

Gold Fish Funeral

Summary

A unit designed to take students through the stages of mourning and give them practical application in regards to planning a funeral, understanding death related terms, and writing obituaries.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

plan for guest speaker, dead gold fish, pamphlets from local mortuary, worksheets from curriculum, note-takers for students, obituaries from a local newspaper.

Background for Teachers

Review material in the curriculum on death and the mourning process.

Student Prior Knowledge

none

Intended Learning Outcomes

Recognize and be able to use terms related to death and mourning, know the steps involved with planning funeral services, write an obituary, and understand more about the stages of mourning.

Instructional Procedures

Day 1 Begin the unit by having a local mortician come in and tell students a little bit about their profession so that students aren't quite so morbid throughout the unit. Have students write questions ahead of time that they would like answered so that you can screen them. Day 2 Lead a class discussion and introduce class to the stages of mourning as per the curriculum. Use the 'Dealing with Death' listening guide for students to fill in throughout the discussion. Hand out the 'Terms Associated with Death' worksheet and have the students fill in as many of these terms as possible and then go over them as a class. Day 3 Using the 'Obituary' fill-in guide in the curriculum, have students interview one another and then write each other's obituaries (have actual obituaries from newspapers available for students to get a feel of how to write one). I have found that some students are too modest to put down their achievements (that's why I have them write each other's). Another option is to make this a homework assignment where the parent fills in the 'Obituary' sheet and then the students have to turn in the actual obituary and include all the information on the sheet. I also had students fill in an official certificate of death so that they could see what one was like. These are available through the county or from a mortician. Day 4 (option 1)-Gold Fish Funeral As students enter the room, have parlor music playing in the background. Meet them at the door and shake their hands as they enter saying something like "We're so glad you could make it" or "Thank you so much for coming" and have them pick up a program (see attachment) of events for the day. At the front of the room, have the dead gold fish in a decorated box (coffin). The program could be filled in with students' names already or you can leave a place to fill them in for volunteers. When everyone has entered, proceed with the program as outlined. For the processional, we were lucky to have an old grave yard near our school, so we walked out to it and buried the gold fish, but you could also lead the processional into the

restroom or something to have a graveside service. Day 4 option 2 (plan your own funeral) Most mortuaries have a list of prices for their services including coffins, flowers, etc. Give each student (or a group of students) a budget and have them plan out a funeral according to their budget and then report their decisions to the class. Most student have no idea how much funerals cost and this is very eye-opening for them.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Encourage gifted students to go the extra mile and let struggling students have a partner or more time on assignments.

Assessment Plan

Assessment will be completed on a short quiz with a few questions related to the mortician's visit, study guides, terms, etc.

Bibliography

USOE curriculum materials, guest speaker

Authors

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