



Books for Grieving Children about Grief and Death

Buscaglia, L. The Fall of Freddie the Leaf. New Jersey: Charles Slack, 1982. (PS/SA)

This story tells how Freddie and his friends, all leaves, change with seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow. Both children and adults will respond to this sensitive treatment of the delicate balance between life and death. The photographs are very effective.

Coerr, E. Sadako. New York: Holt, 1983. (PS)

Based on Eleanor Coerr's previously published *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, this retelling of the story and message of peace, are accompanied by the illustrations of Caldecott medalist Ed Young.

Goble, P. Beyond the Ridge. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1989. (SA)

At her death an elderly Native American woman experiences an afterlife believed in by her people, beyond the ridge to a more beautiful world.

Hanson, W. The Next Place. 1997. (PS/SA)

Striking illustrations and a first person text describe "the next place" the storyteller will go. The book presents a very peaceful and attractive description of the afterlife and is not overtly religious--does not identify with any particular religion. Many have found this book very comforting and helpful.

Holmes, M. A Terrible Thing Happened. Washington, DC: Magination Press, 2000. (PS/SA)

Sherman Smith (a raccoon) "saw the most terrible thing." The terrible thing is never defined which allows many children in many different situations to identify with Sherman. He tries not

to think about it, but this doesn't work. Eventually, Sherman talks to Ms. Maple who helps Sherman draw pictures and talk. With Ms. Maple's help, Sherman learns to cope and feel better.

Levy, J. The Spirit of Tio Fernando. This very beautifully informative story unfolds as young Fernando and his family prepare for The Day of the Dead. Each page of the story is presented in English and Spanish.

MacGregor, C. Why Do People Die? Parents will appreciate the clear and engaging way this book helps them explain dying to their children. The approach makes room for many different beliefs, and playful illustrations will draw children in.

Mellonie, B. & Ingpen, R. Lifetimes. This best selling classic uses nature to explain to children that dying is as much a part of life as being born. *Lifetimes* is about beginnings and endings as well as about living in between.

Mills, L. The Rag Coat. Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1991. (SA)

Minna proudly wears her new coat made of clothing scraps, including her dead papa's work clothes. At school the other children laugh at her coat until she tells them stories behind the scraps.

Moser, A. Don't Despair on Thursdays! Compassion books list this as "one of the best books we have ever seen to explain grief to children." Children are sure to be comforted by the friendly illustrations and the kindly way the author speaks to them. Losses of all kinds are named and validated.

Mundy, M. Sad Isn't Bad. This friendly guidebook gives children (and those who care for them) a comforting and realistic look at loss—loaded with positive, life-affirming hints for coping with loss as a child. It's a book that promotes healthy grief—and growth.

O'Toole, D. Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope. Burnsville, NC: Compassion Press, 1998. (SA)

With the help of his friend, Ralphy Rabbit, Aarvy Aardvark comes to terms with the loss of his mother and brother. The difficulties and long time needed to begin to feel better after a loss are illustrated well in this story. The illustrations can be colored by children as they please.

Romain, T. What On Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? This book helps young people through the pain of losing a loved one by answering in simple, honest words many of the questions that are part of the grieving process. Offers practical strategies for dealing with the overwhelming emotions one experiences when grieving.

Schwiebert, P. & DeKlyen, C. Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss. Portland, OR: Grief Watch, 1999.

Grandy, "an old and somewhat wise woman," sets out to make tear soup as a way to cope with her loss. With wonderful illustrations, making tear soup is used very creatively as a metaphor for mourning. The story deals with wisdom about coping and about supporting others in their grief. It is a story that is also very appropriate for use with adults.

Simon, N. The Saddest Time. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1986. (PS/SA)

Three separate stories depict children's experience with the death of an uncle, an eight-year-old friend and a grandmother.

Varley, S. Badger's Parting Gifts. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1984. (SA)

Following Badger's peaceful death, his friends recall their special memories of how he taught each of them something special-Badger's parting gifts.

White, E.B. Charlotte's Web. New York: Harper& Row, 1952. (SA)

Charlotte, the spider, and Wilbur, the pig, become loving friends. When Charlotte dies, Wilbur holds her memory close and takes care of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The story describes the sadness experienced by loving friends and how memories are kept alive.

Wunsch, L.J. After The Funeral. This book offers multicultural illustrations and clear suggestions to encourage honest communication about death and dying with children. It helps young people articulate questions and identify the feelings they often have when facing loss.