gives examples of typical situations and reactions that children might experience in their grief journey. Ages 5 and up.

### *A Birthday Present for Daniel: A Child's Story of Loss*

Rothman J, Gish L (illus.). 1996 (cloth), 2001 (paper). *A birthday present for Daniel: A child's story of loss*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. 38 pp. This illustrated book tells of the death of a girl's brother and how she tries to understand her own and her family's feelings. The book creatively explores family members' different reactions and how it is okay for people to react in different ways. The book culminates with a description of how the family decides to honor a significant milestone—the brother's birthday. Deceptively simple in appearance, the book covers many aspects of the grief journey. Ages 5 and up (parent reading). Ages 9–12 (independent reading).

### *The Empty Place: A Child's Guide to Understanding Death*

Temes R, Carlisle K (illus.). 1992. *The empty place: A child's guide to understanding death*. Far Hills, NJ: Small Horizons Press. 42 pp. This book tells a story of a 9-year-old boy whose older sister has died. His babysitter, who also experienced the death of a sibling, helps him understand his emotions and how to process them in healthy ways.

### *Everett Anderson's Goodbye*

Clifton L, Grafalconi A (illus.). 1997. *Everett Anderson's goodbye*. New York, NY: Square Fish Publishing. 32 pp. This book describes a young boy who is trying to come to grips with his father's death. It talks about the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Illustrations portray an African-American mother and child. Ages 5–8.

### *I Miss You: A First Look at Death*

Thomas P, Harker E (illus.). 2001. *I miss you: A first look at death*. Hauppauge, NY: Educational Series. 32 pp. This picture book helps young children understand that death is a natural complement to life, that grief and a sense of loss are normal following a loved one's death, and that it may take time for those feelings to change. The book discusses different cultures' beliefs;

illustrations portray people of different races. Tips for parents and caregivers are included on the last page. Ages 4 and up.

*The Invisible String*

Karst P, Stevenson G (illus.). 2000. *The invisible string*. Camarillo, CA: Devorss and Co. 36 pp.

This picture book calms children's fears about being apart from loved ones. Parents can use the book to help explain to children that lost loved ones are part of an invisible string of love reaching to heaven. Ages 3 and up.

*Penny Bear's Gift of Love: A Story of Friendship Between a Grieving Young Boy and a Magical Little Bear*

Wigglesworth P, Eager M (illus.). 2003. *Penny Bear's gift of love: A story of friendship between a grieving young boy and a magical little bear*. Marblehead, MA: Penny Bear Publishing. 84 pp.

This chapter book describes a teddy bear who helps a grieving young boy through his first year after his mother's death. The book deals with emotions in a child-friendly manner. Ages 4 and up (parent reading). Ages 8 and up (independent reading).

*Sad Isn't Bad: A Good-Grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing with Loss*

Mundy M, Alley RW (illus.). 2010. *Sad isn't bad: A good-grief guidebook for kids dealing with loss*. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press. 32 pp.

This book tells children who have experienced the death of a loved one that the world is still safe, life is good, and hurting hearts mend. It helps comfort children facing and coping with death. The book briefly mentions God and prayer in the context of coping mechanisms. Ages 6 and up.

*Since My Brother Died: Desde Que Murio Mi Hermano*

Munoz-Kiehne M, Pitzer S (illus.). 2000. *Since my brother died: Desde que murio mi hermano*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. 16 pp.

This booklet gives a child's perspective on how life is different since his older brother died. The booklet talks about how people act differently toward the child, the child's feelings, how he remembers his brother, and how he can cope with his emotions. The booklet also offers tips for parents, caregivers, teachers, and counselors about how to help children who have lost siblings. Available in English and Spanish. Ages 5–12.

*Where Are You? A Child's Book About Loss*

Olivieri L, Elder K (illus.). 2007. *Where are you? A child's book about loss*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu. 21 pp.

This book talks about death in a way that is suitable for very young children. It is briefly narrated and includes large pictures. The book discusses how children can understand and cope with the loss of a loved one, the funeral service, and feelings of loss. Ages 2–4.

### **Books That Use Animals or Fantasy Characters to Explain Death and Dying**

Some parents, recognizing that their child is having a difficult time with real life situations, use animals or fantasy characters to explain complex subjects in a nonthreatening way. This can help young children understand death. Many families have established bedtime rituals that include reading books together. The following books look and feel similar to typical bedtime books; therefore they communicate important messages in familiar packages.

#### *Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope: A Read Aloud Story for People of All Ages About Loving and Losing, Friendship and Hope*

O'Toole D, McWhirter KL (illus.). 1988. Aarvy aardvark finds hope: A read aloud story for people of all ages about loving and losing, friendship and hope. Burnsville, NC: Compassion Books. 80 pp.

This book uses animal characters to talk about the cycle of grief experienced after death in a way that children can easily follow. The book discusses loss of parents, siblings, and friends. It also highlights the important roles that others can play in the recovery process. Ages 4 and up.

#### *Always and Forever*

Durant A, Gliori D (illus.). 2004. Always and forever. New York, NY: Harcourt. 24 pp. This simple book uses animals (Otter, Mole, and Hare) to tell the tale of their grief about losing a friend (Fox) and how they came to feel better, with Squirrel's help, by sharing fond memories of Fox and doing things to remember him, like planting a garden. Ages 3–7 (parent reading).

#### *Goodbye Mousie*

Harris RH, Ormerod J (illus.). 2004. Goodbye mousie. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks. 24 pp.

This book tells the story of how a young boy responds to the death of his pet mouse, including holding a funeral for the mouse. The story shows the various ways he grieves and how he ultimately learns to accept his loss. It depicts the stages of grief in a nonthreatening way. Ages 4 and up (parent reading).

#### *Grief Is Like a Snowflake*

Cook J, DuFalla A (illus.). 2011. Grief is like a snowflake. Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues. 32 pp.

Using pine trees as characters, this book discusses the death of a father and the emotions Little Tree experiences as a result. The book gives examples of ways of grieving and offers coping tools from a non-religious perspective. Ages 3 and up.

*When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death*

Brown LK, Brown M. 1998. When dinosaurs die: A guide to understanding death. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company. 32 pp.

This book describes feelings children may have about the death of a loved one and discusses ways to honor the memory of someone who has died. The book explains what “alive” and “dead” mean in a way that young children can understand. Sections on customs and what comes after death portray beliefs of different cultures. The book also discusses ways to remember people. Ages 4–8.

*When I Die, Will I Get Better?*

Breebaart J, Breebaart P. 1993. When I die, will I get better? New York, NY: Peter Bedrick Books. 29 pp.

This book was written by a young boy whose younger sibling died to help him understand and express his feelings of grief and loss. He created rabbit characters to tell the story, and his father illustrated his words. The story describes the younger brother’s death, the funeral, and how the rabbit learns to feel better again. Ages 5 and up (parent reading).

**Books That Deal with Other Types of Deaths (Parent, Grandparent, Friend, or Pet)**

While the focus of this bibliography is the death of a younger sibling, other deaths are difficult to explain to young children as well. Parents can use the following books to help children process their feelings in those instances. While the loss of a pet is generally less devastating than the loss of a person, for most children, it is their first experience confronting the reality of death, so it can be traumatic.

*Daddy’s Promise*

Cohen CK, Heiney J, Gordon MJ (illus.). 1997. Daddy’s promise. Bloomfield Hills, MI: Promise Publications. 20 pp.

This book describes Jesse, a young boy, and his journey of discovery after the death of his father. The book describes Jesse’s feeling and questions and how his mother and a series of dreams where Jesse visits his father and learns about life, death, and life after death help him answer those questions. Ages 6 and up.

*Dog Heaven*

Rylant C. 1995. Dog heaven. New York, NY: Blue Sky Press. 40 pp.

This picture book for young children describes what heaven is like for dogs, with God to look after them, room to run, children to play with, biscuit treats, clouds to sleep on, and

a home for each dog. The book is meant to reassure children that their pets are thriving in heaven. Ages 4 and up.

*How Can I Help, Papa? A Child's Journey Through Loss and Healing*

Al-Chokhachy E, Graf U (illus.). 2002. How can I help, Papa? A child's journey through loss and healing. Gloucester, MA: Works of Hope Publishing. 30 pp.

This book describes a young girl whose beloved grandfather becomes ill and dies. The book describes how she helps him during his illness by keeping him company and bringing him water and snacks. It discusses emotions and loss in a way that children can understand, treating death as a part of life. It was written to meet the emotional and educational needs of children with a terminally ill loved one in their lives. Ages 4 and up (parent reading). Ages 7 and up (independent reading).

*I Had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to Children About Death of a Friend*

Cohn J, Owens G (illus.). 1987. I had a friend named Peter: Talking to children about death of a friend. New York, NY: Morrow Junior Books. 30 pp.

This book describes a young girl whose friend dies after being hit by a car and her feelings and fears as she deals with her loss. The story shows how her parents answer her questions about death and funerals in a somber but reassuring manner. The illustrations are age appropriate and evocative. Ages 5 and up (parent reading).

*Samantha Jane's Missing Smile: A Story About Coping with the Loss of a Parent*

Kaplow J, Pincus D, Spiegel B (illus.). 2007. Samantha Jane's missing smile: A story about coping with the loss of a parent. Washington, DC: Magination Press. 25 pp.

This picture book tells the story of a young girl whose father has recently died, describing the full range of emotions, questions, and worries that children have when a parent dies. The book offers ways to remember and honor the lost parent and encourages the open sharing of feelings. The book includes advice for parents about how to cope with children's grief reactions and parents' role in a child's grieving process. Ages 3 and up.

*Saying Goodbye to Daddy*

Vigna J. 1991. Saying goodbye to Daddy. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company. 32 pp.

This book describes a young girl's feelings after her father is killed in a car accident as her mother and grandfather help her through the grieving process. The book describes in child-friendly terms the death journey, including the visitation, funeral, and burial of a loved one. A funeral service in a church is included. Ages 4 and up.

*Saying Goodbye to Lulu*

Demas C, Hoyt A (illus.). 2004. Saying goodbye to Lulu. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company. 32 pp.

This book describes the phases of grief as a young girl watches her dog grow older, get weaker, and die. Over time the girl discovers that the sweet memory of her dog will live on forever in her heart. This book is intended to help a child cope with the loss of a pet—or, by extension, anything or anyone they love.

*The Secret of the Dragonfly: A Story of Hope and Promise*

Shaw-Cramer G, Jones J (illus.). 2010. The secret of the dragonfly: A story of hope and promise. Portland, OR: Grief Watch. 24 pp.

This picture book tells the story of how a grandmother relates the change of a water bug into a dragonfly to illustrate to her grandson the permanence of a relationship even after death. The story has a spiritual element in that it briefly describes the presumption of an afterlife (described in the book as heaven) but is not overtly religious. Ages 5 and up.

*Up In Heaven*

Clark EC. 2004. Up in heaven. London, UK: Andersen Press. 32 pp.

This picture book explains death to very young children using the death of a pet. Parents can use this scenario as a bridge to discuss other types of loss. The book portrays a child's dog in heaven. Ages 2 and up.

*What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?*

Romain T. 1999. What on earth do you do when someone dies? Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing. 72 pp.

This book talks directly to children about what death means and how to cope with it. It asks the questions children have about death—Why? How? What next? Is it my fault? What's a funeral? It describes and discusses the overwhelming emotions involved in grieving—sadness, fear, anger, guilt—and offers practical strategies for dealing with them. The book also suggests meaningful ways to remember and honor the person who has died. Ages 4 and up (parent reading). Ages 7–12 (independent reading).

**Books for Older Children That Deal with Death**

The following books are geared to pre-teens and teenagers who have experienced a death and struggle with articulating their feelings. For pre-teens and teenagers in this situation, emotions are often compounded because they don't want to add to their parents' grief. Boys in this age group, in particular, may have difficulty talking about death and showing their feelings.

*If Only*

Geithner C. 2012. If only. New York, NY: Scholastic Press. 336 pp.

This book is a fictional account of a young teenage girl and what she experiences after her mother's death from cancer. It describes the many emotions she faces at home and at school, with friends and relatives, during the holidays, and throughout the school year and shows how she and her father cope. Ages 10 and up.

*Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope With Losing Someone You Love*

Grollman EA. 1993. Straight talk about death for teenagers: How to cope with losing someone you love. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 160 pp.

This book helps teenagers cope with the loss of a loved one, whether a close friend or a family member. Topics include the first days after a death, feelings, who died and how, advice for special relationships, facing the immediate future, learning to cope, rebuilding a life, and in loving memory. Ages 12 and up.

*Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child. (4th ed.)*

Grollman EA, Avishai S (illus.). 2011. Talking about death: A dialogue between parent and child. (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 128 pp.

This book provides advice to parents of children who have experienced the death of a loved one. It discusses how adults can talk with children in terms children can understand and provides a section for adults and children to read together that features a read-along story and answers to questions children ask about death. Resources are provided for adults who are also grieving and for additional help.

*Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss*

Schwiebert P, DeKlyen C, Bills T (illus.). 2005. Tear soup: A recipe for healing after loss. Portland, OR: Grief Watch. 56 pp.

This book is the story of Grandy, who has just suffered a big loss. She blends emotions and memories into tear soup as a way to work through the healing and grieving process. The book describes how people grieve in different ways, and that this is okay. One brief section describes attending worship services. Following the story are tips on taking care of oneself or a grieving friend, tips for men and for couples who are both grieving, and tips on how to help a grieving child. Ages 8 and up. Available in English and Spanish.

*When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens About Grieving and Healing*

Gootman ME. 2005. When a friend dies: A book for teens about grieving and healing. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing. 128 pp.

This book explains the grieving and healing process for teenagers in a series of questions and statements with explanations. The book presents well-known quotations as well as quotations from teenagers who have experienced grief. Ages 6 and up.

*When Someone Dies*

Greenlee S, Drath B (illus.). 1992. When someone dies. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers. 30 pp.

This book addresses the hurt, fear, and confusion that children and adults alike feel after a death and offers suggestions for easing pain, surviving changes, and remembering good times. Illustrations are of a natural, rural setting. Ages 8–12.

### **Workbooks/Activity Books to Help Children Express Emotions**

Picture books are a good first step in helping children deal with death. Activity books and workbooks help guide them as they work through the stages of grief in a creative and personal manner. The following books allow children to process their emotions non-verbally. The finished product also represents a way to memorialize the person they lost.

#### *After a Death: An Activity Book for Children*

Lindholm AB. 2007. After a death: An activity book for children. [Portland, OR]: Dougy Center for Grieving Children. 67 pp.

This workbook is for children who have experienced the death of a loved one, with a mixture of creative activities and tips for dealing with changes at school, at home, and with friends. It includes a variety of drawing and writing exercises to help children remember the person who died and learn new ways to live with the loss. Ages 5–12.

#### *Children Also Grieve: Talking About Death and Healing*

Goldman L. 2006. Children also grieve: Talking about death and healing. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 79 pp.

This book tells of the loss of a grandparent as narrated by the family's pet dog. It describes the stages of grief and offers prompts to allow children to express (either by writing with a parent's help or with a picture) their opinions and perspectives. It is illustrated with photographs of dogs. The book has a memory journal section that children can personalize. It also includes definitions of words related to death that children might not know. Ages 4 and up (parent reading).

#### *Flying Hugs and Kisses Activity Book*

Sample J, Pandy LK (illus.). 2010. Flying hugs and kisses activity book. Stillwater, OK: New Forum Press. 74 pp.

This activity book allows children to express their thoughts and emotions in reaction to the death of their baby sibling to SIDS through activities such as writing, coloring, drawing, and games.

#### *The Healing Book: Facing the Death and Celebrating the Life of Someone You Love*

Sabin E. 2006. The healing book: Facing the death and celebrating the life of someone you love. [New York, NY]: Watering Can Press. 64 pp.

This interactive book helps children and families express their feelings, ask questions, and explore their memories about a loved one who has died. It is an activity book, journal, and conversation starter that children can make their own and use in the ways that best meet their needs during the grieving and remembering process. Ages 4 and up (with parental assistance). Ages 7 and up (independent use).

*Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies*

Silverman J. 1999. Help me say goodbye: Activities for helping kids cope when a special person dies. Minneapolis, MN: Fairview Press. 32 pp.

This art therapy workbook allows children to express their emotions by drawing pictures or writing responses to prompts relevant to loss and grief. The book begins with having a special person who is sick or hurt and deals with feelings when the person is dying and after the person's death. It includes a section on ways to remember the person and a list of suggestions for what a child can do to feel better. Ages 6–10. Children under age 6 can use the book if an adult reads the prompts.

*I Know Someone Who Died (3rd ed.)*

Manning C, Lund D, Burns K (illus.). 2009. I know someone who died. (3rd ed.). Oklahoma City, OK: In-Sight Books. 24 pp.

This book provides activities such as coloring, reading, and writing as a friendly butterfly gently discusses loss and grief in ways children can understand. Ages 3–8.

*Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine: Your Activity Book to Help When Someone Has Died*

Crossley D, Sheppard K (illus.). 2009. Muddles, puddles and sunshine: Your activity book to help when someone has died. [Stroud, UK]: Hawthorn Press. 31 pp.

This book offers a structure and an outlet for the many difficult feelings children experience when someone dies. The book aims to help children make sense of their experiences by reflecting on the different aspects of their grief while finding a balance between remembering and having fun. It offers readings and activities to help children sort through emotions. Early years.

*When Someone Very Special Dies: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief*

Heegaard M. 1996. When someone very special dies: Children can learn to cope with grief. Minneapolis, MN: Woodland Press. 32 pp.

This workbook helps children cope with loss by providing words of comfort and space for coloring or drawing pictures. The book helps explain death, helps children recognize and express feelings of grief, encourages open communication, and helps parents identify misconceptions children might harbor so they can be resolved. Ages 6–12.

*Why Did You Die? Activities to Help Children Cope with Grief and Loss*

Goldring E, Leeuwenburgh E. 2008. Why did you die? Activities to help children cope with grief and loss. Oakland, CA: Instant Help. 136 pp.

This book provides resources for parents as they help children work through the various emotions of loss after the death of a loved one. The book briefly explains the developmental aspects of grieving and what to expect and watch out for as children grieve. The book provides 40 different activities suitable for children to help them verbalize and process loss. Ages 3 and up.

Author's Note: The idea behind this bibliography was to provide a list of books for parents and caregivers that are easy to obtain. All of these books can be ordered through Amazon.com and other booksellers that sell books produced by mass market publishers. Some of the books may be available through local libraries, depending on the size and scope of the library holdings.

During my evaluation process and in actually compiling the list, I noticed a distinct Judeo-Christian perspective emerging; this is reflected in the sections dealing with religion and death rituals. I view this as a limitation to the bibliography, since children's experiences with death cross all faiths and backgrounds. Additionally, most of the books' illustrations show white family members and therefore are not accurately representative of our country's population. I hope that authors, illustrators, and publishers will provide resources in the future that reflect the diversity of all families who experience death.

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