

Books and resources – KS2

The suggestions below are suitable to use with children to introduce the life cycle including the end of life, or to use when someone they know has died. Books can help children experiencing loss make some sense of confusing and sad emotions. They can also help children to feel less alone. Different books can be selected, appropriate for individual circumstances.

General books

Always and Forever by Alan Durant

When Fox dies the rest of his 'family' are absolutely distraught. How will Mole, Otter and Hare go on without their beloved friend? But, months later, Squirrel reminds them all of how funny Fox used to be and they realise that Fox is still there in their hearts and memories.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst

A short story that by dealing with the death of a pet, takes a child through the rituals associated with any death, addressing the feelings children have when faced with loss. This book does not have religious overtones, so it can be used by pupils with different sets of beliefs.

Remembering Mum by Ginny Perkins

A simple photo journey of a real family whose Mum died. It shows how that family coped with the anniversary of Mum's death, and how they are living without her but still including her in their daily lives. Very real and one with which children will identify.

Sad Book by Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen talks of his sadness after the death of his son. A personal story that speaks to adults and children. Minimal text with moving illustrations.

Am I Like My Daddy? Marcy Blesy

This beautifully illustrated and poignant book will help children bereaved when very young who struggle to remember the parent who died. Grace is in the process of learning about who her father was. Through the eyes of others, she learns about who she is today. This book is American, but relevant to all.

What On Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? By Trevor Romain

Child-friendly, accessible text, this short book deals with the many questions that bereaved children of this age have when someone dies.

What does dead mean? By Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas. Available Jessica Kingsley www.jkp.com

A beautifully illustrated book that guides children gently through 17 of the 'big' questions they often ask about death and dying. Suitable for children aged 4+, this is an ideal book for parents and carers to read with their children, as well as teachers, therapists and counsellors working with young children.

Us Minus Mum by Heather Butler

The boys think Mum is invincible. But they're wrong. Because Mum is ill. Really ill. It's up to George and Theo to keep Mum (and everyone else) smiling – which will almost probably definitely involve willies, shepherd's pie and Goffo's victory at the pet talent show. This book is both funny and sad.

When your mum or dad has cancer by Ann Couldrick

This is a useful booklet for younger children (7+) to teenage children. It has an introduction for parents but then explains cancer in a simple way children can relate to. It also covers many questions children ask such as whether the person will die and what exactly happens, but tackles the answers with insight and honesty.

The secret C by Straight Talking About Cancer by Julie Stokes and Vicky Fullick

This illustrated guide for children provides a sensitive introduction for a child when a parent, sibling or a person close to them is diagnosed with cancer. It is aimed at children aged 7 to 10 years and will work best when an adult is present to expand on the simple messages in the text.

The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside

Bereaved children and those in families where someone is expected to die often have worries they feel unable to share. This reassuring story will encourage them to voice their fears and concerns.

Workbooks to use with children

Remembering by Dianne Leutner

A workbook for children when someone important to them has died. Sensitive illustrated, it will help a child to talk about their memories and make some sense of how they are feeling.

Helping Children Think About Bereavement by Heather Butler

This fun story and related short activities are presented as four, differentiated, lesson plans including one for pupils with learning difficulties. It helps pupils develop resilience and coping skills should someone they know die.

Someone I know has died by Trish Phillips

An activity book written for bereaved children to help them understand what it means when someone dies and to explore their thoughts and feelings with an adult. Although designed with pre-school and early-years age groups in minds, some older children may also enjoy this book.

Talk to My Gran About Dying – my school project by Gina Leveté

Available from www.jkp.com

Teacher resource written in an illustrated diary format. An excellent way to talk to children about dying. Questions to the reader throughout help discussions and allow the child to safely explore their thoughts and feelings. Ideal resource for teachers and parents to read with children aged 8-11.