



Lifetimes: A Beautiful Way to Explain Life and Death to Children

Bryan Mellonie

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When the death of a relative, a friend, or a pet happens or is about to happen . . . how can we help a child to understand?

Lifetimes is a moving book for children of all ages, even parents too. It lets us explain life and death in a sensitive, caring, beautiful way. *Lifetimes* tells us about beginnings. And about endings. And about living in between. With large, wonderful illustrations, it tells about plants. About animals. About people. It tells that dying is as much a part of living as being born. It helps us to remember. It helps us to understand.

Lifetimes . . . a very special, very important book for you and your child. The book that explains—beautifully—that all living things have their own special *Lifetimes*.

Lifetimes: A Beautiful Way to Explain Life and Death to Children Details

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From Reader Review *Lifetimes: A Beautiful Way to Explain Life and Death to Children* for online ebook

Yan says

When my wife died, this was one of the books that were recommended to me by the social services so I'll be able to explain her death more easily to our kids. It helped tremendously, it's written in a beautiful manner.

Jane says

Lifetimes ~ A Beautiful Way to Explain Life and Death to Children is a book I have read and used many times with children. It helps young children to understand that when they step on a bug, they end a lifetime for the bug. *Lifetimes* is beautifully illustrated, gets the message across that we all have a beginning, middle and end to our life and that is the natural order of our world. The beautiful message in this simple book brings a peaceful feeling to anyone who reads or listens to it being read and if a recent death has taken place in a child's life it explains it in a way that even a child as young as three can understand and find comfort.

Jeremy Hornik says

A wonderful and important book. In a simple and matter-of-fact way, "Lifetimes" explains death in a way that children can understand. It is not particularly comforting. Its straightforward prose can even be unnerving... but it's not the book, it's the topic.

My daughter Donna was diagnosed with a brain tumor at 20 months. After two years of treatment, we decided to stop. The treatments were too damaging to her, and each one ended in another relapse. She lived on in wonderful shape: went to pre-school for the first time, watched her new baby brother grow, went to dance classes and read many, many books. One of these books was "Lifetimes". We read this a few times, and then, she started to ask some questions about it. Finally she asked about herself, and we talked about what was happening with her. Because of this book, we could talk about death with her. At the end, she knew she was dying and she was not afraid.

She was in hospice this whole time. After three months, the tumor limited what she could do and she felt sicker, needing more pain medication. Shortly after that, she spoke her last words. She spent a week in bed between her mother and me, sleeping, and then in the middle of the night, she died. This was a painful week but a peaceful one--because we'd had the chance to talk about death.

So I can't recommend this book enough. Hopefully your experience of "Lifetimes" will not be like mine. But we are all going to die, every one of us, and this book can help to understand that without fairy tales or hysteria.

Katie Alexander says

I used this book this week in my Kindergarten classroom to help them understand the loss of their classmate.

It's a beautiful book for kids and adults alike! It really helped me explain when words failed.

Emma says

My parents bought this book for me as a Christmas present in 1995. I had just turned 11 years old. I remember thinking it was a strange gift as nobody in our family was sick or about to die. However I still read and absorbed it's important message. I feel that this book is really the most beautiful and sensitive way to explain life and death to a child. No matter what age.

Denise says

It's hard to think of a rating for this book. I think it's good for what it is intended for - it's not too sappy, it's not too blunt (but straightforward enough), it's clear, and it's been recommended by enough professionals that I assume it has worked well for kids in this situation before. Some of the line drawings (a dead bug, for instance) seemed a little strange - I mean, I guess that's the point, here's a bug that's alive, here's one that isn't, but still felt a little weird to me. Maybe it is helpful for kids? I don't know.

Grace says

Beautiful illustrations, and a good explanation of the cycle of life for living things. I thought it'd be more of a "guide" on actually talking to kids but it is meant to read WITH them. Still a good one to get if you're needing to discuss death.

Linda says

A very special little book about life and lifetime and death. Not scary but useful. 155.937MEL

Margret says

A really beautiful book and soothing way to explain death to a young (toddler aged) child. Highly recommend for the death of a pet or loved one, it's a difficult topic but this book has definitely helped.

Jean O'Shea says

The concept of death is not generally discussed until there is an event and questions that follow. Once children have moved beyond self to include the awareness of another, they will benefit from the gentle scaffolding of the concept. Whether a ladybug, a ponderosa pine or family member, this book reveals through uncomplicated text and subdued illustrations that "each (living thing) has its own special lifetime." *Lifetimes* provides the candid language for a time when words may be difficult to manage.

Volkert says

As a public school librarian, I would say that "Lifetimes" is an effective picture book for an adult to share with a child (or children) in dealing with the subject of death. However, as a person of faith, I would add that the scope of this book is limited to earthly life and therefore does not touch on the belief in life after death.

The text states: "Nothing that is alive goes on living for ever." This statement either reflects the authors' intent on only dealing with the concept of physical death, or it could be interpreted as their belief statement. This is why I'd suggest that "Lifetimes" be read by, or shared with, a caring adult who would be able to answer a child's questions based on a family's belief system. (March 8, 2002.)

Cheryl M. says

This book explains that every living thing has a lifetime. I'm not sure about some of the facts--some butterflies live longer than what was stated in the book. I was looking for something comforting. People are different from other living things. We can have memories. Even from a secular point of view that is some comfort. We have our memories of people we have loved. I don't know why that wasn't included.

Arin Williams says

With simple text and illustrations of nature, this book aims to normalize death by explaining it as a part of a given creature's lifetime. Examples are given about plants, birds, fish, small mammals, and finally, humans. Throughout the book, the lifetime is explained as a beginning and an end, with living in the middle; it is established several times that this is true of all living things. Relating death as a natural occurrence does well to counteract the fear that is usually associated with dying by young children.

Mary Messall says

The book is full of beautiful illustrations and text like this:

"Butterflies live as butterflies for only a few weeks. Once they have dried their wings, they flutter and flit from leaf to flower. At first, they are bright and quick, but as time passes they begin to slow down, until finally they can go no further. They rest for a while, and then they die. That is the way butterflies live, and that is their lifetime."

"Birds grow up quite quickly too. It is often no more than a few months from the time they hatch until they are strong enough to fly and feed themselves. How long they live after that seems to depend on their size. Mostly, the bigger they are, the longer they will be alive. [...] But however long, it is their lifetime for each one."

The message, communicated as much through the graceful illustrations as through the words, is that the brevity of these creatures' lives does not make them less beautiful or wonderful. Our lives are mostly longer

than those of butterflies, shorter than those of trees, but no matter how long we live, we are also beautiful and fragile creatures... Each with our own story and each a part of a larger story, the story of generations of humanity and the vast diversity of life.

Clair Simpson says

I bought this to read with my 4 year old daughter, as she has started asking questions about death. I haven't actually brought myself to read it to her yet but I suppose that's what this book is trying to overcome, our fear of dying and our subsequent passing on of this fear to our children. It is very matter-of-fact, which I think is the best approach and is accompanied by appealing illustrations. I will be interested to see my daughter's reaction. Maybe she can teach me something about accepting the circle of life!!
