

**Dear Librarian,**

Based on the critically acclaimed best-selling novel by Alice Sebold, ***The Lovely Bones*** is an emotional and revealing coming-of-age story uniquely told from the perspective of 14-year-old Susie Salmon, who has been murdered and watches over her family—and her killer—from heaven. In December 2009, this riveting story comes to life when Academy Award®-winning director Peter Jackson (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy) brings ***The Lovely Bones*** to theaters.

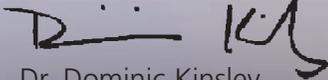
With a rich plotline and captivating characters, ***The Lovely Bones*** is already a favorite at libraries across the country. The debut of the film affords the perfect opportunity to include this contemporary classic in your community outreach strategies. Patrons will become absorbed by the powerful acting of Oscar® nominee Mark Wahlberg and Oscar® winners Rachel Weisz and Susan Sarandon, along with Stanley Tucci, Michael Imperioli, and Oscar® nominee Saoirse Ronan. They will become intimately involved in the gripping storyline and Jackson's amazing perspective on "life and everything that came after." They will connect with Susie's attempts to weigh her desire for vengeance against her desire for her family to heal.

This free library outreach guide, brought to you by Young Minds Inspired (YMI), in partnership with DreamWorks Pictures, Film4, and Paramount Pictures, is designed to help your patrons connect to the film by examining multi-dimensional characters and discussing themes of loss and death so richly depicted on the screen. You can use these materials in conjunction with the book or solely to enrich the movie-viewing experience.

To pique readers' interest, hang the enclosed poster in a prominent location and create a display of books, films, and other materials on themes explored in ***The Lovely Bones***. The back of this letter includes a reproducible handout on one of the film's most resonant themes—coping with loss—which you can use as the springboard for a library discussion group or make available on your take-one table.

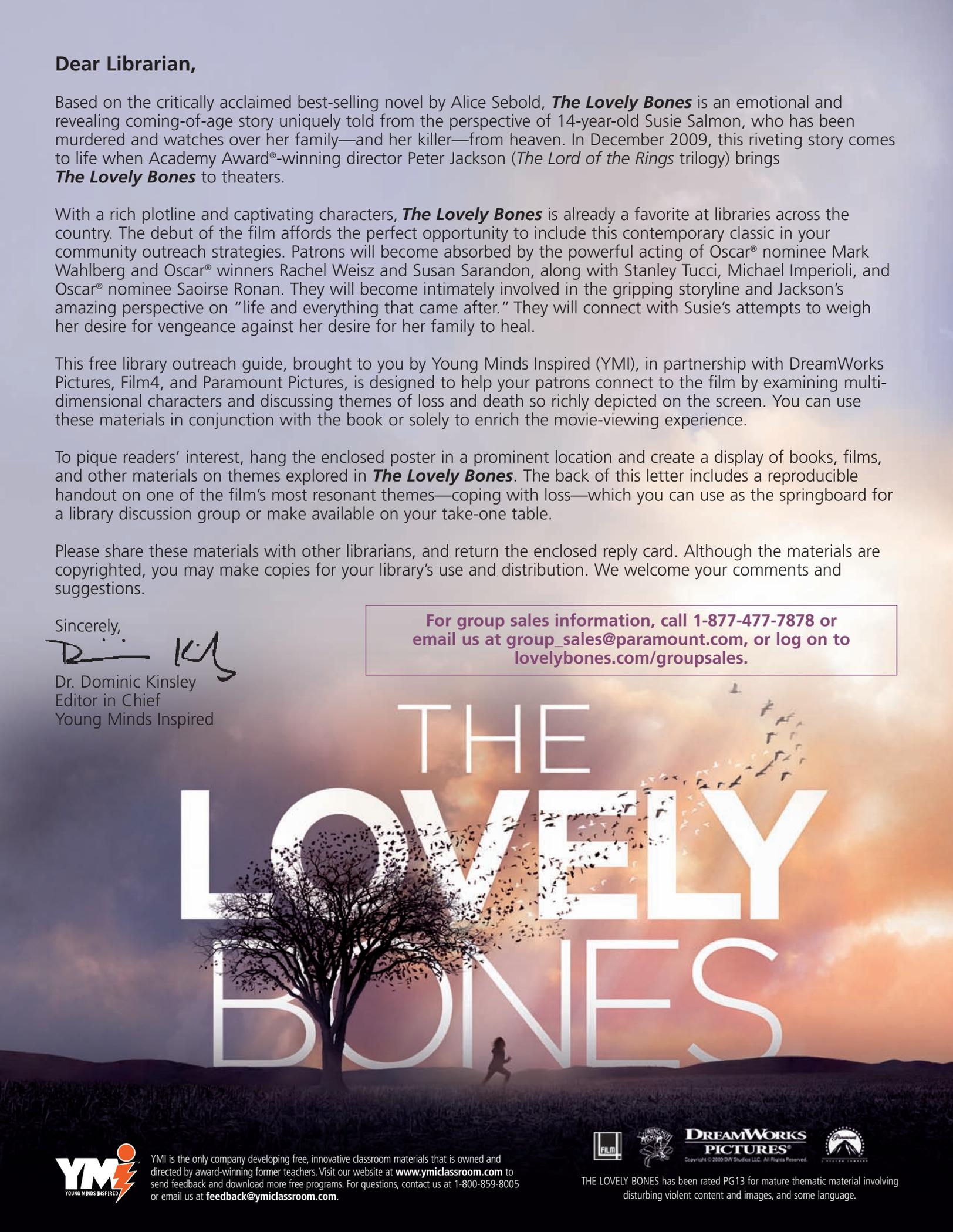
Please share these materials with other librarians, and return the enclosed reply card. Although the materials are copyrighted, you may make copies for your library's use and distribution. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired

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# THE LOVELY BONES



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THE LOVELY BONES has been rated PG13 for mature thematic material involving disturbing violent content and images, and some language.

# THE LOVELY BONES LESSONS IN LOSS

Based on the critically acclaimed best-selling novel by Alice Sebold, and directed by Oscar® winner Peter Jackson from a screenplay by Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens and Jackson, ***The Lovely Bones*** centers on a young girl who has been murdered and watches over her family—and her killer—from heaven. She must weigh her desire for vengeance against her desire for her family to heal. Oscar® nominee Mark Wahlberg and Oscar® winners Rachel Weisz and Susan Sarandon star along with Stanley Tucci, Michael Imperioli and Oscar® nominee Saoirse Ronan.

Although her death at first causes her community worry and alarm, the case remains unsolved and eventually is reduced to low priority. While Susie's father Jack is driven to find the truth at any cost, her mother Abigail becomes paralyzed by sadness and grief. Unable to fill Susie's shoes, sister Lindsey becomes determined to find out what happened to Susie. Susie's young brother Buckley knows that Susie is watching out for him and the family from the "in-between." Ultimately, each family member attempts to make sense of their loss in his or her own way. With an ethereal influence and an intangible presence, Susie nevertheless consistently attempts to bring her family closer once again by providing clues to solve the crime. Jackson's film boldly brings Sebold's novel to life, recreating the universal and piercing sentiments of loss and longing with which readers so strongly identify.

## FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identifies five stages of grief in her famous 1969 book *On Death and Dying*—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Many of Kübler-Ross' theories are still in use today. Have you experienced these stages in your own grieving processes? After seeing ***The Lovely Bones***, think about which stage of loss each member of the Salmon family is experiencing. What advice would you give each one?
2. At the beginning of ***The Lovely Bones***, Peter Jackson presents the Salmon family as a strong, united front—two caring and available parents, three close siblings, and even a grandmother with her finger on the pulse of the family's daily life. As the story quickly unfolds, Susie dies, and her family members react—each in a unique way. In your experience, is the reaction to death universal or personal? What allows people to proceed through the grieving process? What advice would you give to those who have suffered an unspeakable loss? Is it different than what you would say to someone who suffered the loss of an elderly friend or relative?
3. While Susie's father is busy putting the pieces together to find out what happened to Susie, his wife distances herself more from him and from others as well. What divide does this cause in their marriage? How are families supposed to deal with such a situation? Do either of Susie's parents "do the right thing"? Is there a right thing? Can you think of other real-life examples that could cause such a rift?
4. Lindsey, Susie's sister, is preoccupied with the need to find justice for Susie. Could grief counseling have eased her pain, or is the death of a teenage sister too wounding to recover from?
5. The Salmon family desperately wants to find Susie's killer and bring him to justice, but the police find themselves at a standstill with the investigation. This feeling of hopelessness has a profound effect on everyone that was close to Susie. How does this scenario make the grieving process more difficult?
6. Grandma Lynn comes to live with the family to help them cope with their loss. In your experience, does the addition of another family member help or hinder a family's recovery?

## LEARN MORE

If you enjoyed ***The Lovely Bones***, you might consider—

## BOOKS

### FICTION

**Dear Zoe**, by Philip Beard  
**Eye Contact**, by Cammie McGovern  
**Half-Life: A Novel**, by Aaron Krach  
**Living Dead Girl**, by Elizabeth Scott  
**My Sister's Keeper**, by Jodi Picoult  
**One Fine Season**, by Michael Sheehan  
**Speak**, by Laurie Halse Anderson  
**Story of a Girl**, by Sara Zarr  
**Sunrise Tomorrow**, by Elizabeth B. Brown  
**The Memory Keeper's Daughter**, by Kim Edwards  
**The Time Traveler's Wife**, by Audrey Niffenegger

### NONFICTION

**Adolescent Encounters With Death, Bereavement, and Coping**, by David Balk, Ph.D. and Charles Corr, Ph.D.  
**Beyond Tears: Living after Losing a Child**, by Ellen Mitchell  
**Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul**, by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen  
**How Good Do We Have to Be? A New Understanding of Guilt and Forgiveness**, by Harold S. Kushner  
**How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies**, by Therese A. Rando  
**I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye**, by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair  
**Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family**, by Monica McGoldrick and Froma Walsh (Editors)  
**On Death and Dying**, by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross  
**Talking to Heaven**, by James Van Praagh  
**When Bad Things Happen to Good People**, by Harold S. Kushner

## FILMS

**Along Came a Spider**  
**John Q**  
**Moonlight Mile**  
**Rachel Getting Married**  
**Reservation Road**

# THE LOVELY BONES

LOVELYBONES.COM | LIMITED – DECEMBER 2009 | NATIONWIDE – JANUARY 15, 2010



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