

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

## THE NATURE OF GOD

### ART

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Grief is what follows loss, especially death. Grief is both the hurt and the healing. Grief is never straightforward or simple or the same for two people.
- If we allow ourselves to grieve and to let others grieve, people can continue living meaningful lives.
- In most cultures, people create rituals to help them in the grieving process. One such ritual in our culture is the funeral or memorial service.
- Grief does not mean forgetting; it means remembering. In time, we remember the dead with more feelings than just sorrow. We remember them with love, with gratitude and even laughter.

#### Lesson Materials

- Images of works of art about grief from attached resource idea list
- Book with images of art by A. Calder
- Flipchart or chalkboard for brainstorming
- Cardstock/posterboard
- Wire
- Low-temp hot glue guns
- Rigid base for stabile

#### TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Grief can awaken us to new values and new and deeper appreciations. Grief can cause us to reprioritize things in our lives, to recognize what's really important and put it first. Grief can heighten our gratitude as we cease taking the gifts life bestows on us for granted. Grief can give us the wisdom of being with death. Grief can make death the companion on our left who guides us and gives us advice.

- Roger Bertschausen

He who conceals his grief finds no remedy for it. --Turkish Proverb

Sorrow makes us all children again, destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

I still miss those I loved who are no longer with me but I find I am grateful for having loved them. The gratitude has finally conquered the loss.

~ Rita Mae Brown

#### GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 5-10 minutes

Spend some time looking at images of grief in art. What do you see in the faces and bodies of the figures? How can you tell how the figures are feeling? What is going on in these images of funerals or mourning? If these were real people, would they feel like this forever or would their emotions change? How?

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

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**YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES**

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**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE  
THE GREAT ART FUNERAL**

🕒 10-15 minutes

- We're going to create a giant funeral made out of art. We'll create our art in the style of the sculptor Alexander Calder, who used wire to make figures of people and animals and who also used forms called "stabiles" and "mobiles", which we'll imitate with posterboard and wire. Lots of other people started making wire art after Calder.

Wondering Together (take notes of brainstormed ideas that might provide inspiration for the art funeral)

- I wonder what you think we might see if we attended a funeral?
- I wonder what people attending the funeral might be doing?
- I wonder what different feelings people might be feeling?
- I wonder why people have funerals and memorials in the first place?
- I wonder what a memorial is like here at our church?

- This will be a collaborative art project, with contributions from all kids of all ages. It could be a pretty big funeral. We'll mount the entire production on a piece of wood so that it can be transported as one unit.
- Spend some time looking at two or three pieces of art on the inspiration page. How did artists make the wire into a person? How did they get that figure to stand up? Can we do the same? How could we make a sad looking person? A flower?
- Ask each child to think about what *one thing* they'd like to contribute to the funeral. Will they create a mourner? Send a vase of flowers? Create someone to officiate the service? Create the headstone for the deceased? A table of food, brought by caring friends? Someone saying a prayer or meditating on the loss? If previous Workshop groups have already started the project, what's still missing? What could we imitate or do differently?
- Provide each child access to sculpting wire, poster board, yarn, scissors, tools and low-temp glue guns. First and second graders should still be supervised with low-temp glue guns. Demonstrate that twisting wires connects them together and curling, braiding or bending the wires can create the necessary shapes. Encourage creative combinations of posterboard, yarn and wire.
- Show the children where to place their finished product. The individual pieces can be permanently mounted outside of classtime if time is short.

- Ask each child to share a little bit about their contribution.
- Allow time for clean-up.

## **CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING**

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words:

*Life and death are one and the same,  
like the river and the ocean.  
Grief is the invisible ache in our hearts  
and grief is the healing of that ache, too.  
Grief is like the river, too, never taking the straightest path  
but flowing where it needs to flow.  
Love is like the ocean, too, great and deep,  
touching even the shores we cannot see.*

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## **IDEA BANK:**

Here are some things and people at a memorial service. Which is our sculpture still missing?

- Grown ups
- Kids
- Flowers
- Wreaths
- People bringing flowers
- People playing music
- People hugging
- Ministers
- People praying
- People crying
- People laughing
- Food
- People making and serving food
- Casket or urn (or no casket or no urn)
- Photographs
- Flags

Here are some things and people at a cemetery:

- Grave markers
- Flags
- Flowers
- Casket
- Statues
- Chapels to pray in
- Fountains
- Trees
- Tents to shelter people from the rain
- Benches
- People sitting at gravesides
- People bringing flowers
- People crying
- Ministers helping people say goodbye

## Works of Art that Touch on Grief



The Weeping Buddha  
Indonesia



Jazz Funeral  
Jon Guillaume

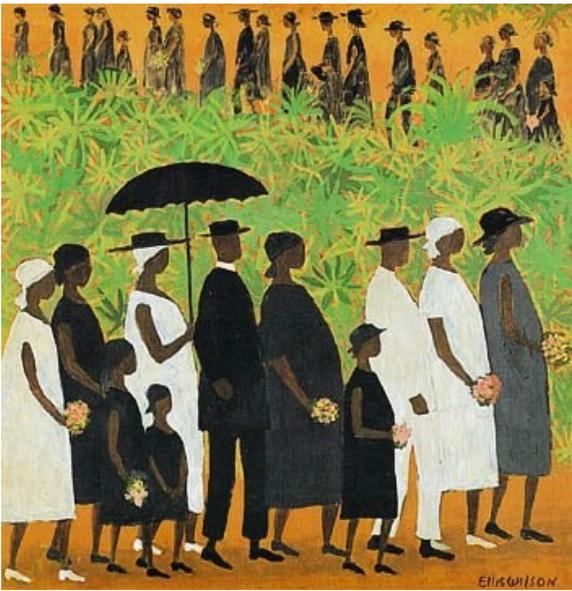


Reflections  
Lee Teeter, 1988(?)



Emelyn Story's tomb, Rome  
William Wetmore Story, 1894

## Works of Art that Touch on Grief



Funeral Procession  
Ellis Wilson, 1950s



The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner  
Edwin Landseer, 1837

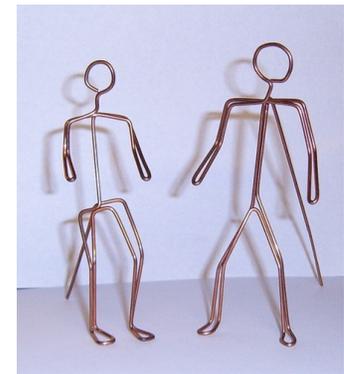
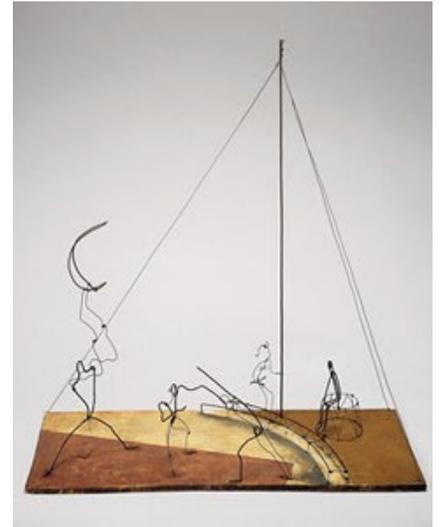
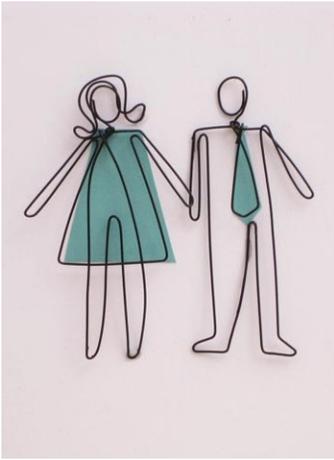


All Souls' Day  
William Adolphe Bouguereau, 1859



Fort Snelling National Cemetery  
Bob Firth

# ARTSY IDEAS



How can you make people, flowers, food and furnishings out of wire, paper and yarn? Here are some ideas from other artists...

