Children’s stage of development influences their understanding of death. Their age, verbal ability and cognitive development all impact on their level of understanding.

There are 3 concepts that are important for children to grasp:

- Death is irreversible and final – it is not ‘a trip’ from which they will return.
- Death brings about non-functionality – life and body functions stop.
- Death is inevitable – everyone will die some time.

Most children can understand these concepts by the age of nine years.

It is important to avoid using euphemisms such as 'sleeping forever' or 'left us...' or ‘gone to ..’ as these phrases cause confusion for children.

Children before the age of seven are likely to come to a partial understanding of death.

What they need:
- Our willingness to talk openly
- Clear age-appropriate information and honest answers
- Reassurance
- Acknowledgement of the pain of past losses
- Permission to grieve in their own way
Our Christian Story

Death is sad – because we are separated from the ones we love.
But for those who die – death brings new life.

As Christians, we believe that death is not the end of our journey –
our body dies but our spirit/soul lives on with God.

Our Church talks about our body and soul.
The soul is the part of us that makes us who we are; what animates us:
It is our spirit.

‘I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.’
John 11:25

Jesus says: ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’ – when we follow His way we have the
promise of eternal life.

Just as a caterpillar needs to spin a cocoon and be transformed to become a butterfly –
We believe that when our body dies (stops functioning) our soul (the part of ourselves that
loves, laughs, cries) sees God more clearly and lives on with God.

We don’t know what this looks like but we call this ‘being in heaven’.
When we are in heaven, there is no more pain or suffering – there is
only the love and joy of God and the communion of saints.

Jesus said: ‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full’
- Fullness of life and our completeness comes through both our living and our dying.

When a person dies we pray:

*Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord,*
*and may perpetual light shine upon him.*
*May he rest in peace.*
*Amen.*

When a person dies we:
- tell stories of their life to remember them and celebrate their life;
- pray for them and their families at a funeral mass and with the rosary.

The person who has died is buried or cremated. We can go to a cemetery to remember them and to pray for them.