

WHEN SOMEONE DIES

REALLY USEFUL BOOKS:

We acknowledge that it is often very, very difficult to talk with children and young people following death and bereavement. Thankfully, there are now many wonderful books which have been found to be of assistance to children and young people and to parents, carers, and professionals. Books can often provoke discussion and foster understanding about the loss of a loved one.

The following list of books, first created by the Lyn Coyle, Rainbows Registered Director for the Diocese of Southwark, has been found to be really useful. We thank Lyn for her generosity in sharing it with us but it is by no means exhaustive. We recommend that all schools carry an appropriate selection of these books in the school based library.

The age ranges given are for guidance only and depend on the maturity or understanding of the child.

Before sharing any of these books with children and young people please ensure that you have read them yourself and are sure of their appropriateness.

BOOKS FOR PARENTS, CARERS OR PROFESSIONALS:

***Healing the Hurt Restoring the Hope* by Suzy Yehl Marta, founder of Rainbows; the world's largest grief support organisation for children and young people** This book is an invaluable aid for guiding children and young people through times of loss and bereavement with the Rainbows approach. ISBN: 1405041919. Also available directly from www.rainbowsqb.org

A Child's Grief: Supporting a Child when someone in their Family has Died. Created by Winston's Wish, this excellent booklet is designed to be a helpful tool for adults who are supporting children through bereavement. (Available from www.winstonswish.org.uk)

***A Special Star* By Alison Wertheimer** This book discusses suicide from an adult perspective but can be an invaluable resource for those helping children and families bereaved through suicide. ISBN: 0415017637

***Children Also Grieve* by Linda Goldman** ... an imaginative, fully illustrated interactive storybook for bereaved children and those who care for them. ISBN: 1843108089

***Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults* by Atle Dyregrov**

***Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grownups* by William C Kroen**

***Water Bugs and Dragonflies:* by Doris Stickney & illustrated by Gloria Stickney.** This booklet with small black and white pictures is based on a fable, associating death with a water bug's transformation into a dragonfly. It portrays the mystery around death but may need an adult to explain the analogy and help a child relate it to their own experience. It uses Christian beliefs with a focus on life after death and also contains advice for parents.

***Helping Your Child through Bereavement* by Mary Paula Walsh**

This book addresses the many questions that arise for parents and children when someone close has died and offers practical advice in a Christian context. ISBN: 1853905305

***It's OK to be Sad* by Margaret Collins.**

Practical, circle time activities to help children aged 4 – 9 to manage loss, grief or bereavement. ISBN 1412918251

***Remembering* by Lorna Nelson and Tina Rae**

Practical guidance for children aged 7 – 13. ISBN: 978-1-90431504201

***Learning to Say Goodbye: When a Parent Dies* by Eda LeShan**

Hope beyond the headlines: supporting a child bereaved through murder or manslaughter.

Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk

Beyond the Rough Rock: supporting a child bereaved through suicide.

Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk

***Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine:* by David Crossley.**

This book from Winston's Wish offers practical and sensitive support for bereaved children and has the potential to become an invaluable keepsake in the future. ISBN: 1869890582

***On Children and Death: How Children and their Parents Can and Do Cope with Death* by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross**

***Living with Grief: Children, Adolescents, and Loss* by Kenneth J Doka**

***Loss Change and Grief – an educational perspective* by Erica Brown**

ISBN: 1853464651

***The Little Book of Bereavement for Schools* by Ian Gilbert**

ISBN: 978-184590464-7

***Out of the Blue* by Julie Stokes and Paul Oxley**

A collection of tried and tested ideas to help young people remember the person who has died and to help express their thoughts and feelings. ISBN: 1903458714 or Winston's Wish.

***Sunshine & Shadows: Reflections of a Macmillan Nurse* by Clare Fitzgibbon.**

An inspirational and sensitive book of hope and courage ISBN: 97809556140002

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PRE-SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS (age reference is for approximate guidance only. NB some books for 5-8 year olds may also be suitable)

***Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley.** A story about Badger, who is old, and the sadness his friends feel when he dies. His friends eventually realise that death was a happy release for him and so they are able to look back on their memories of him with happiness rather than just dwelling on their grief.

Granpa by John Burningham This tells of the close bond between a little girl and her grandfather. When he dies, the little girl still misses him but is comforted by her happy memories of him.

A Dog like Jack by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan After a long life of chasing squirrels an old dog comes to the end of his days.

The day Great-Grandma moved house by Joy Smith Written for 3 – 6 year olds this book explains death and bereavement from a positive Christian viewpoint, focusing on the joyful expectations of a person who is looking forward to meeting the Lord.

The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back by Margot Sunderland and Nicky Armstrong. The beautiful sea dries up and the sand dragon finds ways of coming to terms with his loss by finding water to save a dying flower and by building a rock pool. This book comes with a very helpful guidebook, "Helping Children with Loss", complete with further work to do on bereavement and grief. (<http://www.speechmark.net/>)

The Goodbye Boat by Mary Joslin and Claire St Louis Little
A lovely simple story book to help a child understand bereavement ISBN: 0745942644

Up in Heaven by Emma Chichester Clark
For children who have recently lost a family pet. ISBN: 9781842703335

The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside This tells of a little girl whose worries and anxieties overshadow her life. With the help of the old lady next door, she learns to share her worries and try to deal with them.

5-9 YEAR OLDS (N.B. Age reference is for approximate guidance only)

Ask Me by Antje Damm
Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2005
ISBN 978-1-84507-386-2

this book offers an engaging way for primary school aged children to generate those really special conversations that happen when the defences are down and a child feels more able to open up.

I miss my sister by Sarah Courtauld,
Child Bereavement UK
ISBN: 978-0-9521661-1-5

Flamingo Dream written and Illustrated by Cathie Felstead
Greenwillow Books, 2002
ISBN 0-688-17863-4

this bright and colourful book is narrated by a young boy whose dad is seriously ill and dies soon after a trip to Florida to see the place where he grew up. The collage style illustrations capture the things the boy collects to remind him of his dad. This is a sensitive but honest book, which emphasises the importance of memories.

My Mommy Has Cancer by Carolyn Stearns-Parkinson
Park Press, 1991
ISBN 0963028707

this is an American story book about a child whose mother is in hospital for treatment for cancer. Suitable for use with children aged from three to six.

No Matter What by Debi Gliori

Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999

ISBN 0-747581347

this book gently and powerfully conveys the idea of unconditional parental love through the characters of Large and Small. It is suitable for children aged from three to eight.

On Eagles' Wings by Sue Mayfield

Lion Hudson, 2004

ISBN 0-745948901

Tony's mother is dying. There's nothing he can do about it and he can't always put a brave face on things. Often he wishes he could just fly away from everything, like an eagle, powerful and free. Gradually, through his experiences, Tony begins to understand that death can sometimes bring freedom. A very readable and sensitive story about growing up, family relationships and facing bereavement

There's No Such Thing as a Dragon by Jack Kent

Golden Books, 1975

ISBN 0-375832084

This is another really helpful story for children aged from four to eight. It is a funny, quirky story about a little dragon that gets bigger – eventually becoming an overwhelming size because no-one is noticing him. It subtly conveys to a child that even tough stuff can and needs to be talked about to make it more manageable.

The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer by Julie Stokes

Winston's Wish/Macmillan Cancer Relief, 2000

ISBN 0-9539123-0-2

Available from the Winston's Wish on-line shop or call 01242 515157.

This book aims to help children ask questions about cancer and answers some common questions. It has a simple description of what cancer is and the treatments. The book discusses side-effects in easy to understand language as well as the emotions that a child may have when a family member has cancer. Suitable for use with children aged from four to 11.

When Your Mum or Dad Has Cancer by Ann Couldrick

Sobell Publications, 1991

ISBN 978-0951753736

Single copies available from Cancerbackup on 0808 800 1234.

This booklet for children uses simple cartoons to explain cancer, treatment and common feelings children may have. Suitable for use with children aged from three to eight.

Goodbye Mousie by Robie H. Harris & illustrated by Jan Ormerod. This beautifully illustrated picture book tells the story of a little boy whose pet mouse has died. At first he doesn't believe it, thinking it is just asleep, but by asking lots of questions and with the help of his family he begins to accept Mousie's death. This would be very helpful to introduce death to young children and a starting point to discuss what happens when someone dies and the different feelings one may have.

Gentle Willow by Joyce C Mills This story is one of the few written for children suffering an illness from which they may not recover. It tells the tale of Amanda and the Little Tree who discover that their friend Gentle Willow isn't feeling very well. This book helps to address feelings of sadness, worry, anger, love and compassion.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book by Michael Rosen. This book is suitable for all ages and tells of Michael's sadness when his beloved son, Eddie, dies. A true story that tells of the very real emotions that affect him and of the things he does to try to overcome and come to terms with his sadness.

Milly's Bug-Nut by Jill Janney Jill Janney, author of this lovely book, wrote this story for her own children after the death of their father. ISBN: 9780953912346 or Winston's Wish.

Goodbye Vivi! by Antoine Schneider When Granny's beloved canary dies, the family comes to accept it, as well as the idea that some day they will lose Granny as well.

Always and Forever by Alan Durant A family of forest animals learn to cope with the death of a loved fox friend. The book does not flinch from facing up to the reality of death as the animals find fox's body "still and cold".

The Sunshine Cat by Miriam Moss Sunny the cat is loved by all his human family, but one day there is a knock at the door - Sunny has been killed in an accident. A sensitive story which aims to help children come to terms with death.

8-12 YEAR OLDS (N.B. Age reference is for approximate guidance only)

Saying Goodbye to Daddy by Judith Vigna Clare's Dad died in a car accident and this book looks at changes in the family, difficult feelings, funerals and memories through the eyes of Clare. It would also be a good book to help parents understand the child's perspective. It gives good examples of how adults can answer children's questions, emphasising the need to be clear and honest.

When Someone Very Special Dies; When someone has a Very Serious Illness; When Mom and Dad Separate all by Marge Heegaard. A series of books to help children cope with their feelings Practical workbooks, rather than stories, they encourage children to personalise and illustrate their thoughts and feelings. (Available from Being Yourself, 73 Livingstone Road, Deal CT14 7NN)

The Cat Mummy by Jacqueline Wilson On the surface, this tells the tale of a girl coming to terms with the death of her cat but this death prompts Verity to think about the death of her mother many years ago.

What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? By Trevor Romain A thought provoking book for older children that describes the huge range of emotions people go through when a loved one dies and how to cope with the situation. It answers questions such as 'why do people have to die?', 'is it okay to cry?' and 'what is a funeral/memorial service?' It is written in a straightforward way, with practical tips, advice and information about different faiths and beliefs.

Rudi's Pond by Eve Bunting When a sick boy dies; his friends and classmates remember him by building a schoolyard pond in his memory.

Saying Goodbye: A Special Farewell to Mama Nkwelle by Ifeoma Onyefulu This book has bright colourful photos and follows a little boy, Ikenna describing what happens at the ceremony after his great-grandmother's funeral. It gives ideas of different ways to remember someone and an insight into Nigerian culture. A lovely book that could be used in many different situations

How it feels When a Parent Dies by Jill Krentz. Children from 7- 16 discuss the questions, fears and bereavement they experienced when one of their parents died.

A Gift for Tia by Karen T Taha Little Carmela is close to her elderly neighbour and saddened by her illness and death but she finds a way to express her love when Tia Rosa's grandchild is born.

Death: What's Happening? By Karen Bryant –Mole This factual book has clear text and large photos. It uses stories of young people to discuss issues surrounding death such as feeling frightened, the funeral and the future. It includes advice on how to feel better and cope with difficult situations after someone has died. Using straightforward language, this book may reassure the reader there are other young people who have had someone important to them die and answer some of their questions and concerns.

12 YEARS PLUS (Age reference is for approximate guidance only)

Alice's Dad by Bill Merrington A book to help girls cope with the death of a parent
ISBN: 1-84003-374-6

The Hideaway by Bill Merrington A book to help boys cope with the death of a parent
ISBN: 978-1-84003-182-9

Death, Funerals and Heaven by Bill Merrington Guidance for young people
ISBN: 978-1-84867-185-0

Losing Uncle Tim by Mary Kate Jordan This picture book for an older child explains how a young boy finds out his Uncle Tim has AIDS and is going to die. It is a serious and sensitive book covering many of the issues, changes and difficult feelings that can occur when someone has a serious illness.

The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and their Friends by Helen Fitzgerald. A fairly sophisticated book aimed at young people that gives advice on how to cope with death and the emotions that may be felt.

Before I Die by Jenny Downham Suitable for older teens, it tells the story of Tessa, a 16 year old who is dying of terminal leukaemia and of her wish list of things she wants to do before she dies. It very movingly tells of how she faces up to her death and the responses of family and friends.

When a Friend Dies a Book for Teens about Grieving and Healing by Marilyn E Gootman

Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers by Earl A. Grollman, 1999 How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love. This book was written after the author spoke to thousands of teenagers and found they often felt forgotten after someone has died. Written in short, clear sentences that are easy to read, it covers feelings, different types of death and the future. This book gives the reader many options of what can happen, how s/he may feel, giving advice and reassuring readers grief is normal.

The Charlie Barber Treatment by Carole Lloyd

Simon's Mum died suddenly from a brain hemorrhage and he came home from school to find she had died. With his GCSE coursework piling up and having to help around the house, Simon finds it hard and doesn't go out much with his friends. He then meets Charlie, who is visiting her Grandma, and believes their meeting was fate. Simon starts to enjoy life again and to re-build relationships with his family and friends. A sensitive and realistic book that conveys some of the thoughts and emotions of a teenage boy

Before sharing any of these books with children and young people please ensure that you have read them yourself and are sure of their appropriateness.