

Books that prepare for the idea of death

Title	Author	Amazon.com product description / reviews
<i>Lifetimes</i>	Bryan Mellonie	A pet . . . a friend . . . or a relative dies, and it must be explained to a child. This sensitive book is a useful tool in explaining to children that death is a part of life and that, eventually, all living things reach the end of their own special lifetimes.
<i>Waterbugs and Dragonflies</i>	Doris Stickney	A pet . . . a friend . . . or a relative dies, and it must be explained to a child. This sensitive book is a useful tool in explaining to children that death is a part of life and that, eventually, all living things reach the end of their own special lifetimes.
<i>The Invisible String</i>	Patrice Karst	Here is a warm and delightful lesson teaching young and old that we aren't ever really alone and reminding children (and adults!) that when we are loved beyond anything we can imagine. "People who love each other are always connected by a very special String, made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love
<i>The Fall of Freddie the Leaf</i>	Leo Buscaglia	This story is a warm, wonderfully wise, and strikingly simple story about a leaf named Freddie--how Freddie and his companion leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow.
<i>Gentle Willow</i>	Joyce C. Mills	Written for children who may not survive their illness or for the children who know them, this tender and touching tale helps address feelings of disbelief, anger, and sadness, along with love and compassion. Amanda and Little Tree discover that their friend Gentle Willow isn't feeling well. Amanda summons the Tree Wizards, who visit Gentle Willow and determine that they can't fix her. Amanda is angry at first, but eventually she listens to the Tree Wizards as they explain that death is a transformation and journey into the unknown. They also counsel Amanda that the medicine she can give Gentle Willow is love. In a final act of love, Amanda comforts Gentle Willow, who is afraid, with a story about the caterpillar who transforms into a butterfly. A new "Note to Parents" addresses how to cope with death and dying.
<i>Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs</i>	Tomie dePaola	This is a wonderful tale of a 4-year-old boy's close relationship with his 94-year-old great-grandmother. His great-grandmother lives in the upstairs bedroom of the house with his grandmother and grandfather, who play a lesser role in the book. The little boy has a weekly routine of visiting "Nana Upstairs" and sharing mints with her. It is nice to see an elderly person being cared for in the home of relatives rather than in a nursing home! She is so frail that she can't sit upright unassisted, so she is tied into a chair. Don't worry; this is not a scary thing! The little boy also insists on being tied in, so they can be alike. Eventually Nana Upstairs dies. This is not over dramatized and my children were not upset about this, perhaps because the boy is comforted when he sees a falling star in the sky and thinks it is a sign that Nana Upstairs is sending him a kiss. Years later we see the boy as an adult and we find out that Nana Downstairs has died, and he sees another shooting star and is again comforted.

<i>The Next Place</i>	Warren Hanson	An inspirational journey of light and hope to a place where earthly hurts are left behind.
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