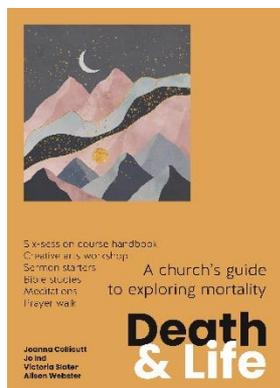


19 April 2024



Death & Life

A church's guide to exploring mortality

Joanna Collicutt, Jo Ind, Victoria Slater, Alison Webster

Pb, A4 format, ISBN 978 1 80039 283 0, £24.99



As a society we aren't good at talking about death, and as individuals we may try and avoid thinking about it. But there's increasing evidence that people from a broad range of backgrounds would value the opportunity to think about death and mortality as part of the process of healthy ageing.

For Christians, dying and death are not the end but a transition point in a story that continues. Reflecting well – and theologically – on our own mortality can help us to make peace with the prospect of death and to live more fully in the here and now.

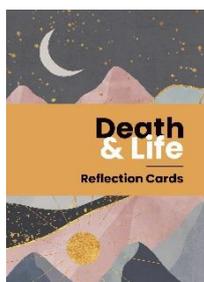
While the religious landscape is changing, churches and faith communities have an important role to play in offering both pastoral care and theological accompaniment to the dying and the bereaved. There is a challenge and an opportunity for churches and faith communities to (re)claim their role – [to re-weave religion and death](#).

An important new resource

This research-based six-session course includes everything that churches need to plan and deliver a course enabling people – old or young, healthy or frail – to prepare practically, emotionally and spiritually for their last months on this earth. The course covers six topics: legal practicalities; life stories; funeral planning; physical aspects of dying; spiritual aspects of dying; and the life to come. It also offers a range of materials on themes related to living well in the light of mortality – loving, letting go, seeing, growing, belonging and hoping – including a creative workshop, sermon starters, Bible studies, meditations and a set of prayer stations which combine to form a prayer walk. A section on good practice and a comprehensive list of further resources completes the package.

Look inside [here](#). For more information click [here](#).

Reflection cards



An accompanying set of ten beautifully designed reflections cards is also available for individual and group use.

A6 cards, ISBN 978 1 80039 325 7, £8.99

For more information click [here](#).

About the lead author

Revd Canon Dr Joanna Collicutt has a background in clinical psychology and academic psychology of religion. She was for many years the Oxford diocesan adviser for older people, and it was in this role that she became interested in the spiritual and theological aspects of death and dying.

She is an associate priest in an Oxfordshire parish and is currently studying for a PhD in the area of Christianity and the arts. Joanna has written or co-written ten books, including *Thinking of you: A resource for the spiritual care of people with dementia* (BRF, 2017) and *Seriously Messy: Making space for families to talk together about death and life* (BRF, 2019).

Joanna outlines the background to this new resource:

‘... [as] adviser for spiritual care for older people for the diocese of Oxford I was reflecting on what “spiritual care” actually means, and how churches might go beyond tending to the physical and emotional well-being of older people (important though this is) and offer something distinctively Christian... my attention [was drawn] back to something I had not noticed before: the New Testament presents older people as faithful prophets rather than knowledgeable sages. The Christian faith sees old age not as a dignified decline into oblivion, but the urgent run-up to its ultimate goal, stepping through the gateway of death to resurrection life.

‘Yet, outside of Easter services, there didn’t seem to be much talk of this sort of thing going on in church circles. Unlike baptism and marriage, there were hardly any courses laid on by churches to prepare folk for this ultimate life event. So, in 2012 I delivered one myself. It was very successful and became a pilot for what turned out to be a much bigger project run jointly by Oxford Diocese and Ripon College, Cuddesdon. This ran from 2014 to 2018 and was supported in part by a generous grant from the Henry Smith Charity. It is out of this more substantial project – gathering stories, recording good practice, identifying needs, doing theological reflection – that this resource has been developed.’

Look inside [here](#). For more information click [here](#).