

# Management of Grief and Loss

## Summary

Students will learn of coping behaviors related to grief and loss. They will recognize the tasks associated with the grief and loss process. Students will also have an opportunity to identify common ways literary characters cope with loss.

## Main Core Tie

Health Education - 3rd Grade

[Strand 2: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH \(MEH\) Standard 3.MEH.1:](#)

## Time Frame

2 class periods of 60 minutes each

## Group Size

Large Groups

## Life Skills

Communication

## Materials

Writing journal for each student

"Lifetimes" by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen

"The Patchwork Quilt" by Valerie Flourney

## Background for Teachers

Children ages 10 to 12 (cite: 1997, Cedar Valley Hospice, Inc.):

Recognize that death is inevitable and irreversible.

May view death as a punishment.

Retain some elements of feeling guilty or responsible for the death.

Curious about the "gory" details.

May come up with personal theories for the reasons for the death.

May have practical questions about the body and the funeral.

"Grief", states Dr. Wolfelt, "is what you think and feel inside when someone you love dies." According to Sandra Fox, after a death, adults try to fill the void. Children, on the other hand, simply go on once they are ready. Most children feel it is enough that their special someone existed for a time.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Have students read one of the following books before this lesson:

"The Giver" by Lowry

"Tuck Everlasting" by Babbitt

"Sonder" by Armstrong

"Where the Red Fern Grows" by Rawls

## Intended Learning Outcomes

After reading a novel that deals with death, student will be able to analyze the way death was written of. Students will be able to explain how the characters in the book react to the death. Students will also

be able to identify feelings and behaviors related to grief and loss.

### Instructional Procedures

1. Read "Lifetimes" by Mellonie and Ingpen to the class. It is a short book on the cycle of life.
2. Have students write a paragraph or two in their writing journals about a loss they have experienced.
3. Have students form a circle for a class discussion. Stress the importance of respect and remind students there will be no putdowns during this discussion. Have those students who are willing to share, read from their journals. Lead the class in a discussion.
4. Have students re-tell the different causes of death in any of the four novels listed above. Discuss how the characters in the stories handled the deaths.
5. Teach the class as much of the following information as time will permit.
  - A. The grieving process is composed of a series of steps (cite: Sandra Fox):
    - \*To understand that the death happened
    - \*To grieve
    - \*To Commemorate
    - \*To go on
  - B. Death is a natural part of living.
  - C. (cite: Cedar Valley Hospice) Children need to openly grieve a death and discuss the situation with a trusted adult.
  - D. (cite: Rabbi Grollman) Children have the unique ability to grieve intermittently. It puzzles adults when crying children at a funeral service turn in to playful children at the luncheon.
  - E. Crying is natural. A newborn enters life crying for oxygen. Tears are wordless messages, a vital part of grieving.
  - F. when helping a friend in grief: (cite: South Florida Chapter forum for Death Education and Counseling)
    - \* Remember that grief work is a normal and necessary process.
    - \* Learn to be with the person, not to solve the problem.
    - \* Allow the pain. Learn to enter into it, not try to take it away.
    - \* Allow the expression of feelings (guilt, anger, sorrow, depression) without judgment.
    - \* Listen when the story is told over and over again.
    - \* Remember that the process of mourning takes time.

### Strategies for Diverse Learners

Allow students to choose a book that interests them from the Children's Book List Dealing With Death (see bibliography).

### Extensions

After reading "The Patchwork Quilt" by Flornoy, make a quilt for someone in need.

Visit a cemetery and make marker rubbings.

Science - study life cycles.

Write a report about superstitions and legends of death and burial. Use the Internet.

Look at the obituaries in the newspaper for one week. List all the causes of death. Make a chart or graph.

### Assessment Plan

Class discussions. Completion of one of the novels.

### Rubrics

Bibliography

Resources:

- Cedar Valley Hospice, Inc. Children And Grief. Waterloo, Iowa, 1997
- Flournoy, Valerie, The Patchwork Quilt. N.Y. Dial Books, 1985.
- Fox, Sandra Sutherland, Good Grief: Helping Groups of Children When a Friend Dies. Judge Baker Guidance Center, Boston, Mass. 02115.
- Grollman, Rabbi, Time Remembered: A Journal for Survivors. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1987.
- Hyde, Margaret O., and Lawrence E., Meeting Death. N.Y.: Walker and Company, 1989
- Mellonie, Bryan, and Ingpen, RoBert, Lifetimes: The beautiful way to explain death to children. N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1983
- The Dougy Center, School of Humanities, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.
- Wolfelt, Alan D., Ph.D., Healing Your Grieving Heart, For Kids. Fort Collins, Colorado: Companion Books, 2001 (an excellent resource)

Books for students:

- The Giver by Lowry
- Tuck Everlasting by Babbitt
- Souder by Armstrong
- Where the Red Fern Grows by Rawls

Authors

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