NOT IF BUT WHEN

Books for Young People about Death and Loss
CHILDREN & LOSS

Developmental Phases
Perceptions and Implications
TODDLERS

No clear understanding
Response to emotion
Somatic responses
PRESCHOOLERS

Death as:
Reversible
Temporary
Lack of emotional vocabulary
AGES 4-9

Death as:
- Magical thinking
- Self-blame
- Increasing finality
- Curiosity — all living things die
- Personified
AGES 9-13

Death as:

Irreversible

All living things die

Curious about physical processes

I will die
ADOLESCENCE

Death as:

Seeking meaning

Testing limits

Seeking control over mortality

May want to be part of ritual/memorial

I will die
TALK ABOUT IT — BOOKS CAN HELP

Honest, open, and clear

Again & again

Be available
WHAT MAKES A GOOD BOOK?

Loss & Death
YOU, ME, THEM, US
Dad said, "She's gone forever."

I knew she wasn't going to die and I would never see her again. They were going to put her to a house and then in the ground, where she would be in peace.

I knew very well that dying means you're never going to come back.

"What's good about death?" I asked Dad. I couldn't believe she'd "taken her place". How will Dad know how to make my bed? What will he do without me? I was sure Mum didn't teach him how, and now it's too late. We won't be able to manage without her.

Dad said, "I wish she was still alive.

I knew she wasn't going to die and I would never see her again. They were going to put her to a house and then in the ground, where she would be in peace.

I knew very well that dying means you're never going to come back.

"What's good about death?" I asked Dad. I couldn't believe she'd "taken her place". How will Dad know how to make my bed? What will he do without me? I was sure Mum didn't teach him how, and now it's too late. We won't be able to manage without her.
“You don’t understand. Superman’s not brave. He’s smart. He’s handsome. He’s even decent. But he’s not brave… He’s indestructible. You can’t be brave when you’re indestructible. It’s guys like you and me that are brave, Angus. Guys who are different and can be crushed — and know it — but go out there anyway.”
"The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it."

Elizabeth Drew
MOVING BEYOND BIBLIOTHERAPY

Books as Part of the Cultural Landscape
OUTSIDE ORDINARY EXPERIENCE
BEYOND GRIEF

1. Speechless
   - Author: Adam P. Schmitt

2. Lost in the Sun
   - Author: Lisa Graff

3. This Is Where It Ends
   - Author: Marieke Nijkamp
DEATH AS BACKDROP
ABSTRACT EXPLORATIONS
FURTHER CONVERSATIONS

Go to our website for booklists and contact information: wwwnotifbutwhen.org
OTHER RESOURCES

www.our-treehouse.org

www.campfiresnoco.org/camp/grief-camp/

www.nctsn.org

www.whatsyourgrief.com/childhood-grief/