



FaithWorks Counseling

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Helping Children Understand Grief and Loss

These books help children understand death, express emotions, and remember loved ones in safe, concrete, and comforting ways. Each title includes a brief description and practical ways to use it at home.

♥ Understanding Death and Loss

***The Invisible String* – Patrice Karst**

Teaches that love connects us even when someone we love isn't physically here.

Use it: Draw an "invisible string" picture showing who your child is connected to (Daddy, Nana, family).

***Ida, Always* – Caron Levis & Charles Santoso**

Two zoo bears experience loss together; tender, honest, and reassuring.

Use it: Pause after sad moments to label feelings (He's sad. What helps him feel better?).

***The Goodbye Book* – Todd Parr**

Colorful and simple; normalizes sadness and remembering someone special.

Use it: Help your child make their own Goodbye Book with drawings and photos of the person who passed away.

***Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* – Bryan Mellonie & Robert Ingpen**

Explains that every living thing has a beginning and end.

Use it: Read slowly; connect to things in nature that your child can see (flowers, pets, trees).

💬 Talking About Feelings & Memories

***When Dinosaurs Die* – Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown**

Answers common questions about death in a child-friendly way.

Use it: Read one page per sitting; use it to start short conversations.

***I Miss You: A First Look at Death* – Pat Thomas**

Helps children recognize and name emotions that come with grief.

Use it: Pair with feeling-faces or emotion cards.

***Always Remember* – Cece Meng**

Celebrates the memories loved ones leave behind.

Use it: Create a "Memory Box" for special photos, drawings, or small keepsakes.

Hope, Healing & Connection

***The Memory Box: A Book About Grief* – Joanna Rowland**

Encourages children to hold memories and love in their hearts.

Use it: Add a new drawing or memory to the box each week.

***A Terrible Thing Happened* – Margaret Holmes**

Helps children process trauma after seeing or experiencing something scary or sad.

Use it: Discuss how our bodies feel when we're sad or scared (tight tummy, tired, heart beats fast).

***Something Very Sad Happened* – Bonnie Zucker**

Simple, direct, and clear for young children.

Use it: Ideal if your child asks direct or repeated questions (i.e., 'Daddy died, and his body stopped working.').

Faith-Based Books

***Heaven's Forever Home* -- Crystal Bowman**

Age Range: 4–8 years

Tone: Gentle, simple, reassuring

Summary:

This beautifully illustrated picture book introduces Heaven in a way that feels warm and inviting, rather than abstract or frightening. It tells children that Heaven is a real place — God's forever home — where there is no sadness or pain, and where loved ones who have died now live with God.

Faith Message:

It emphasizes that Jesus loves us and prepares a place for us (John 14:2–3), offering peace and reassurance to children who wonder where a loved one has gone.

Therapeutic Use:

- Ideal for children who need **concrete, positive imagery** about where their loved one is now.
- Can help replace fear or confusion with comfort and hope.
- Use short reading segments, followed by simple discussion:
i.e., “Daddy lives with God now, and God helps us keep Daddy in our hearts.”

***God Gave Us Heaven* -- Lisa Tawn Bergren**

Age Range: 5–9 years

Tone: Conversational and comforting

Summary:

This story features *Little Cub* asking Papa Bear honest questions about Heaven — “What’s Heaven like?” “Will we eat there?” “Will we see God?” Papa Bear answers simply and lovingly, describing Heaven as a beautiful, joyful place where we’ll live forever with God and our loved ones.

Faith Message:

Encourages curiosity and provides faith-based reassurance rooted in God's promise of eternal life through Jesus. It frames Heaven as a continuation of love and belonging rather than an ending.

Therapeutic Use:

- Excellent for children who ask concrete, repeated questions about death or Heaven.
- Models how adults can respond calmly, truthfully, and lovingly.
- Use it to support bedtime reassurance or quiet reflection time:
"God made Heaven for us to be happy and together again someday."

Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss -- Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen

Age Range: 8+ (can be adapted for younger children with guidance)

Tone: Gentle metaphor, both emotional and instructional

Summary:

Tear Soup uses the metaphor of "cooking tear soup" to represent the grieving process. The main character, *Grandma*, combines different "ingredients" — memories, feelings, time, and tears — as she heals from a profound loss. The book normalizes grief as something everyone experiences differently and in their own time.

Faith Message:

While not explicitly religious, *Tear Soup* aligns beautifully with Christian values of compassion, patience, and emotional honesty. Many Christian counselors use it alongside scripture such as Psalm 34:18 ("The Lord is close to the brokenhearted").

** Reading Tips for Children with Autism**

- Keep sessions short (5–10 minutes).
- Use calm, predictable routines for reading time.
- Pair each story with a concrete activity (drawing, sensory toy, photo).
- Repeat key messages and validate your child's questions.
- Use visual emotion aids to reinforce feelings vocabulary.