

Dying, Death, and Grief
Resources for Parents with Young Children

This is an eclectic collection of written resources to help parents prepare for or process the death of a loved one. This is not at all an exhaustive list. This is just a sampling or best of...

Everyone's circumstances, background, and experience is different. There is no one best way for all. Some of these are "spiritual but not religious". Most of the theological language in these is fairly broad; however, some will clearly hear the Christian story in the writing while others may hear it differently. Assuming that you will be walking this journey with your child, it would be up to you to adapt any of the language to be more or less explicitly expressed in faith-based vocabulary and concepts, keeping in mind that children under the age of eight or nine are not usually developmentally ready to process and articulate abstract concepts, but can be treated as inherently spiritual persons. As their expressive abilities evolve, so will their approach to death and grieving. This is why pat answers are not necessary and may actually be quite limiting.

Help for Adults with Children:

[*Companioning the Grieving Child*](#) – A soulful guide for caregivers
Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

This offers helpful insights with compassionate language on how a child may or may not be expected to grieve and ways to help them in a very loving and respectful way. Practical, but not "clinical".

[*Why Did You Die? – Activities to Help Children Cope with Grief & Loss*](#)
Erika Leeuwenburgh, LPC
Ellen Goldring, LPC

This is an activity book. This would be most useful with children who can read and write and worked with in a conversational context with a parent. It could be used in a group or family setting as well.

[*Tell Me, Papa*](#)
Joy and Marv Johnson

This is old, but very solid. Written in story form, but a gentle way to talk candidly about what typically happens when someone dies. e.g., what happens to the body, what the funeral director does, what a funeral is and its purpose, the burial, what to expect...

Books for Children: (best to be read with an adult, at least the first time)

[*When Good-Bye Is Forever*](#)
Lois Rock

[Dog Heaven](#)

Cynthia Rylant

[Where's Grandpa?](#)

T.A. Barron

[Consolation for Life's Darkest Hours: 7 Unusual and Wonderful Books that Help Children Grieve and Make Sense of Death](#)

(Brainpickings webpage with descriptions of books which are “spiritual but not religious”. Curated by Maria Popova)

[The Golden Cord Story](#), [Leanne Hadley](#)