



Saint Augustine's School, Saint John of God Community Services

When Someone Dies





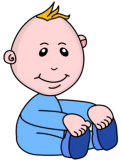
This book may answer some of your questions about death. It will give you some information about death and the feelings we all have when someone important to us has died.





The Cycle of Life

You may have learnt about the "Cycle of Life" in school.
People, animals and plants are living things.



All living things are born.



All living things grow.



All living things die.





Why do people die?

Nobody lives forever. Everybody dies.

Most people live for a long time and get old.



When people get very old, their body stops working and they die.

Sometimes, people die after an accident.

Most people who have accidents do not die and get well again.



Some people die suddenly because their body stops working.

This does not happen often. Most people's bodies are working fine until they are very old.





Some people die because they are very sick and the doctors and nurses cannot make them better.



Most people who are sick do not die and get better again.

Some people die because they end their own lives. This is called suicide. It can happen when people are very upset and think that they cannot get help. Most people who are very upset do not die by suicide.

Please remember that everybody who is very upset can get help.

If you are very upset or have questions about suicide talk to an adult you trust.

Who do you think you can talk to?





Will the person come back?

People who are dead are not just asleep.

They will not wake up. They will not come back.

When a person is dead:

- Their body stops working. They stop breathing.

- They stop moving.



- They stop laughing. They stop crying.



- They stop feeling pain. They stop feeling hungry or thirsty.



Will the person go to Heaven?



Lots of people believe that when a person dies their soul goes to Heaven.

Some people have different names for Heaven.



People think of the person who died in different ways.

You may think of the person who died as an angel looking after you.



You may think that the person who died comes back as something else, for example a bird or a butterfly.



Most people agree that the memory of the person who died stays in the minds and hearts of the people who love them.





What happens at a funeral?

At a funeral people meet in a church or other place to say goodbye to the person who died.



In Ireland most dead people are buried in a graveyard. You may have seen graveyards before. They are places with lots of big stones that have the names of dead people written on them.



Some dead people's bodies do not get buried. They get burned. This is called cremation.

Remember: People who have died do not feel any pain.

If you have worries or questions about a person's funeral or cremation, talk to an adult you trust.



Are my feelings normal?



This is a list of feelings people may have when someone important to them has died:

- You may feel **sad** and **upset** that the person has died.
You may miss them very much. You may cry a lot.
It is okay to cry.



- You may feel **shocked**. You may not feel anything at all.
You may find it hard to believe that the person has really died.
You may not be able to cry even if you want to cry.



- You may feel **angry**. You may think that it is not fair that the person has died. You may feel angry with doctors or other people who could not help the person. You may feel angry at the person because they died. It is okay to feel angry. **Try not to take out your anger on others.** Talk to an adult you trust.





- You may feel **guilty**. You may think that you were not always nice enough to the person before they died. You may think that the person died because of something you said, or because you had thoughts that were not nice.

You need to know: **Words and thoughts do NOT make someone die.**
If you feel guilty, talk to an adult you trust.

- You may feel **lonely**. You may find it hard to play with friends.
- You may feel **worried**: you may be scared that you or other important people in your life might get sick or die.

**Remember that most people live for a long time
and die when they are very old.**

If you feel worried, talk to an adult you trust.





? Do you have any of these feelings?

You may have some of these feelings. You may have all of them, or your feelings may be different. Your feelings may change quickly. You may have lots of feelings at the same time.



All your feelings are normal. All people are different. All people have different feelings when somebody important has died.

All your feelings are normal. All your feelings are okay.

Talk about your feelings with an adult you trust.

It will take time before you feel better again.

Some people need more time to feel better than other people.





**Some people feel changes in their body
when someone important has died:**

- You may eat less.



- You may eat more.



- You may sleep less.



- You may sleep more.



- You may find it hard to concentrate and do your school work.



- You may get headaches.



- You may get pains or feel sick.



- You may have bad dreams. You may find it hard to get to sleep or you may wake up at night.



- You may wet your bed.



If you are worried about changes in your body, talk to an adult you trust.



What can help me feel better?



After someone important to you has died, you will probably be sad and upset for some time.

Give yourself time. It may be hard to believe now, but after some time you will feel much better again.



There are things you can try straight away that may make you feel better:

- **Talk to an adult you trust.** Ask any questions you have. Share your worries and your feelings.



- **Spend time with people you like.**

- **Keep doing things you normally do.** For example go to school, do activities, play with friends.



- **Take breaks and rest** when you need to.





- **Think about the good times** you had with the person who died.



- **Visit the grave or another special place** that may help you remember the person who died.



- **If you are religious, pray and think about the person who died.**
Some people like to pray in a church or other holy place.
Some people like to pray at home.



- **Talk about the person who died** with an adult you trust.



- **Look at photos of the person who died**, if you have some.
Show photos to an adult you trust.



- **Make a photo album** of the person who died with some help from an adult you trust.





- **Make a memory box.** You can put things into the memory box that help you remember the person who died.



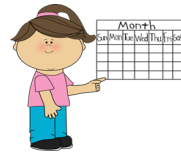
- **Make a memory garden** and plant a plant for the person who died, with some help from an adult you trust.



- **Listen to music you like.** You may enjoy listening to songs that help you remember the person who died.



- **Put together a calendar** that helps you plan and look forward to doing things you enjoy.



Do you think these things will help you feel better? You may try some of them, or you may try all of them. Or you may try different things that you think will help you feel better.

Remember that there are things you can do to feel better.

**If you cannot think of anything that may help you feel better,
talk to an adult you trust.**





Will I feel happy again?

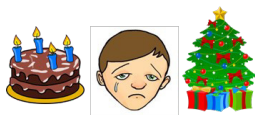
It may take time before you feel happy again.



Give yourself time. It may be hard to believe now, but after some time you will feel happy again.

You will not forget the person who died. You will still think about them sometimes, but you will not feel as sad and upset anymore.

After someone important to you has died, you may have good days and you may have sad days. You may feel extra sad and upset on special days like birthdays or Christmas. It is okay to have sad days.



Give yourself time.

After some time you will have less sad days and you will feel happy again.





Words you may hear after a person has died:

- **Bereavement:** When a close friend or a family member has died.
- **Burial:** When the body of the dead person is buried in a grave in a graveyard.
- **Cremation:** When the body of the dead person is burned.
- **Crematorium:** Building where the dead body of the person is kept before the body is burned.
- **Coffin:** A box. The dead person is put into a coffin before they are buried or cremated.
- **Dead:** A person is dead when their body stops working. A dead person stops breathing, moving, talking and feeling.
- **Death:** Death means that a person has died.





- **Funeral:** At a funeral, people meet in a church or other place to say goodbye to the person who died.
- **Funeral Home:** Building where the coffin is kept before the funeral.
- **Grave:** The place where a dead person is buried. In Ireland, most graves have a wooden cross when they are new. After some time, the family of the dead person gets a gravestone for the grave that has the person's name, their date of birth and their date of death written on it.
- **Graveyard:** Places with lots of graves. Graveyards are often near churches.
- **Grief/Grieving:** all the difficult feelings people have after a person important to them has died, or after other difficult changes in their lives (for example the separation of parents).
- **Heaven:** Some people believe that there is a place that is the home of God. They imagine that this is a very nice place and call it Heaven. Many people believe that when a person dies their soul goes to Heaven. People imagine Heaven in different ways.





- **Loss:** The feeling of losing something after an important change in people's lives, for example after a person has died. The feeling of loss often happens after other important changes, for example after parents separate or when a friend moves away.
- **Soul:** Many people believe that there is an important part of the person that is not in their body. They call this part the soul. You cannot see, hear or smell the soul. Many people believe that after a person has died, their soul will go to Heaven.
- **Spirit:** Another name for the soul.
- **Urn:** A tall container that has the dead person's ashes in it, after cremation.
- **Wake:** when people get together before a funeral to say goodbye to the person who died. Wakes can happen in people's homes or in funeral homes.





This book was created by Saint Augustine's School, Saint John of God Community Service.

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