



JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

ENDINGS

KINESTHETIC

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

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TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

- 🕒 Ahead of time

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight. ~Kahlil Gibra

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE PRACTICE MEMORIAL SERVICE

- 🕒 40-45 minutes

With the help of the congregation's ministers and parents, we'll set up the physical environment of a memorial service or funeral as it would most likely be set up in the lives of the children of the church.

This practice memorial service will provide parents and children an opportunity to see and touch the important physical elements of a funeral and ask the sorts of questions that curious and anxious children have about these mourning rituals, but without the complication of an actual loss. In the event that a child is bereaved, it's often too difficult to process the big, new feelings and learn about the common grieving practices in our society at the same time.

In Ames Chapel, we will set up an environment similar to a memorial service and explain the physical elements to the children and allow them to ask questions. Our focus will be on the grieving process of the family and friends in the event of a death rather than on the deceased person, but the children may naturally ask questions about death and dying. Throughout this unit, we lift up grieving as important work of living human beings.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

- You might find the word **discipline** a helpful tool, but be sure to clarify that in this sense, the word discipline doesn't mean that we punish ourselves. Discipline comes from an old word that means "teaching". When we commit to a new discipline, it means we're teaching ourselves something new.
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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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The set-up for the practice memorial service may include:

- Flowers
- Wreaths
- Hymnals
- Photo boards
- Guest books
- Casket
- Podium or lectern
- Orders of service
- Special music
- Candles
- Cremation urn

The minister will walk the group through the elements, pausing to invite questions. The Teacher's role is to assist in this memorial service by helping children to sign the guest book, see and touch objects like the casket and urn, follow along, and to feel comfortable asking questions. The Teacher will also keep an eye on children and their parents, offering to help if attendees seem uncomfortable or unable to participate fully.

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.*