



**Useful Books and Films for
Children who need support dealing
with serious illness, death & dying.**

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When a loved one is unwell

Pre-school and Primary School age

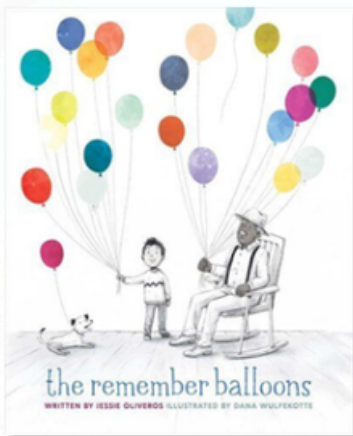
The Invisible String by Patrice Karst



This book addresses the issue of separation by reassuring children that even though they can't always physically be with their loved ones, there is an invisible string always connecting them to the people they love, even from afar. The story begins with twins Jeremy and Liza being awakened by a thunderstorm and running to their mom for comfort. Mom tells Jeremy and Liza to go back to bed, and they protest, telling her they want to stay with her.

Mom responds, "You know we're always together, no matter what." Liza asks how they can be together when Mom is out in the living room and they are in bed. And that's when Mom tells the twins about the "invisible string." Comes as an activity book too, with 50+ activities.

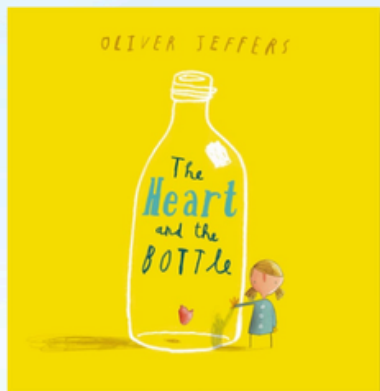
The remember balloons by Jessie Oliveros



James's Grandpa has the best balloons because he has the best memories. He has balloons showing Dad when he was young and Grandma when they were married. Grandpa has balloons about camping and Aunt Nelle's poor cow. Grandpa also has a silver balloon filled with the memory of a fishing trip he and James took together. But when Grandpa's balloons begin to float away, James is heartbroken. No matter how hard he runs, James can't catch them. One day, Grandpa lets go of the silver balloon—and he doesn't even notice!

Grandpa no longer has balloons of his own. But James has many more than before. It's up to him to share those balloons, one by one.

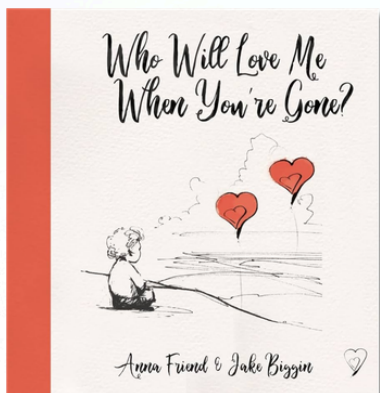
The Heart and The Bottle by Oliver Jeffers



An inquisitive little girl, who is enchanted by the world around her, is badly shaken when she loses someone she loves. She retreats into herself and as she gets older, stops noticing the stars and the sea, which she had previously delighted in. She puts her heart away in a bottle, where it can never be hurt again. One day she meets a little girl whose own curiosity and zest for life reminds her of the child she once was and her

heart is released and her sense of wonder restored. This stylish and moving picture book from Best New Illustrator, Oliver Jeffers, explores love and loss and offers an ultimately uplifting resolution

Will you love me when you're gone? by Anna Friend and Jake Biggin

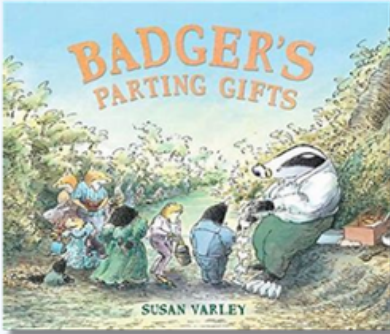


A moving but reassuring journey through a child's feelings of grief: Jack's mum is very poorly, and he is worried about what will happen when she's gone? Will Mummy take her love aswell?

When a loved one has died

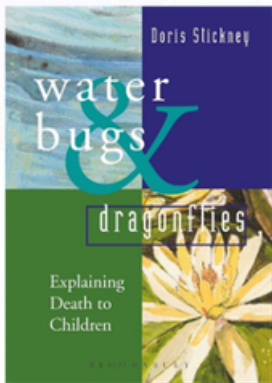
Pre-school and Primary School age

Badger's Parting Gift by Susan Varley



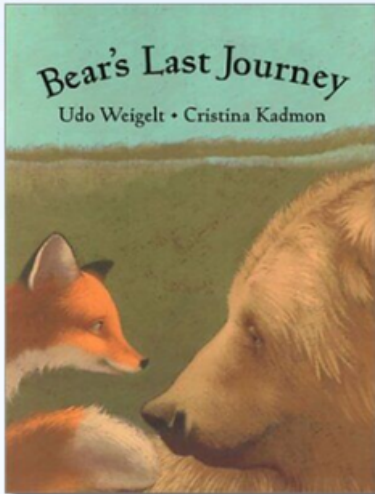
Badger is so old that he knows he must soon die, so he does his best to prepare his friends. When he finally passes away, they are grief-stricken, but one by one they remember the special things he taught them during his life. By sharing their memories, they realise that although Badger is no longer with them physically, he lives on through his friends

Water Bugs & Dragon Flies by Doris Stickney



Comes in small hardback edition, or as a colouring book. A fable that explains death to children using water bugs who transform to dragonflies. The idea is that dragonflies can never return underwater to visit the water bugs, just as one who has died cannot return to life. Ends with a prayer.

Bear's Last Journey by Udo Weigelt



Old Bear is very sick. With his animal friends gathered around him, Bear tells them that that he must say good-bye, for he is going on a special journey. ""But...but...you're not dying?"" asks Rabbit, and Bear admits that he is. All the animals are saddened by the news, but the little fox is especially upset - hurt and angry and confused. He cannot imagine life without Bear. How Fox and the other forest animals deal with the loss of their friend is a moving story about death, grieving, and the solace to be found in memory.

The Memory Box by Jo A Siddall

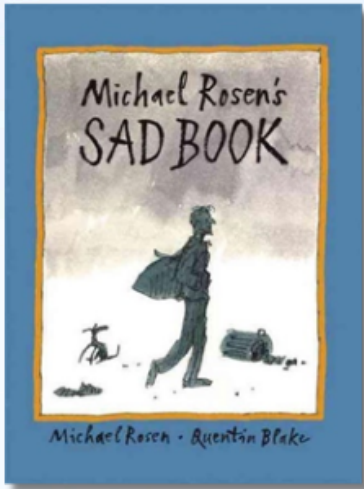


We all treasure the times we remember with our loved one's. Memories can be propped by a photograph, a place, a song - we remember in so many different ways at so many different times. Children can be encouraged to keep 'memory boxes' to help them remember special people, special places and special times.

This little book acts as a prompt to help with 'remembering' in a gentle way. The 'ordinary' things of life that makes life 'extraordinary' and precious. Through the watercolour illustrations

and the gentle rhyme, the reader is encouraged to experience the significance of our story sharing. Remembering that both the little and the big things matter.

Sad book by Michael Rosen



With emotional elegance and nuance, Rosen welcomes and unpicks each layer of mourning and explains why it's ok to be sad. He speaks about losing his son Eddie, and his mum. A painful, yet surprisingly uplifting read that's suitable for both children and adults. It acknowledges that sadness is not always avoidable or reasonable and perfects the art of making complicated feelings plain.

The Memory Tree by Britta Teckentrup



A beautiful and heartfelt picture book to help children celebrate the memories left behind when a loved one dies.

Fox has lived a long and happy life in the forest, but now he is tired. He lies down in his favourite clearing, and falls asleep for ever. Before long, Fox's friends begin to gather in the clearing. One by one, they tell stories of the special moments that they shared with

Fox. And so, as they share their memories, a tree begins to grow, becoming bigger and stronger with each memory, sheltering and protecting all the animals in the forest, just as Fox did when he was alive.

When a Grandparent has died

Pre-school and Primary School age

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst



When Syd and Grandad go through the door in the attic, they find themselves on a sailing ship. They sail to an island covered with jungle. They explore, have fun and make friends with all the animals. It's the most perfect place, but Syd knows it will soon be time to go home. Grandad is having such a good time though, that he decides to stay. Syd will miss Grandad very much, but will find the way to safely steer the ship home all by himself.

If all the world were by Joseph Coelho



A moving, lyrical picture book about a young girl's love for her granddad and how she copes when he dies, written by poet and playwright Joseph Coelho. This beautifully illustrated, powerful and ultimately uplifting text is the ideal way to introduce children to the concept of death and dying, particularly children who have lost a grandparent.

Films with themes of death and grief

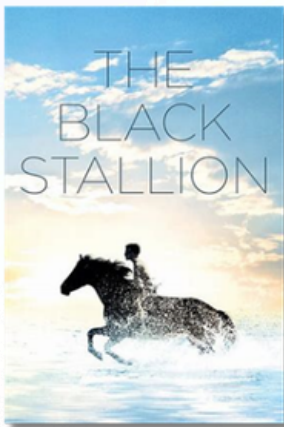
Pre-school and Primary School age

The Lion King



After the murder of his father, a young lion prince flees his kingdom only to learn the true meaning of responsibility and bravery.

The Black Stallion



After a young boy named Alec and a horse are washed up on a deserted island from a shipwreck that killed Alec's father, the orphaned boy and the animal soon form an inseparable bond. The pair are rescued and Alec becomes determined to turn "The Black" into a racehorse with the help of a grizzled old trainer. Alec's connection with the horse brings him solace, helping him deal with his grief for his father.

Up



After the death of his wife, Carl embarks on adventure to South America to visit her dream destination. Little does he know he's carrying a stowaway. Like the films mentioned above, Up highlights the importance of remembering those who have passed away while being open to new friendships

The Snowman



This short film follows as a young boy called James builds a snowman on Christmas Eve and it magically comes to life. To the tune of the classic song We're Walking In The Air, James and his snowman friend take flight, heading to the North Pole to meet Father Christmas. A bond quickly

forms between the pair, but sadly snow tends to melt...

Moana

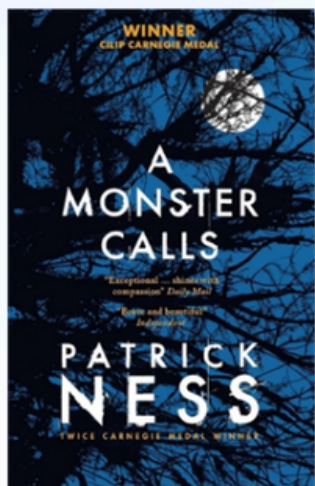


After the death of her grandmother, a brave teenager sets sail on a mission to save her people. Her grandmother's spirit, which appears to her as a manta ray, guides her along the way.

Books & Films with theme of death, dying and grief

Secondary School age

A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness



This moving fantasy novel is the story of a 13-year-old boy who is coping with the diagnosis of his mother's cancer. A book about stories and myths, about courage and loss and the fear of loss. Conor has the same dream every night, ever since his mother first fell ill, ever since she started treatments that don't quite seem to be working. But tonight is different. Tonight, when he wakes, there's a visitor at his window.

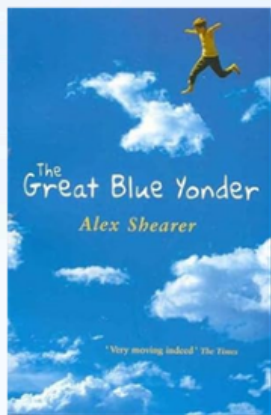
A Monster Calls (2016)



128 minutes; Rated PG-13; available on Amazon.

Conor's mother is gravely ill, and the 13-year-old struggles with anger, sadness, guilt and anticipatory grief. To cope with all the overwhelming emotions, Conor (Lewis MacDougall) conjures a monster who offers up three fables and then demands one from him — it must be his ultimate truth. MacDougall gives an authentic performance as a boy learning to face the truth, even though it is contradictory and complex.

The Great Blue Yonder by Alex Shearer

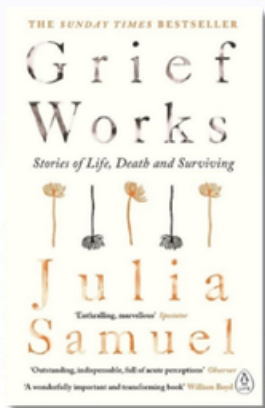


A quirky, gentle journey of a boy stuck between looking back, and moving on.

'You'll be sorry when I'm dead.' That's what Harry said to his sister, before the incident with the lorry. And now he is just that – dead. And he wishes more than anything that he hadn't said it. He wishes he could say sorry. And say goodbye to everyone he left behind – his mum, his dad, his best friend Pete. . . even Jelly Donkins, the class bully. Now he's on the Other Side, waiting to move on to the Great Blue Yonder. But he doesn't know how to get there

– until he meets Arthur, a small boy in a top hat who's been dead for years, who helps him say goodbye. . .

Grief Works by Julia Samuel



Grief Works is a compassionate guide that will inform and engage anyone who is grieving, from the 'expected' death of a parent to the sudden unexpected death of a small child, and provide clear advice for those seeking to comfort the bereaved. Julia Samuel guides you gently through her eight practical pillars of strength - that include the power of saying 'no' to the structure and building of good new habits - to support you and help you to gradually rebuild your life in the face of grief. With personal real-life stories of loss, and brilliantly accessible and practical advice, Grief Works will be

passed down through generations as the definitive guide for anyone who has lost a loved one, and will revolutionise the way we talk about life, loss and death.

The Theory of Everything



In *The Theory of Everything*, the life and accomplishments of theoretical physicist, Stephen Hawking, are front and centre. As is his love life and his diagnosis of ALS. Despite doctor's warnings that he has little time left, Hawking (Redmayne) and his wife (Jones) work around the clock to make some of the most ground-breaking discoveries of our time.

Summer 1993 (2017)

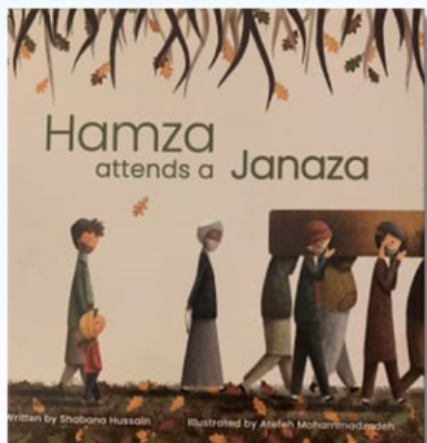


100 minutes (subtitled); available on Amazon. After her mother's death, 6-year-old Frida must move from Barcelona to the country to live with her aunt, uncle and younger cousin. The young girl soon struggles with grief and her place in this new family. Often presented from Frida's viewpoint, with overheard conversations and waist-high camera angles, the film is based on the director's personal experiences with loss.

Themes of illness, death and grief

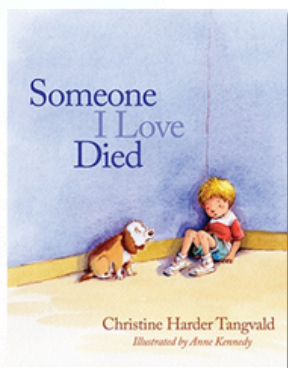
Religious perspective

Hamza attend a Janaza by Shabana Hussain



Hamza's usual fun Saturday is cancelled when his family receives the sad news that Uncle Sameer has died. Follow Hamza through the day as he learns about the various aspects of a janaza. This story is a gentle introduction to attending an Islamic funeral, told from a child's perspective. It familiarises children with the etiquettes and some of the rituals surrounding a funeral and provides an opportunity for important discussions around death and the afterlife in an age-appropriate manner.

Someone I Love Died by Christine Harder Tangvald



It gently leads children through grief with age-appropriate words and solid biblical truth that understands a child's hurting heart. The added interactive resources ensure this book will become a treasured keepsake. Once complete, children create a memory book of the loved one's life. And it offers grown-ups a tool that turns what could be a difficult season into a meaningful time of healing.

