

Books on Grief for Children and Adolescents

Pre-School to Early Elementary School Age

Thumpy's Story: A Story of Love and Grief Shared by Thumpy, the Bunny, by N. Dodge (1984)

This book tells a simple story with soft, expressive illustrations of two rabbit parents who help their surviving child by dealing sensitively with fears and questions. It is designed to help children and parents express their own grief, and is available as a coloring book and work book in which the child can write and draw.

Last Week My Brother Anthony Died by M.W. Hickman (1984)

A poignant, ultimately upbeat story told through the eyes of a girl whose infant brother died of congenital heart disease. The family minister provides support for the grieving family.

The Purple Balloon by Chris Raschka (2007)

This story deals with the deaths of both a young friend and a grandparent and shows how a support system helps the characters handle their feelings of loss.

A Quilt for Elizabeth by B. Tiffault (1992)

After a girl's father gets sick and dies, the girl and her grandmother decide to make quilt from her father's garments. This highly recommended book creatively deals with loss and mourning.

Samantha Jane's Missing Smile: Coping with the Loss of Parent by Julie Kaplow, Donna Pincus, and Beth Spiege (2007)

After her father dies, Sammy Jane doesn't know how to express her grief. With the help of a neighbor, she learns to express her feelings and accept her loss. Suitable for children up to age twelve.

For Elementary School Age Children

Not the End: A Child's Journey Through Grief by Mari Dombkowski (2015)

In this book, a girl copes with the loss of her father. It is written in simple, plain language. This book is appropriate for children in elementary school experiencing a loss.

Emily's Sadhappy Season by S. Lowden-Golightly (1993)

This is an excellent story about a little girl's reaction to the sudden death of her father from a heart attack. The story is realistic and portrays honest and sincere emotional responses to loss. At the end of the book, there are some helpful tips for children grieving the death of a parent.

Grandpa Abe by Marisabina Russo (1996)

The story follows the course of events in a relationship between a grandfather and grandchild. When the grandfather dies a funeral is held where family members comfort one another.

Aarvy Aardvark Finds hope by Donna O'Toole (1988)

In this book, Aarvy the Aardvark is befriended by Ralph Rabbit, who helps Aarvy work through stages of grief by telling him about how he felt when his sister died. This book focuses on loving, losing, friendship and hope and can be read aloud with the child.

Poppy's Chair by K. Hesse (1993)

A story about a little girl trying to come to grips with the death of her grandfather. She is afraid to touch the grandfather's picture, sleep in his bed, or sit in his chair. This book handles the subject of fear, an important element of mourning, in a thoughtful manner.

Saying Goodbye to Grandma by J.R. Thomas (1988)

A charming and realistic story about a seven-year-old girl who attends her grandmother's funeral. One of the main strengths of this book is its portrayal of children behaving like children in spite of the solemnity of the occasion. **See page 2**

A Taste of Blackberries by D.B. Smith (2004)

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



For Late-Elementary and Middle-School Age Children

Her Mother's Face by Roddy Doyle (2008)

A little girl whose mother died remembers many things about her mother, except her face. She meets a mysterious woman who tells her a secret that could help bring back forgotten memories.

Lanky Longlegs by K. Lorenzen (1983)

This prize-winning book is about a girl who experiences the death of her brother and the birth of her dog's puppies. Appropriate for children who experience any kind of loss. Translated from Norwegian.

Sun & Spoon by Kevin Henkes (1997)

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 by P. Hermes (1982)

A touching story of a young girl's struggle to deal with her mother's imminent death.

For Middle-School Age Children

Beat the Turtle Drum by C. Greene (1976)

A beautiful story about the love and friendship between two sisters. When the younger one dies after falling out of a tree, the older one (thirteen years old) describes her feelings in a very honest and realistic manner. An excellent book for children who have lost a sibling.

Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume (1987)

This excellent book is about a fourteen-year-old girl whose father is shot in a store robbery. The story describes the attempt by her, the mother, and the younger brother to cope with the loss in the course of year. (Also appropriate for high school students).

For Adolescents

After Suicide: Living with the Questions by Eileen Kuehn (2001)

This book provides a definition of suicide and describes its effects on survivors and the stages of grieving. It suggests ways teens can cope with suicide and heal.

Just One Tear by K.L. Mahon (1994)

A novel in the form of the diary of a 13 year-old boy who witnesses the shooting death of his father. The book explores the boy's wide range of emotions.

A Matter of Time by R. Schotter (1979)

A very moving, beautifully written book about a high school girl coping with her mother's illness and anticipated death.

A Time of Mourn, A time to Comfort by Rachmiel Tobesman (2008)

This nonfiction guide for children explains Jewish mourning rituals and customs. It also helps children understand their feelings about loss, discusses how to manage their feelings and suggests whom to lean on for support.

What Do I Do: When Teenagers Deal with Death by Steven Gerali (2009)

This book offers a Christian perspective on the death of a teen or other loved one. It describes different causes of death (sudden, due to terminal illness) and provides suggestions on coping with death. Includes Bible verses.

When a Friend Dies: A Book for teens About Grieving & Healing by Gootman, Marilyn, Ed. D. (2005)

This book answers questions grieving teens often have, like "How should I be acting?" "Is it wrong to go to parties and have fun?" and "What if I can't handle my grief on my own?" The advice is gentle, non-preachy, and compassionate; the author has seen her own children suffer from the death of a friend, and she knows what teens go through.

Weird Is Normal When Teenagers Grieve by Jenny Lee Wheeler (2010)

A unique book since it is a self-help book for grieving teens written by actively grieving teen. The author lost her father to cancer when she was fourteen and validates for her peers that they have the right to grieve in their own way and according to their own timetable, that their grief attacks might be different from those of adults around them.

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