

Suggested Reading

Please note that no book is “right” for everyone as some texts have a spiritual or religious flavor. Also, the range in price is significant.

Grief for a child

Healing a Parent’s Grieving Heart Alan Wolfelt

Differing grieving styles in men and women

When a Man Faces Grief James E. Miller

When Men Grieve: Why Men Grieve Differently and How You Can Help
Elizabeth Levang

Marriage after Mourning: the Secrets of Surviving Couples
Judy C. Pearson

The Bereaved Parents’ Survival Guide Juliet Cassuto Rothman

The Bereaved Parent Harriet Sarnoff Schiff

The Death of an Adult Child: a book for and about Bereaved Parents
Jeanne Webster Blank

Children's books

The following books are classics, but it is really important to remember that children's books often illustrate specific spiritual and religious perspectives . It is essential to ask ourselves whether a book will fit a family's specific belief system before making a recommendation.

Buscaglia, Leo (1982) The Fall of Freddy the Leaf. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Suitable for all ages; describes the cycle of life in a leaf. Best used metaphorically, resisting the temptation to interpret parallels in human existence.

Kremetz, Jill (1996) How It Feels When a Parent Dies. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Suitable for children from 7 years and above; these are first person accounts by children from seven to sixteen years old, of their experiences when a parent died.

Spelman, Cornelia (1996) After Charlotte's Mother Died. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman and Company.

Suitable for 5 years upwards; describes a six-year-old's difficulty in expressing her feelings, and the way a counselor helps her and her grieving father.

Thomas, Jane Resh (1988) Saying Goodbye to Grandma. New York: Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Suitable for children from 7 years upwards; tells the story of a child who travels to her Grandma's funeral; absolutely on target about the child's questions and perceptions; describes open casket and a church service but does not venture into spirituality or religious beliefs.

Varley, Susan (1984) Badger's Parting Gifts. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard.

Suitable for children from 5 to 8 or 9; describes the way mourning can be assisted by internalization of memories and shared experience. (Lovely old-style illustrations!)

Viorst, Judith (1988) The Tenth Good Thing About Barney. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Suitable for 5 years and above; describes the loss of a pet cat from the perspective of the cycle of life. Best read without making the connection to human existence.

There are many excellent children's books that address different kinds of losses; it is worthwhile going to your local bookshop to see what is available. But remember, please be careful to choose books that are compatible with each family's belief systems.