PROJECT

A Curriculum on Dealing with Death for the Fourteen Year Old

A project encompassing the religious, psychological and educational arenas in presenting a death education course to the fourteen year old religious school student.

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> Life is a day that lies between two nights.. the night of not yet, before birth, and the night of no more, after death. That day may be overcast with pain and frustration, or bright with warmth and contentment. But inevitably, the night of death must arrive. [1]

It has been said that we are born in order to die, that life is but a preparation for death... that, of all things in this earth. only death is inevitable. However we may rationalize or be realistic about the subject, it is, nevertheless, an emotionally charged issue. There are most assuredly different levels of grief--certainly the death of a child can be considered more tragic than the passing of someone who has led a full, long and rich life. However, a sense of grief, of confusion, of loss and of guilt by the surviving relatives can, and often, does, accompany the death of a loved one.

The purpose of this first chapter is to examine the concept of death and customs surrounding death, particularly within the Jewish framework. Since the aim of this study is to develop a program on death for 14 year-old adolescents, an examination of the psychology of adolescence and their reactions to death will later also be presented. In order to provide insight as to what has already been prepared by other groups, samples

of programs on death will be included and analyzed.

The Hebrew word of death is "mavet," perhaps taken from the name of the Canaanite god of the underworld, "Mot." Mot was victorious in his fight against Baal, the god of rain and fertility and forced Baal to descend to his kingdom in the earth. Baal's sister, Anoth, avenged her brother and killed Mot. Both Baal and Mot were to return to earth, but at different times. This is interpreted by commentators as symbolic of the changing seasons: Mot returns to life in the rainy season while Baal dies.[2]

We find that the predominant attitudes of the bible toward death are negative and mysterious. There are traces of myths that Death is a destructive force having its own messengers, totally distinct from God. As found in Jeremiah 9:20, "For Death has climbed in through our windows, has entered our fortresses, cutting off children from the streets, young men from the squares." Mavet, here, may be compared with Lamashtu, the Mesopotamian demon who attacked children through entering windows.[3]

Two reasons are given for the death of man in the bible. In Genesis, we find the natural reason: that man was made from the dust of the earth, to which he returns. Genesis 3:22-24 offers a second reason: that of justice. When expelled from paradise, man was deprived of access to the tree of life and thus eternal life was lost to him. In Genesis 3:19, we find a "death sentence:" "By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat until you return to the ground." This is opposed to other Biblical passages that speak of the dead who go down into the tomb and enter the region of the dead, known as she'ol.

We repeatedly find in the bible the negative notion that the dead all share the same unhappy fate. This is characterized by the names given to the 'region of the dead,' such as erez (earth, underworld) as found in I Samuel 28:13; kever (grave) as found in Psalms 88:12; bor (pit) as found in Isaiah 14:15 and 38:18 and other places; and mahelei beleyya'al (the torrents of Belial) as found in II Samuel 22:5,6, among others.[4]

There is occasionally also the idea that the situation of the deceased is dependant upon the attention bestowed upon them by the living. Great importance is placed upon burial by the bible. In Genesis 47:29,30, we find

> When the time approached for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him: 'If you really wish to please me, put your hand under my thigh as a sign of your constant loyalty to me; do not let me be buried in Egypt. When I lie down with my ancestors, have me taken out of Egypt and buried in their burial place. [5]

The Torah does not use the words, so important to Rabbinic tradition, of "honoring the dead." Yet the idea comes out in its horror at no burial or at the improper treatment of corpses. In Deuteronomy 26:14, the prohibition of sacrifices to the dead is mentioned. This can be linked to Psalm 106:28, which refers to idolatry: "They joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. "[6]

A prime example of pessimism in Mesopotamian texts regarding man's fate is found in the words of Siduri trying to convince Gilgamesh of the futility in seeking eternal life, for "when the gods created mankind, Death for mankind they set aside, Life in their own hands retaining." A verse found in Ecclesiastes 7:9 stresses the enjoyment of life while one is able:

> Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of the fleeting life that is granted you under the sun. This is your lot in life, for the toil of your labors under the sun. 7

Through these examples, we receive an understanding of the fear, the hesitation and the mystery revolving the concept of death as found in the bible. The general impression one receives is that of the primitiveness of the bible in dealing with the unknown quantity of death. In many places, we find negative and fearful attitudes. Death is destructive, sin-provoked, and inevitable. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that there are found in the bible direct contrary evidences which counter-balance any terror surrounding death. As found in Daniel 12:2, the concept of resurrection, in the true sense of the word, is a reward for the people of Israel. In Isaiah 66:24, punishment of the wicked is eternal, but is not connected with their resurrection. In the book of Samuel, when Saul is summoned by Samuel, his complaint is only that he was disturbed at being called up from Sheol. In these and other cases, while death is seen negatively, it also comes from the good God and is not independent of God. Thus, it cannot be utterly evil.

The bible does not sharply distinguish, as does later Judaism, between mourning acts done before the funeral and those done afterwards. The rite of mourning most frequently found in both the narrative and poetic sections of the bible is that of tearing garments. Beginning with Genesis 37:27, Reuben, in his use of a mourning symbol as reaction to a threatening situation, tears his clothes upon hearing of Joseph's disappearance. In Genesis 37:34, Jacob reacts similarly upon finding Joseph's bloodied cloak. In his defeat at Ai, Joshua responds in a like manner (Joshua 7:6) as does Mordecai, in responding to the news of the fate of the Jews (Esther 4:1).[8] Apparently, this was the accepted cultural act for the expression of grief. Moderns might suggest that the rending of garments is an emotional outlet, or may have developed as a substitute for self-mutilation.

Another rite of mourning is the wearing of sackcloth. In II Samuel 14:2,

we find this example when the woman of Tekoah whom Joab sent to King David was dressed in mourning garments. This may have been similar to those worn by Tamar, as found in Genesis 38:14-19. In Ezekiel 26:16, he prophesies that Tyre will mourn by the removal of ornate garments and the wearing of special mourning robes. In Joshua 7:6, II Samuel 13:19 and other sources, we find reference to the practice of placing ashes upon one's head. Biblical sources are also found for the mourning customs of abstaining from washing (II Samuel 2:20), fasting (II Samuel 3:35) and in(Esther 4:3) in communal emergency and refraining from wearing ornaments (Exodus 33:4).[9]

Other biblical rites of mourning related to the hair and beard are cited. At the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the Israelites uncovered their hair as a sign of mourning. The prophets (Isaiah 22:12, Jeremiah 16:6, Ezekiel 7:18) describe shaving the head as a rite of mourning. Job, when hearing of the death of his children, shaves his head (Job 1:20).

Along with the shaving of the head and beard, we find in Jeremiah 16:16 and 41:5, the practice of gashing of the hands and other parts of the body as a mourning rite. The prophets seemed unaware of any prohibitions in this regard; however, Leviticus 21:15 prohibits the priest from participating in this ritual (as well as all other mourning activities).

In Leviticus 19:27,28, we find the prohibition of all Israel from haircutting, shaving, gashing, and tatooing as mourning rites.[10] In his folkloristic explanation, T.H. Gaster suggests that the mutilation of the body was originally intended to provide the ghosts of the deceased with blood to drink; the cutting of the hair enabled the ghost to draw on the strength that it embodied.[11]

The bible, in Ezekiel 26:16, describes the typical mourning posture as that of sitting on the ground, while in II Samuel 12:31, it is lying on the ground. In Isaiah 24:8, and Jeremiah 31:12, the biblical association of mourning with the cessation of both music and dancing is found.

Jack Riemer, in his Jewish Reflections on Death, linked present mourning customs with biblical and other passages. He cited the prohibition from cutting one's hair (Lev. 10:6), from washing onesself (Berakhot 2:7), from sex (II Samuel 12:24), from wearing leather shoes (Ezekiel 24:7), from working (Amos 8:10) and many others. This, he explained, was all done to demoralize the mourner-- to make him less concerned with his own personal well-being.

The bible also mentions specific periods of time for carrying out the process of mourning. The Jewish custom of seven days of mourning is observed by Joseph upon the death of Jacob (Genesis 50:16) as well as with Job, at the height of his suffering (Job 2:13). In Numbers 20:20 and Deut. 34:8, we find that Moses and Aaron were each mourned thirty days while Jacob and Ephraim each mourned "many days "for their children (Genesis 37:34, Chronicles 7:22).[12]

The incompatibility of religious festivals and mourning is suggested in Nehemiah 8:9. In Isaiah 40:1,2, we find the tender word as a comforting gesture to mourners as well as sitting with the mourner (Job 2:13) and by offering him bread and wine (II Samuel 3:35). "Lechem oni," is the name for this bread of "agony" as found in Ezekiel 24:17 and Hosia 9:4 and the wine is the "cup of consolation," as indicated in Jeremiah 16:7.

The Talmud's viewpoint on death significantly differed from that of the bible because of the Rabbis' firm belief in an afterlife. In the Talmud, death was thought of as the moment of transformation from life in this world to that of the beyond. In Avot 4:6, we find, "this world is like a corridor before the world to come." In Kid. 39b, we find, "Death is the passing of the portal separating the two worlds, giving access to a 'world which is wholly good.'" [13]

Birth and death were viewed as parallel processes; just as man is born with a cry and tears, so he dies. In Yoma 20b, we find the statement that the soul leaves the body at death with a cry that reverberates from one end of the world to another, to pass into a state of existance, the exact nature of which was a source of debate among the Rabbis. The Rabbis accumulated 903 manners of death--from dying of asthma as the most severe to the "kiss of death," the lightest form reserved for the most righteous, such as Moses. In a negative context, one description of the death process related that when the angel of death, holding a drawn sword, stands over a dying man, the man opens his mouth in fright, whereupon the angel spills into him a drop of gall suspended from the sword. The person dies and because of his drop, the corpse gives off an unpleasant odor. [14]

It was generally believed that the dead reap whatever rewards or punishment due them for deeds performed while alive. The Rabbis also stated that, at death, one was free from Torah and the observance of the commandments. Death was often considered an atonement for sin. In Sanhedrin 6:2, the confession formula before death appears. "May my death be an atonement for all my sins." After the destruction of the Temple, this atoning value received greater emphasis with the abolishment of sacrifices. For the most serious sins, com-

plete forgiveness, despite prayer, penitence on Yom Kippur and previous suffering, was dependant upon the final atoning value of death.[15]

The Rabbis disputed the necessity of death. One extreme view, found in the tractate Shabbat, held that death was the wages of sin. "There is no death without sin." Another view, much older, stems from the Tannaitic period and stresses death's inevitability--its naturalness as part of the very fabric of the world since its inception. The mishna in Avot 4:22 stresses: "Those who are born will, of necessity, die...for perforce you were created, born, live and perforce you will die." According to this view, sin does not cause death, it only hastens it. Lack of sin either enables man to reach his predetermined life span or helps him to live longer than the years alloted to him.[16]

In Genesis Rabbah 9:5, we have one view on why both the wicked and the righteous die, a major Jewish case of the problem of evil, i.e.,no justice. The wicked perish in order to cease angering God; the righteous die to rest from their continual struggle against the evil inclination which loses power over them after death. Though mortality affects both the wicked and the righteous, the Rabbis were sure that the whole quality of their respective lives, here and in the hereafter, greatly differed. The wicked are considered dead while alive and even in death, the righteous are called living (Berachot 18,a,b).[17]

The Rabbis, in their many discussions and deliberations concerning death, seemed to have developed a more humane, less fearsome attitude than in biblical times. We find death discussed as a corridor between two worlds. This is a significant development. From a psychological point of view, they seem to be cushioning the finality of death-- it is merely a passage from one state of existance to another.

Theologically, they are reminding us of what Jews believe--that death is not our end. In dealing with the subject in this manner, there is less fear, less mystery, less dread. The talmud and midrash also deal with the inevitability of death, both for the righteous and the wicked. In discussing the atoning value of death and the various ways of dying, it may be understood that, according to the Rabbinic interpretations, those who lead righteous, moral lives have less fear of the death process than the less righteous. In essence, we find the Rabbis expressed concerns and issues regarding death in a more humane, sophisticated and understanding manner than in the biblical passages.

Many additional laws of mourning are of Rabbinic rather than biblical origin. With few exceptions, the laws of mourning described in the Talmud and the early sources are in standard use. These laws were designed to provide dignity for the deceased, "kibud hamet," as well as for those surviving. The body of the deceased was accorded certain respect. Similarly, the laws channel the way the mourner should deal with the despair and the pain.

The dead body was not left alone, but rather was guarded by watchers until the funeral. In Berachot 3:1, we learn that these watchers are exempted from the performance of other positive commandments because of the greatness of this mitzvah.[18]

Before the funeral, the body was cleansed according to a specified ritual. The basis for Tahorah is in Ecclesiastes 5:15, "as he came, so shall he go." Since man is washed at birth, so, too, is he washed at death. The ceremony of Tahorah is not mentioned in the bible, although ritual purity in relation to dead bodies is noted. Tahorah was observed in Mishnaic times, as can be understood from the statement in Shabbat 23:5 that limited washing and anointing of

the body is permitted on Shabbat.

In the cleansing process, the body was lain on a tahorah board, with the feet toward the door to indicate the escape of impurities. While the body was undressed and cleansed, with lukewarm water, the mit'assekim (performers of the cleansing) recited biblical verses such as from Zecheriah 3:4 and Ezekiel 36:25. The head and front part of the body were rubbed with a beaten egg, to symbolize the perpetual wheel of life. Afterwards, nine measures (approximately 4 1/2 gallons) of water were poured over the body which was then thoroughly dried and dressed in shrouds.

In Talmudic literature (Bezoh 6a, MK 8b), we find mention of the cleansing of the body with myrtle and the cutting of the deceased's hair. In addition to washing the body, we find in the Shulcan Aruch, YD352:4, the mention of combing the hair and clipping the nails of the deceased. In the Shulchan Aruch YD 339:5, we find the custom of pouring out all the drawn water in the neighborhood in which the person died. This folk custom was a method of announcing the death since Jews were reluctant to be the bearers of evil tidings.[19]

The Rabbis classified four distinct mourning periods. The first, called Aninut, is the time between death and burial. All the subsequent time is called Avelut. The seven days following the burial are specifically known as Shiva. The time between burial and the 30th day following burial is known as Shloshim. Finally, there are restrictions pertaining to the first year following the death of a loved one.

As previously mentioned, the first level is called aninut, with the mourner known as the Onen. In this period, the mourner is absolved from the performance

of all positive mitzvot such as reciting the Sh'ma or wearing talit and tefillin (Mo'ed Katan 23B). The Palestinian Talmud, cited by Tosafot in Talmud Brachot, derives this law from Deuteronomy 16:3: "So that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live." (The tie-in, according to Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, is that the Jew accepted commitment to Judaism, to the positive commandments of Judaism, to the recitation of the Sh'ma, when he left Egypt, "kol y'may chayecha"--as long as he lived. At the moment of experiencing the death of a close relative, man experiences a symbolic death and thus the onen, the mourner, is not alive).[20]

Freedom from certain religious obligations enabled the onen to attend to the needs of arranging the funeral, etc. without distraction. As found in Sukkot 25a, the rule that "he who is engaged in a religious act is exempt from performing other religious duties," applied. The onen was also forbidden to overeat, eat meat, or drink wine (TJ Ber. 3:1, 6a) except on Shabbat.

The next phase of mourning is known as avelut, which means to withdraw. The turning point from aninut to avelut is the recitation of kaddish at the grave. The mourner first withdraws almost completely from society for seven days, hence the term, "shiva." The mourner's first meal after the funeral was known as "Seudat Havra'ah" (meal of consolation) and was provided by friends in accordance with the Talmudic injunction that "a mourner is forbidden to eat of his own bread on the first day." (MK 27b)[21]

During this period of shiva, the bereaved family gathered in the house of the deceased, covered their heads and sat on overturned couches. Mourners were obligated to tear their garments and to recite the blessing, "Dayan Ha'emet,"

the true judge. According to MK 23a and 15a and b, they were prohibited from leaving the house, performing manual labor, cutting hair, engaging in sex, wearing leather shoes, washing clothes, greeting acquaintances or studying Torah. They were, however, permitted to study certain sorrowful portions of the bible and Talmud. The Rabbis considered the first three days of mourning as the most intense. According to MK 27b, "three days for weeping and seven for lamenting."

Rabbinical literature explained the reasons for the choice of seven as the main period of mourning. In Amos 8:10, we find, "I will turn your feasts into mourning." In commenting upon this verse, the Rabbis explained that just as Passover and Sukkot last for seven days, so does the period of mourning (MK 20a). In the 13th century, in the Zohar, Va Yahi 226a, we have a mystical interpretation, "for seven days the soul goes to and fro between the house and the grave, mourning for the body."

The Kaddish is characterized by an abundance of praise and glorification of God and an expression of hope for the speedy establishment of His kingdom on earth. The congregational response, "May His great name be blessed for ever and to all eternity" (Sifre to Deut. 32:3) is the essence of the prayer. This verse has parallels in Daniel 2:20, Job 1:21, and Psalm 113:2 as well to the eulogy found in Yoma 3:8, "Blessed be the name of this glorious kingdom for ever and ever," which was recited in the Temple.[22]

The simple form in which the pleas are praised and the lack of reference to the destruction of the Temple indicate the oldness of the Kaddish prayer. In Ezekiel 38:23, we find the Kaddish's opening phrase, "Magnified and sanctified by His great name in the world," which was similar to the Lord's prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13. The Kaddish prayer was not originally part of the synagogue

liturgy. In Sat. 49a, we find that the Talmud specifically records the Kaddish's first use as a concluding prayer to public aggadic discussions conducted in Aramaic.[23]

The Kaddish is first mentioned as part of the daily synagogue prayers in the tractate Soferin of about the 6th century C.E. By geonic times, it had become a statutory synagogue prayer requiring the presence of a minyan. In Soferim 10:7, we find the first mention of the term, "Kaddish," as well as the explanatory passage beginning, "Blessed and praised," etc., which was recited in Hebrew and added for non-Aramaic speakers. The plea for acceptance of the prayer, the prayer for the welfare of the supplicants and the concluding passage ("He who creates peace, etc. found in Job 25:2) are all later additions.

It was during the time of the German persecutions during the Crusades in the 13th century that Kaddish became associated as a mourner's prayer. According to a late aggadah, Rabbi Akivah rescued a soul from punishment in hell by urging the latter's sons to recite the verse, "May His great name be blessed."[24] This idea had been previously expressed in Sanhedrin 104a. It has been suggested that the Kaddish became a mourner's prayer because of the mention of the resurrection of the dead in the messianic passage at the beginning.

Kaddish is generally recited for 11 months and not a full year. According to Jewish tradition, the souls of the dead are exposed to a kind of purgatory for no more than twelve months in order to cleanse them from their sins before they are admitted to Gan Eden, paradise. Any cleansing which lasted for more than a year would be considered punishment rather than cleansing. As only the real sinner needs cleansing for a full year, traditional Jews say Kaddish for only eleven months, lest it seem that they were implying that their loved ones

needed a full year's cleansing in atonement for their sins.

Halacha then commands the mourner to start picking up the pieces of his life and to re-establish himself. During the shloshim, the thirty days following the death, the mourner, according to MK 27B, is told not to cut the hair or wear pressed clothes. Also, the mourner may not marry, attend festive events or participate in social gatherings (MK 22b-23a, Yad, Avel 6:2). In mourning for parents, these restrictions are in effect an entire year.

The observance of the formal rites of mourning pertained for the nearest of kin, corresponding to those for whom a priest was to defile himself, i.e., spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister as found in Lev. 21:1-3 and MK 20b (but according to Yad, Avel 1:6, Maimonedes' Code, this did not pertain to an infant less than thirty days old). No outward signs of mourning were permitted on Shabbat; however, private observances, such as refraining from washing, remained in effect. (MK 23b).

In reflecting upon these Jewish attitudes and customs which surround dealing with death, one is most impressed by the understanding and humanity reflected by the Rabbis. In their less superstitious, more humane views toward the subject, the Rabbis stressed the inevitability of death and fabricated a detailed, concise structure insofar as dealing with death was concerned. It is this "structure" that is most impressive and praiseworthy. During a period when tragedy strikes, when the mourner, in fact, temporarily loses control, these stages of mourning, im providing a certain discipline, reflect a deep understanding of human psychology and human needs. We find the mourner first being free from all positive commandments in the time of his deepest shock and grief, and then gradually, although still heavily structured, re-emerging into society and

regaining control over his grief and thus, re-establishing his life. In this way, the mourner is allowed his despair, and is forced to remember his loved one through restructions lasting an entire year and through the daily recitation of the Kaddish. This year-long mourning process provides for the necessary time required for healing and starting anew.

In trying to understand death and reactions to it in both ancient and modern times, it is interesting that, in present day culture, there are now attempts at preparation for most situations with which we will come into contact: marriage, parenthood, professions, etc. Until recently, there appears to be nothing to prepare people for the most fundamental and universal task which might have to be met at any age: death and bereavement. People do not desire to study death because of what Geoffrey Goren called, "the pornography of death.."[25] the distaste of contemplating the problems raised by death in the family, the compulsive shying away from discussion, the use of every possible euphemism to shield themselves at all costs from its sting.

Death can be considered as an unfamiliar personal event. Because of longer life expectancy, smaller families and greater separateness in our family lives, death may be an unfamiliar experience to many, especially since the process of dying has been moved from home to the hospital. However, the subject of death cannot be avoided. In our literature, music and other art forms, we see events surrounding death as major themes. For both young and old, the horror of the assassinations of the 1960's brought with them the reality of death. Issues such as abortion life-support systems and euthenasia have made necessary analysis and examinations of the quality of life and the questions "what is life" and "what is death."

Death may be welcomed and sought or feared and fought. It brings with it a

very personal response always. As in "Come, Sweet Death," by Bach,and Shakespeare's Romeo, "Come, death, and welcome," or the line by Burns, "O death!. The poor man's dearest friend," we find that to some, death is preferred to living an unbearable life. Those who believe in afterlife may see death as the passage to eternal life or to a reuniting with lost loved ones. Others view death as an enemy to be fought with rage; still others view it as an end to life with no hope of continuation.

A most interesting set of death rituals is found in the East African concept of the "second burial" which seems to be designed to care both for the living and the dead. This funeral occurs one year after the death. During the year, the deceased is "kept alive" through the grief and mourning of his family. Any child born during this time is named after him. Meanwhile, the entire family prepares for the second funeral. If the dead person is a man, his son prepares an effigy of him. On the eve of the anniversary of his death, the grave is slightly reopened and the effigy is placed on top of the body, but facing the opposite direction. This means that the dead man has now left the living world and joined his ancestors. The survivors are now free to live their lives. The widow may remarry and the mourning cord worn by her throughout the year of mourning is now cut by her new husband at the gravesite. The atmosphere changes from mourning to rejoicing. Through this ritual, the step from death to life and sex and birth is sanctioned, and the bereaved can take it without guilt.[26]

In a great sense, this African mourning rite is similar to that prescribed by Judaism. Both mourning processes ential an entire year's restrictions and rites and provide for the gradual readjustment into society as well as for renewal. Just as after one year, we find the African concept of a second burial

so, too, in Judaism, do we unveil a tombstone after a similar time period. Again, in both cultures, we find a detailed, prescribed ritual insofar as concerns the mourning of a loved one.

For moderns, psychology provides great insight into dealing with the death process. In studies on death and its effect upon survivors, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the psychology of child and personality development. It is believed that from the moment of birth, people should be seen less as isolated entities in their interactions with others and especially in their close emotional relationships. The fundamental importance of close relationships continues from the cradle to the grave.

> There is rarely just the dying person, there are those he leaves behind; there is never just the bereaved but the dead person too. Between them they created a psychological situation which makes for the responses of bereavement. 27

The emotions and ties of infancy, even though they are forgotten or buried in the unconscious, remain the most important and binding in everyone's life.

In her study of Freud, Dr. Martha Wolfenstein describes his views of the process of mourning as based on the nature of emotional attachments. In loving another person, a part of our emotional energy is firmly bound to that person. When that person dies, the problem arises of dissolving the emotional attachment bound to his image. According to Freud, mourning is this painful process of detachment from a lost love object.

> It consists of bringing up, one by one, the memories of the lost beloved, and slowly, reluctantly, separating memory from hope, realizing that this will not come again. 28

Gradually, reality takes precedence over the powerful wish for the return of the beloved.

According to research directed by Dr. Joan Fleming [29], which dealt with adult patients in psychoanalytic treatment who had lost a parent in childhood, we find that patients were still emotionally bound to the lost parent and had not gone through the work of mourning, as per Freud. They remained emotionally arrested at the state of their development at which they lost a parent.

In a later paper, Freud recorded observations of persistent attachment to a parent lost in childhood. In the case of two young men, who as children, lost their fathers, they continued to function as if the father were still alive. Their denial of reality was only partial.

> On the manifest level, they were well aware of the facts of the death of the father. However, on a deeper emotional level, the facts were denied; it was as if the father was still alive. 30

Freud termed this as "splitting of the ego." On one level, reality was accepted; on the other level, wish fulfillment was dominant. There was no reconciliation of opposing views.

From the moment life begins through all phases of child development, human growth depends upon accepting and mastering loss. To cope with loss, the child has to take into itself the object whose absence frightens him. In order not to become too bewildered by the comings and goings of his mother, the infant has to set up a permanent mother inside himself. If the real mother is felt to be threatening rather than reassuring, or if she is absent more than she is present, the internalized mother will be a bad instead of good object. This success at establishing an internal good object in early life is a precondition for the ability to tolerate later anxiety about loss or separation.

In his study, Attachment and Loss, John Bowlby sees separation anxiety in early childhood as the main key to understanding the mourning process.

> Separation anxiety expresses dread of some unspecified danger, either from the outside or from mounting internal tension, and dread of losing the object believed capable of protecting or relieving one. Separation anxiety will be reactivated in all subsequent fears of losing a person to whom a deep attachment exists. It is a natural process and the basis for mourning. If a child has not experienced separation anxiety, this indicates that he was unable to form a true attachment and this will hinder his ability to cope with loss through mourning. To tolerate separation anxiety and to mourn are signs of the healthy personality who is capable of deep attachment. 31

The first response to death is shock which may find its expression in physical collapse, in violent outbursts and in withdrawal, denial, and the inability to take in the reality of death. The attempts of the bereaved to cope with this first phase of shock will vary with his temperament and the situation. For physical shock, rest and warmth are considered the recognized methods of treatment, yet the most frequent advice given for the emotional shock of grief is to keep busy. This remedy may set the scene for a denial of loss and pain, and subsequent pathological development.

After the initial shock, the controlled phase follows. Arrangements must be made and the funeral faced and endured. The mourner is surrounded and supported by relatives and friends. The real pain and misery is felt when this controlled phase is over and the task of testing reality and coming to terms with the new situation is tackled. It is then that the mourner feels lost and abandoned and attempts to develop defenses against the agonies of pain. Searching is the principal behavior pattern evoked by loss. Children and animals search but express it in restless behavior, tension, and loss of interest in all that does not concern the deceased. 32

Contemporary rabbis have sought to explain death both in their similar psychological and Jewish viewpoints. According to Rabbi Maurice Lamm, the first spiritual reaction to a death is the apparent injustice of God. Religious conviction teaches that virtue is rewarded and sin is punished. Death teaches the apparent reverse.

> ..despite tragic experiences to the contrary, death should be... a sum under the bottom line, a total of all life's events, adding up to a meaningful conclusion and ending naturally. It should not intrude in the midst of the equations of living, starkly disrupting all the calculations, confusing all the figures, and belying all prepared solutions. When that does not happen, when death comes abruptly--we are struck with the horrible injustice of it all. 33

Similarly, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik observed that man's initial response to death in general is saturated with malice and ridicule toward himself:

> If death is the final destiny of all men, if everything human terminates in the narrow, dark grave, then why be a man at all? They why make the pretense of being the choicest of all creatures? Then why lay claim to singularity and imago dei? They why be committed, why carry the human moral load? Are we not... just a band of conceited and inflated day dreamers who somehow manage to convince themselves of some imaginary superiority over the brutes of the jungle. 34

In his study seeking the meaning of grief within a psychological framework and tying in these observations with Jewish sources, Rabbi Jack Spiro noted the following four themes:

> 1. The primary sources of grief reaction are unconscious and grow out of the inherent dynamic structure of the individual. The two opposing forces of love and aggressiveness are in contention. In grief situations, this polarity causes two distinct reactions: frustration because the love force is thwarted and guilt from aggressive impulses.
>
> 2. The conflict between frustration and grief gives rise to a state of anxiety. Defenses are used as a form of self-preservation. The bereaved first uses the defenses of denial, then repression. Sometimes regression occurs to an earlier state of life when a certain mechanism of confronting a loss may have been successful.

3. Judaism is a socio-cultural system. In providing for specific laws, rites, mores of mourning and establishing definite time sequences, it does not deny the need for various defenses, but prevents them from becoming pathological.

4. Judaism tries to resolve conflicts by rechanneling love impulses. Through observances and ceremonies carried out by the mourner, he is enabled to lean upon his socio-cultural system. The mourner has the right to express his deepest feelings of grief. Most laws and rituals of Judaism are developed around a communal or social structure. 35

From the psychological point of view, it can be interpreted that the restrictions placed upon the onen are reminiscent of Yom Kippur..that the act of mourning is equal to the act of expiation. Washing, use of cosmetics and the like are prohibited so as to depersonalize the mourner and to make him less concerned with his own personal well-being and appearance. In essence. the mourner is now a diminished person. In the same light, traditional Judaism dictates that the mourner cover all mirrors in the house. A mirror objectifies one's image and thus one's existance. The mourner denies his existance so he covers the mirror with a sheet in order to eliminate himself from the environment. This, perhaps more than anything else, symbolizes his total withdrawal, his absence, from society.

There are two fundamental reasons why it is Jewish custom not to delay a funeral. First, Jews lived in semi-tropical areas and did not embalm. Secondly, and more importantly, the Rabbis recognized that the principal grief occurs before burial and that during this greatest grief, the family could not be expected to carry on even the religious duties of mourners, let alone familial and other responsibilities. Burial marked with a finality an end to this period of nothingness.

Most of the mourning observances previously mentioned from Talmudic times are

still in practice by traditional Jewry. Burial societies of funeral chapels arrange for the details of tahorah. In the house of shiva, couches are no longer overturned; however, the mourners sit on low stools. Cloth slippers are worn instead of leather shoes and women abstain from the use of cosmetics during the shiva period. A candle burns continuously in the house of mourning for the entire seven days. With the exception that mourners no longer muffle their heads, all other Rabbinic restrictions are observed. A minyan gathers in the house of mourning for the daily Shaharit and Mincha-Ma'ariv services so that Kaddish may be said.

Liberal Judaism has allowed for significant changes in both burial and mourning customs. Embalming is prohibited in Orthodoxy as it is considered insulting to the deceased to do more than cleanse the body for the funeral. Liberal Judaism permits embalming. Traditional Judaism prohibits autopsy as well, except when the medical procedure will have a beneficial effect upon the living. Liberal Judaism permits autopsy, if there is due cause.

All branches of Judaism agree that the coffin should be firmly closed at the funeral. Orthodox Jews keep watchers sitting with the body until the funeral, reciting psalms. The reason for the watcher is based on the superstitious fear of the depradations of the spirits or the fear that animals may get to the body.[36] These precautions are dispensed with in Liberal Judaism. Both traditional and liberal Jews light candles in the room with the deceased. This can be interpreted as symbolic of the quenched light of life which continues in the remembrance of the living and within the spirit of God.

Cremation is prohibited by traditional Judaism since it is believed that the body will be resurrected at the end of days. If the ashes are spread, the soul

will have trouble in reclaiming the body. Liberal Jews permit cremation. The use of concrete vaults to contain the coffin or of elaborate caskets is foreign to traditional Jews. The reason for this is that they prevent deterioration of the body which is a prerequisite to resurrection. Traditional Jews do not allow flowers at the funeral as this is seen as a Christian custom.

Traditional Jews are buried in tachrichim, simple white burial garments. Men also wear their talit and yarmulka. The body is cleansed according to the previously detailed instructions as outlined in the Shulchan Aruch. A small sack of earth from Israel is placed under the head to assist the dead in rising, as resurrection will occur in Israel. Sometimes, shards are placed over the eyes. Reform Jews use neither earth or shards. The body is clad in a suit or dress which was part of their regular wardrobe.

Any informed Jewish male may conduct a Jewish funeral. Traditional Jews do not have music at the funeral. Reform Jews may want simple background music. Bearing the coffin is considered a mitzvah. Traditional Jews usually do not allow children of the deceased to serve as pallbearers. There is no basis for this in Judaic laws.

Liberal Jews do not tear garments but rather affix a black ribbon to their garments. The lining up of those attending the funeral so that the mourners can pass though their midst is also not usual in Reform. Liberal Judaism also does not insist that the grave be filled with earth within view of the mourners. (This was done in order to emphasize the finality of death).

The observance of shiva can be seen as a prescribed routine to fulfill psycho-

logical as well as religious and social purposes. Family solidarity is underlined. The family is together and may not leave home, except to go to the synagogue on Shabbat or in an emergency, until the week is finished. According to Reform practices, mourners need not remain in the house to which they return after the funeral, but may return to their own homes afterwards. They should try to spend day and evening together at the home of the eldest or in the largest house. If they do not live in close proximity to one another, they should spend at least the first three days together. In Liberal Judaism, either a three or seven day period of mourning is acceptable. Usually, Reform Jews sit on regular chairs and do not wear slippers. Men are permitted to shave. On weekdays, services are held at the home.

A minyan is not imperative in Liberal Judaism. However, women are included should a minyan exist. "The Orthodox custom of the women leaving the room in which men are praying," according to Rabbi Morrison David Bial, "is repugnant to Liberal Judaism. The women need the prayers as much as do the men."[37]

Children are permitted to attend school after the second day and adults may return to work after three days. Traditional Jews refrain from entertainment or music for an entire year; Liberal Jews often do so for thirty days.

The El Mole Rachamim, as recited by Reform Rabbis, has been shortened to leave out the line which details contributions to charity made by mourners in honor of the deceased.

Finally, traditional Jews do not visit the grave until after the shloshim. Liberal Jews may visit after shiva.

Through the studies in this first chapter, we are able to see the progress made by Judaism regarding the concept of death and our dealing with it. From the almost primitive biblical response to the highly detailed and debated Rabbinic and Talmudic viewpoints to contemporary practices, we are aware of the sensitive and painstaking efforts made by our spiritual leaders, both past and present, to assist us in dealing with the confusion and grief brought about by the death of a loved one. It is most interesting and gratifying to note that the centuries old methods and practices regarding death as outlined in the Talmudic times still form the basis for traditional mourning rites. This obviously serves to underline the extent to which the Rabbis then deliberated over and conceived mourning procedures which would, on one hand, provide the necessary structure and solace to the bereaved, and, on the other hand, accord the proper respect to the deceased. Although Reform has made significant changes and modifications to our traditional mourning code, the concepts of respect both to the mourner and mourned, of family solidarity during the shiva period and of renewal are all maintained.

Living in the latter part of the 20th century, it is for us, in dealing with death, to attempt to blend traditional rites and customs surrounding loss of a loved one with contemporary lifestyles. Reform has already made significant strides in that direction. In easing restrictions insofar as the mourner is concerned, Reform reflects an understanding of the pressures of present-day life as well as of the necessity of relaxing laws without losing sight and sense of their importance, both traditionally and spiritually.

In having studied past and present customs and rituals surrounding death, I am most impressed by Judaism's strong commitment to the mourner's acceptance of the reality of the death. It is only by facing and accepting the fact that

one can then begin to rebuild. In its concise, well-outlined mourning schedule, Judaism allows for grief and defenses. However, it stresses that life must continue and calls for renewal.

The areas in which there are considerable debate and discussion regarding death surround the concepts of God and an afterlife. Although traditional Judaism, as previously outlined, has definite statements regarding the above, the issues, nonetheless, pose profound questions to both liberal and traditional Jews alike. With the holocaust as one of the many factors, the issue of God's existance and potency is no longer a "given." In the same light, the concept of an afterlife is also questioned and disputed. Beliefs in God and an afterlife are especially important and significant in dealing with death. In times of stress, danger and profound grief, prayer, i.e., communication with God, can and does serve as a consoling force. In a time when so many of us doubt God's existance and power, what healing effect can prayer provide? What justification for death can there be when it cannot be rationalized as "God's wish?"

To many,the afterlife concept provides solace in facing death. Death is not an end, but rather a single step in the soul's continuing journey. In time of bereavement, this fact, that the loved one's "life" has not really ended, but is rather taking a next step, can and does ease the pain accompanying the loss.

As previously mentioned, these two concepts, God and afterlife, provide for healing and consolation. The problem, however, lies with those who cannot readily accept their existance and reality. If one denies the existance of God and doubts the reality of an afterlife, can the teachings of the Rabbis and

the mourning code as outlined in Judaism aid in overcoming grief? Perhaps in stressing family solidarity in time of bereavement, Judaism provides for solace and comfort within the family environment for those who cannot find such solace in a more religious fashion.

Since the object of this work is to provide a program on dealing with death for adolescents, certain questions must be asked. Can an adolescent, who is now experimenting with religious beliefs, find the necessary comfort in a grief situation through the previously outlined Judaic practices? Will the same rites and customs that may be suitable for adults be meaningful for adolescents? In a time of breaking away from the family, will the adolescent derive support in sitting shiva together with the family? In a time of vast change, both physical and emotional, can Judaism provide the necessary outlet to grief that will be sensitive to the traumas of the age? In order to achieve a better understanding of death insofar as it relates to adolescent reaction, a study of the psychology of the adolescent and an examination of the radical changes that accompany this period will be presented.

In this second section, the psychology of the adolescent will be studied, with particular emphasis placed upon reaction to grief and death situations. Since, as previously mentioned, the ultimate aim of this work is to formulate a program on dealing with death geared to fourteen-year olds, I will, wherever possible, particularize adolescent growth, reaction and sensitivity to that age group.

Adolescence is, in many ways, the most difficult stage in the human experience. Adolescence may begin anywhere from the age of eleven to thirteen and extend until the early twenties. During this period of growth, the individual changes in physical appearance and in psychological make-up. "He is torn and twisted, pulled and pushed during the period of adolescence."[38]

There are major physiological changes occuring which often catapult the adolescent into a state of query over his new form. New characteristics are added to his appearance as he recognizes signs of sexual maturation. Adolescence is an individual as well as a group phenomenon. Young people become aware of the physical changes in each other as well as in themselves. This is a period when the "other" grows in meaning. Of course, adolescent physiological change is uneven and occurs at varied times in each adolescent.

Along with the physiological growth comes a two-part psychological change, one cognitive and one emotional. The adolescent experiences himself thinking in a new and strange way. New ideas are expressed; reality is viewed from a new perspective. These new conceptions help him answer

questions concerning the importance of life and how to derive meaning from it.

The experience of adolescence is quite different from that of early years. For some, growing and maturing may be a struggle. Margaret Mead, in her studies of Samoan culture, discovered that the Samoan child follows a relatively continual growth pattern, with no abrupt changes from one age to another.

> He is not expected to behave one way as a child, another way as an adolescent, and another way as an adult. He never has to change abruptly his way of thinking or acting; he doesn't have to unlearn as an adult what he learned as a child. 39

Adolescence, here, does not represent a specific change from one pattern of behavior to another.

Mead offers several reasons for the difference in cultural conditioning between the two societies. First, the responsible roles of children in primitive societies are contrasted with the non-responsible roles of children in Western culture. In primitive societies, play and work often involve the same activity. By "playing" with a bow and arrow, a boy learns to hunt. His adult hunting "work" is just a continuation of his youthful hunting "play." The Western-cultured child assumes a different role as he matures-- the shifting from a non-responsible play situation as a child and into adolescence to a more responsible work situation. This shift usually occurs at the latter stages of adolescence, after the completion of formal education.

Secondly, Mead contrasts the submissive role of children in Western culture versus the dominant role of children in primitive society. The child in Western culture must drop his childhood submission and adopt its opposite, dominance, as he approaches adulthood. The Samoan child, on the other hand, is not taught submission as a child and them suddenly expected to become dominant upon reaching adulthood.

Finally, the similarity of sex roles in children and adults in primitive societies is contrasted with the dissimilar sex roles of children and adults in Western culture. Mead indicates the the Samoan girl experiences no real discontinuity of sex roles as she passes from childhood into adulthood. She has the opportunity to experiment and become familiar with sex with almost no taboos. By the time adulthood is reached, she is able to assume a sexual role in marriage very easily. By contrast, a Western-cultured child is sexually denied and adolescent sexuality is repressed. When the adolescent matures sexually, he must unlearn these earlier attitudes and taboos and become a sexually responsive adult. Although Mead's research dates back to the 1920's, her basic premise remains valid. Western culture, with its mixed messages concerning acceptable behavior and responsibility of the growing child, has impeded the natural progression of "growing-up" such as found in more primitive societies.

Anna Freud, in her description of the adolescent, encapsulated the trauma of the age, the vascillation and the confusion:

> Adolescents are, on the one hand, egoistic, regarding themselves as the sole object of interest and the center of the universe, and on the other hand, capable of self-sacrifice and devotion. They form passionate love relations, only to break them off suddenly. They sometimes desire complete social involvement and group participation; at other times, solitude. They oscillate

> between blind submission and rebellion against authority. They are selfish and material-minded, but also full of lofty idealism. They are ascetic yet indulgent, inconsiderate of others yet touchy themselves. The oscillate between light-headed optimism and the blackest pessimism, between indefatigable enthusiasm and sluggishness and apathy. 40

Adolescence is, in actuality, a biological phenomenon with sexual maturation as its central theme. The main biological event, puberty, is characterized by the attainment of biological sexual maturity. With girls, menstruation provides the milestone into puberty; in boys, signs are less sharply defined--pubic hair appears, sex organs grow and nocturnal emissions occur. Boys usually begin the pubertal growth spurt later than girls and this spurt lasts three to four years longer than with their female counterpart. For this reason, girls between the ages of 12 and 15 tend to be taller than boys, but boys catch up and end their growth spurt significantly taller, on the average, than girls. Boys increase in muscle size as well, thus making them stronger than the female. Both sexes experience a growth characteristic known as asynchrony. This refers to the fact that different body parts mature at different rates. As growth progresses, however, body proportions usually become more harmonious.

With the many physical changes come deep reactions. An important factor to remember is the influence of the mythical "body ideal" --the body type defined by the culture as attractive and sexually desirable. Peer pressure, mass media and family expectations all contribute heavily to its importance. William Schonfeld in "Body Image in Adolescents: A Psychiatric Concept for the Pediatrician," pointed out that movies, television, advertising and the worship of sports heroes perpetuate the reverence for the ideal body and encourage the disparagement of those whose bodies fall short of the ideal.

To a large extent, body image appears to determine adolescent reactions to themselves. In his study of body development and personality which he compiled in 1960, Boyd McCandless found a strong correlation between the way college-aged students view their body (body-concept) and the way they judge themselves as people (self-concept). His research suggests that girls are more concerned and place more emphasis on physical appearance than do boys and are more concerned than boys with the failure of their developing bodies to match the culture's ideal.[42]

Sexual development obviously brings with it wide psychological and social ramifications. The adolescent whose body conforms to the society's ideal is working with a social advantage. The converse, the adolescent who is too tall, short, fat, etc, is more likely to evoke negative reaction from peers.

Apart from variations in rates of physical and sexual maturity, it is clear than more adolescents today are sexually active at an earlier stage. Sexual attitudes and behavior are generally more open and accepted; however, few adolescents escape the social pressures that dictate appropriate sexual conduct for each gender.[43]

During adolescence, self-definition and self-esteem assume an importance not paralleled in other periods of the life cycle. Erik Erikson holds self-definition and self-esteem as central concerns for the adolescent. As

a result of physical changes, powerful sexual impulses, conflicting choices and possibilities, and confusion in the roles expected of him by both parents and peers, the adolescent is confronted with an identity crisis. He must incorporate his new physical and sexual attributes into a new self-concept. He also must generate an orientation and a goal that will give him a sense of unity and purpose so that he can made a vocational choice that will best match his view of himself. Finally, he must integrate into his self-understanding the expectations and perceptions that others have of him.[44]

Upon entering adolescence, the child has played a role in three kinds of social groupings: the family, the peer group and larger organizations, such as school. The teen-ager judges himself according to the standards of those who define the roles in his social groups. Among these role definers are parents, peers and teachers. The process of re-examining and re-integrating his self concept requires the adolescent to blend emerging cognitive and behavioral abilities and his new values and purposes. There are wide individual differences through which the adolescent attains a new self-concept.

> One youthful solution involves a determined attempt to change the society so as to bring into line with the adolescent's principles and needs. Another solution is a systematic attempt to change one's self so as to fit into the existing system with less anxiety or discomfort. A third approach is the effort to carve out some special niche within the society where the qualities of one's self can be preserved, enhanced or acted on. 45

In a 1968 study, Erikson suggested that identify is experienced as a sense of well-being, i.e., feeling at home in one's body, knowing where one is going and feeling assured of recognition from people "who count." People with low self-esteem lack a consistent frame of reference within which to assimilate their experiences of self and others. They are more likely to

be lonely, vulnerable and sensitive to criticism. The adolescent with low self-esteem is "awkward with others, assumes they do not like him, has little faith in human nature, is submissive and non-assertive and gets little respect. He infrequently participates in extra-curricular activities and is rarely selected for leadership positions...(he) is caught in a trap in which his very real isolation from others keeps him from developing a positive view of himself. "[46]

In many cases, adolescence is the first phase in which people begin to introspect. Adolescents who develop formal thought are now able to imagine future possibilities and to plan long range goals. Central to their self-concepts and identify, adolescents are also likely to reconsider in more sophisticated terms their self-impressions and others' impressions of them. According to Sigmund Freud,

> Adolescence is the time of the last identifiable stage of psychosexual development, the genital stage. During this stage, the individual's identify takes its final form, and, in place of narcissistic self-love, love for others and altruistic behavior develop...Peers and parents still play an important role in providing love and realistic direction for the individual.[47]

Insofar as concerns the 14 year-old, he is now better oriented to both himself and to his inter-personal environment that he was at age 13. He feels that he is coming into his own. He has a new self-assurance despite the pressures of mounting energy. The 14 year old occupies a zone of maturity intermediate between the elementary school and high school. He is definitely outgrowing the limitations of the lower grades and his mental maturation is proceeding rapidly, in preparation for the higher grades.

> Indeed, when all factors are considered, 14 may be regarded as a somewhat pivotal year in the grand cycle of human growth. The youth is coming into his own. He is able, to a gratifying degree, to accept the world as he finds it. At his typical best, he presents a fine constellation of maturity traits and potentials,

> which are in propitious balance. He is exuberant and energetic; but reasonable in temper (notwithstanding the loudness of his voice). He has a fair measure of wisdom and philosophy, often expressed in art and humor. His group loyalties are strong and sensitive, but normally they do not distort his person-to-person relationships in the home circle, at school, and within the community. He has many friends. He understands them pretty well, and has a sympathetic awareness of the unpopular and unfortunate. 48

The chief interpersonal theme in early adolescence is the gradual move from familial dependence toward greater involvement in the outside world. Many young people experience ambivalence about their relative dependence or independence. They alternate between provocative self assertion and childish requests for help and through this are gradually able to emerge from their families.

As the child grows into adolescence, he increasingly participates with his parents in the decision-making process, such as concerning jobs, money and peers. When parents are either totally controlling or totally permissive, adolescence is likely to be a time of stormy parent-child relations and excessive peer conformity.

In his 1959 study, "Race, Ethnicity, and the Achievement Syndrome," Bernard Rosen identified three sets of beliefs that affect motivation in achievement situations. The first is locus of control, or activism (the belief that a person is able to manipulate the physical and social environment to his advantage). The second is individualism and the last is strongly related to self regulation, labeled future orientation (the belief that a person should forego short term rewards in the interest of long term gains). In a similar study by E.J. Phares in 1976, which was cited in the Schell article, it was found that adolescents from both upper and lower-middle class families learned as children that they were able

to control their own lives and to be successful through their own personal efforts.[49]

Two words mentioned in studies of adolescents are conformity and rebelliousness. There are some accounts of adolescent development which assume that as a child enters adolescence, "conformity to parents' wishes decreases and conformity to peer wishes increase."[50] The peer group can be a major influence in resolving the adolescent's identity crisis. With his peers, the adolescent can try on new roles and use the reactions of others to judge how well the roles fit his self-concept. Identification with the heroes of the group may give the adolescent a temporary sense of coherence. As peer relationships undergo transformation during this period, friendships also change and move from the congenial sharing of activities to psychological sharing of intimacy.

Among girls, friendships appear to progress from being activity-centered to a relationship that is interdependent, emotional and conflict-resolving. Junior and senior high school boys form friendships more similar to those found among pre-adolescent girls and involve a congenial companion with whom one shares reality-oriented activities. Males are more likely than females to spend their adolescent social lives in cliques and gangs as opposed to pairs.

Popularity is highly related to conformity to peer group mores and customs. The characteristics having most to do with peer acceptance are those that define appropriate sex typed behavior in our society. Because characteristics such as athletic ability, sexual prowess and being "fun to be with,"

bring with them the positive consequences to peer acceptance, they are, in turn, strengthened.[51]

As previously mentioned, along with the great physical and emotional changes comes changes in moods, sometimes erratic. Insofar as concerns the 14 year old, happy moods far outstrip his sad ones. Rather than being sad, he is apt to be annoyed or moody. His moodiness can progress to brooding or depression. But the 14 year old quickly moves out of these states. He is now less inhibited than previously about his temper and is apt to become angry quickly, though infrequently. He shows short, explosive outbursts, especially against a sibling. He does not keep things bottled up and makes his anger or annoyance evident. He less frequently strikes out physically, except with siblings. There is usually a good reason behind it when he does, however. It occurs more often than not when the 14 year old is angry or confused and does not necessarily make him feel better.[52]

The primary changes of adolescence result in a radically changed person and parents who fail to realize this may inhibit greater autonomy in their child. What is so commonly termed, "adolescent negativism" may be the child's reaction to the parent's failure of modify his expectations in light of the adolescent's new capabilities and sexual maturity.

It is presumed that in an earlier and more static society, parents could understand the adolescent and his problems because they had virtually faced the same situations. Today the bridge of understanding is less easily crossed because the adolescent world is so different in so many ways. Parents and their adolescent children frequently disagree and feel that

the other simply does not understand. "Friction over choices of friends, clothes, hair styles, use of the family car or telephone, family responsibilities, attitudes towards parents, grades, study habits, drinking, drugs, smoking, sex and staying out of trouble may arise."[53]

As adolescents become more non-family oriented, outsiders have more influence on their values and decision-making than parents. The impact of outsiders depends mainly upon how great a gap there is between their values and parental values. As the adolescent turns more and more to outsiders, the home has less and less influence on his values. The breakdown of togetherness also makes the adolescent feel that he no longer needs his parents as he did when he was younger.

In order to become fully emancipated from his parents, the adolescent usually must doubt the religious attitudes, standards and value systems of his parents. Involvement with and support by peers involve the adolescent in a comparison of his religious beliefs with those of others. This comparison usually results in change, ranging from abandonment to renewed intensity.[54]

Some psychoanalysts would describe the religious experience of the adolescent as a crisis stemming from the fact that a personal God is described as a father. According to Sigmund Freud's account,"...the personal God is psychologically nothing other than a magnified father."[55] When the adolescent begins to rebel against his father's authority, his religious faith also begins to collapse. Sudden eruptions of religiousity in the adolescent are explained as a reawakening of his oedipal wishes to strive for a father. "Religiously, adolescence is characterized by conflict

between dependence and independence of a father image; between love and hate; between obedience and rebellion; between faith and disbelief."[56]

The adolescent rejects religion as a way of emancipating himself from parents who are not giving him the freedom he seeks. The adolescent's rebellion against going to synagogue or Sunday school is one expression of this rebellion against parental authority. He can't react against his parents to whom his anger is directed, so he reacts against the religion which they want him to have.

Religion is often a source of distress and conflict to the adolescent. Overtly expressed disbelief in God is more often encountered in adolescence than at any other age, according to James A. Knight of Tulane University. Typical of the paradoxes found in adolescence, however, is the fact that this period is also characterized as the most religious period in life. In an effort to examine personal religious beliefs and arrive at a faith of one's own, adolescents may deliberately expose themselves to a variety of religious experiences.[57]

Ernest Jones, Freud's biographer, recalled similar self-examination during his own adolescence:

> Those years...were indubitably the most stirring and formative of my life. The starting point was the problem of religion, which covered more personal sexual ones. Since the age of 10, I had never been able to give any adherence to any particular creed, but my conscience troubled me badly and impelled me to seek in every direction for enlightenment. I prayed earnestly, frequented the diverse religious services available, and read widely on both sides. From that time dates my lasting interest in religious phenomena and the meaning of their importance to the human soul. 58

Insofar as concerns the concept of religious maturity and faith, the psychologist, due to the theological nature of the issue, can only attempt a partial definition, that is, one given in psychological terms. A mature religious faith includes

> the sense that there is a power in the universe that is greater than the individual; that the experience of this power is of supreme value to the individual concerned; and that through this experience, life acquires a new meaning, although the experience cannot be arrived at through the operation of reason. 59

In simplest terms, a definition of faith may be given as a capacity to trust in a divine being, the commitment to a system of values, and the participation in a way of life that makes all significant aspects of life sacred. The adolescent's religion can be described as his relationship to whatever he holds ultimate, as well as the shared ritualistic and ethical response that ensues from the relationship.

It is not uncommon for an adolescent to enter a stage of atheism or agnosticism. The meaning of this fairly common experience in adolescence probably has something to do with the individual's previous relationship to both his father and to God. In the small child, the being called God is probably conceived as being human and not spiritual, for the supreme value is found in the parents. Thus it is probably natural that the child's religious experience should be bound up with his parents. If development proceeds according to a normal pattern, his projections onto them are gradually withdrawn and they become to him more human and less divine.

Religious doubt may be active or passive. Active doubt is characterized by a conscious seeking of answers to troubles or questions. Passive

doubt involves little or no effort to settle the questions either way. Active doubt is more heavily weighted with feelings of guilt and fear than is passive doubt.

The majority of adolescent religious doubts fall into three categories: doubts concerned with the bible (ex. the origin of man, the parting of the water); doubt about religious doctrines in general; and doubts concerning doctrines peculiar to a given denomination.[60] Doubting shows that the individual is attempting to make the mental adjustments needed for maturity. Childish religious beliefs are no no longer satisfying. The more authoritarian the adolescent's training, the greater his revolt is likely to be. Some adolescents are hesitant to change religious beliefs because of threats from parents or fears of supernatural powers or because their personality or limited knowledge and experience prevent making satisfactory change. As adults, these adolescents will find themselves clinging to religious beliefs more suited to children. The religious beliefs most subject to revision are the concepts of God as a person or heaven as a place of eternal happiness.

As the adolescent disassociates himself from childish religious beliefs and concepts, he will develop a more tolerant attitude of other religious faiths. He may accept his own or a different religion or may drift into indifference.[61] Some adolescents raise doubts about God through an examination of the problems of evil. Their greatest conflicts and deepest questioning focus on the problem of evil viewed in the context of the avowed goodness of God. Adolescents speak of the brutalities and unjust sufferings of this world, of disease, of violence, and of inhumanity. Evil

is incompatible with the picture of the loving Father-God. They may conclude, therefore, that there is no God, or if there were, and He permitted these atrocities, they want nothing to do with him.[62]

A major area of religious conflict concerns sex. The adolescent's sexual drive is so powerful that it is rarely possible for him wholly to sublimate it in non-sexual activities. Usually, he resorts to masturbation, for he has practically no other recourse for the direct release of his sexual tensions. Masturbation is almost always followed by feelings of guilt. Since most churches and religious leaders have moral injunctions against masturbation, it is usually felt that these injunctions are responsible for these feelings. In ascertaining why it is so difficult for the adolescent to find relief over masturbation, psychoanalytic research reveals that masturbation is almost invariably associated with fantasies that have their origin in early childhood. These highly disguised fantasies relate to the incestuous attachments of early childhood.[63]

Directly related to the concept of religion is the question of morality. The moral values of childhood are no longer adequate to meet all the needs of the adolescent. The individual must acquire new moral values to meet new needs, especially those arising from relationships with members of the opposite sex and those having to do with drugs, alcohol and use of the car. One of the major developmental tasks of the adolescent is to learn what the group expects of him and then to conform to those expectations without constant guidance and supervision.[64]

Since the adolescent is eager to win social approval and avoid disapproval,

his motivation to make the transition to a more mature morality is strong, however the adolescent may be confused about what is right and wrong. Girls, on the whole, have less difficulty making the transition to an adult morality than boys, primarily because their early training has been stricter and they have learned that adhering to cultural values enhances their prestige. Boys, by contrast, know that violating rules and laws gives them greater prestige, especially in the peer group. In a successful transition to adult morality, the adolescent learns to assume control of his own behavior. The conscience is the inner controlling force that makes external restraints unnecessary. Guilt and shame act as deterrents to behavior that is socially unacceptable.[65]

In essence, the adolescent needs religion--beliefs that he can accept and along with it meaningful observances. According to Elizabeth Hurlock, in her book, Adolescent Development, he does not necessarily need theology-- a system of beliefs and observances given to him by some religious establishment. Adolescence is a period of strain and insecurity. Almost every adolescent needs a religion to give him faith and a sense of security.[66]

Many adolescents are intolerant of dogma in religion as well as in other areas. When confronted with dogmatic authority, they assert their independence in their opposition to it. "A religion that condemns the pleasures of youth as immoral has little appeal for the adolescent of today."[67] The adolescent needs a religion that will help him, not one that will mystify him.

In their study, Psychology of Adolescence, cited within Hurlock's research,

L. Cole and L.N. Hall emphasized three emotional needs of religion which help to meet adolescent needs:

> There is first the catharsis of guilt feelings through prayer, the confessional or talks with ministers. The resulting feeling of being cleansed of sin, of being given another chance, and of reduced tension is of great value in adjustment. A second value is the increase of security, sometimes relatively superficial and sometimes profound, that may result from religious belief. A trust in God prevents the panic of despair, a belief in personal immorality with its promise of an everlasting perpetuation of the ego prevents the fear of death, the membership in a group gives the sense of belonging, and the chance to work with and help others leads to helpful identifications and attitudes. These values are not all of a religious nature, but they are of assistance in the search for happiness and adjustment. Religion, may, therefore, be an important contributing factor to mental health. Finally, religion can become the basis for a sound philosophy of life, even though it does not always do so. 68

Insofar as concerns the subject of death and adolescent dealings with the subject, we must first analyze how mourning is possible among adults. What, in particular, are the developmental conditions which must be fulfilled before the individual becomes able to perform the work of mourning? A crucial phase of this development is, in fact, adolescence, which has often been compared to mourning.

> It is a phase in which the developing young person is forced to withdraw a large part of his emotional attachment from those he has loved most through childhood, his parents. The sad or depressed moods frequent in adolescence come from this diminution of love which is experienced as a loss. If the protracted and often painful process of adolescence is successfully passed through, emotional energies are free for new loves which will replace the earlier ones of importance. 69

Grief, and in its milder forms, sorrow, sadness and distress, is likely to have the greatest physical and psychological damage upon adolescents. It comes from the loss of something highly valued and for which the individual has developed an emotional attachment because it fills an important need in his life.

For many adolescents, grief in its various degrees of intensity is a common emotional occurrence, especially during early adolescence. Grief is a relatively new emotion for the adolescent and he must learn to deal with it. As a child, he was by and large insulated from grief-provoking experiences by protective parents and by his limited social contacts. With his heightened intellectual capacities and insight, the adolescent has a more realistic grasp of situations that give rise to grief. In childhood, he did not comprehend the finality of loss of a family member or pet through death. Now he is capable of doing so.[70]

Adolescent grief is usually social in origin. It may arise through death, divorce or breaking of a friendship that had been a source of emotional security. In its milder form of sadness, grief may occur when the adolescent fails at something which is important to him, such as making an athletic team or being invited to aparty.

Unlike children, few adolescents show their grief by crying in the presence of others. They have learned that crying is a sign of immaturity or cowardice. In this overt expression of grief. adolescents often induce a general state of apathy manifested in several ways.

> They lose interest in people and things around them; become self-bound, avoiding opportunities for socialization; grow listless and lose their appetite; are unable to sleep soundly; and are unable to concentrate in school. 71

Beginning at early adolescence, the child is able to formulate realistic concepts of death based upon biological observation. Death becomes a perceptible end of bodily life and is final, irreversible and inevitable. Ignorance about death can be terrifying and disruptive. The most awesome reality is better than uncertainty. Avoidance creates further anxiety.

In confronting death, one also begins coping with the actualities of life. No one should be kept in emotional or intellectual isolation. Two of the greatest needs of adolescents are for trust and truth. Evasion by adults indicates their inability to deal honestly with real situations.

Denial is a natural reaction to loss and takes many forms. Denial is encouraged by silence and secrecy. The youngster may look unaffected because he is trying to defend himself against the death by pretending it did not really happen. A lack of response often signifies that he has found the loss too great to accept and pretends secretly that the deceased is still alive.

According to Dr. John Bowlby of London's Tavistock Clinic, adolescents may experience three phases of a normal grieving process. The first is to protest, when they cannot quite believe that the person is dead and they attempt, sometimes angrily, to regain him or her. The next is pain, despair and disorganization, when youngsters begin to accept that the love one is gone. Finally, there is hope, when they begin to reorganize
72
their lives without the deceased.

Adolescent responses to grief fluctuate according to their concepts of death, their developmental level and the way they had related to the person now dead. Some will not speak about the individual who died; others will speak of nothing else. Some will cry hysterically; others will remain outwardly impassive and emotionless; others will even laugh. Some will praise the deceased as the most wonderful person in the world; others will hate the individual for abandoning them.

Young people should not be deprived of the right to grieve. They should no more be excluded from sharing grief and sorrow than they should be prevented from demonstrating joy and happiness.

The funeral is of tremendous significance as it serves as a rite of separation. The bad dream is indeed real. The presence of the casket actualizes the parting experience, transforming the process of denial to an acceptance of reality and an opportunity to say good-bye. Although the funeral is, of course, sad, sadness is an integral part of the life cycle.

Regarding adolescent reaction to death of a parent, Anna Freud indicated that a child's love for a mother becomes a pattern for all later loves. "The ability to love, like all other human faculties, has to be learned and practiced."[73] If this relationship is interrupted through death or absence, the youngster may do one of four things: remain attached to a fantasy of the dead person; invest his love in things or work; be frightened to love anyone but himself; or, hopefully, accept the loss and find another person to love.[74] If a boy's mother dies, he may regress. Later in life, because he was "injured" by his mother, the prototype of all women, he may believe that all girls have a tendency to hurt him. To avoid being wounded by them, he loves them and leaves them before they can do what his mother did to him--hurt and abandon him.

A reaction to the death of a sibling may be the frightening realization that it could happen to the adolescent as well. Seeing the grieving parents, the youngster may try to replace the deceased brother or sister

in an attempt to make everything right again. The surviving child is often beset with guilt. He remembers the times when they fought and argued and perhaps may wonder if the death was, in fact, a punishment for this wrong-doing.

At times, a recurrent reaction to death is anger and quarrelsomeness. Instead of grief, the child who has lost a parent reacts with rage. Typically, this rage is turned against the surviving parent. There is a tendency to idealize the lost parent, and to displace to the surviving parent the anger and frustration which the adolescent feels in the absence of the parent he has lost. The surviving parent is typically more or less withdrawn, absorbed in grief, emotionally debilitated. Thus, he or she lacks the emotional energy to respond adequately to the child's needs. This deficiency only serves to intensify the anger and frustration felt by the youngster.

Shame is a feeling typical of adolescents who have lost aparent. They often try to conceal from others the fact that a parent is missing. Shame is directly related to another feeling, often quite conscious, of guilt in relation to the parent's death. Generally, in human nature, there is a deep seated feeling that nobody dies a natural death.

The main causes of death in teen-age boys and girls are different. Most deaths of teen-age boys are due to violence--some suicide and homicide--but mostly accidents with cars, drowning, firearms and misfortunes at home-not matters of health. Accidents account for only about 1/5 of fatalities among girls, while various diseases account for the other 4/5. Between 1960 and 1970, suicide attempts by those under the age of twenty rose from 8 to

20% of the national total. Girls try suicide about twice as frequently as do boys, although it may be that some male automobile deaths are intentional. Of those teenagers who have thought about suicide, some 80% have communicated such intentions to parents and other key persons.

The 14-year old is less concerned about death and more concerned about life. He wants to live as long as he can; he wants to live a complete life. He feels that "anyone with a good life ahead should not die before he reaches old age."[75] He seldom worries about death and accepts it as inevitable. He even recognizes death as a good thing--as a comfort when one has been in an accident or when one is old. His thoughts of after death may include only the reality of being placed in a coffin and buried.

Although difficult, it is healthy for the adolescent to recognize that his future is limited and that times passes whether one is busy or bored. Through achievement, the adolescent can find a sense of identity and continuity and can be challenged to use his time remaining in search of his ideal.

It is most difficult for the adolescent to comprehend his finiteness. This, in part, may be related to his appraisal of himself as able to do anything or solve any problem. This aspect of youthful development is designated as "omnipotentiality."[76] When he moves in to young adulthood, the adolescent must forego his omnipotentiality for the sake of the acquisition of a particular skill or accomplishment. This feeling of omnipotentiality permits the adolescent to search many fields or endeavor before responding to the social and maturational necessity of commitment. According to Dr.

James Knight, there are some adolescents who postpone making a vocational commitment because of "unconscious fears of death and the feeling that growing up means growing toward death."[77] Perhaps individuals known in our society as "jacks of all trades and masters of none" and "perennial adolescents" are symbolic of this phenomenon.[78]

In the following chapter, we shall explore several programs on death education as well as what other educators and professionals say is crucial for the success of such programs.

> Two ships were sailing near the shore, one headed toward the open sea and the other headed toward the harbor. Everyone was cheering the outgoing ship, but very few cheered the incoming ship.
>
> A wise man, observing this scene, felt it to be a great contradiction. He said that the outgoing ship should not be cheered, for nobody knows what lies in wait for it, what stormy seas it may encounter, how it would weather the storms during its voyage. But, he continued, everyone should cheer the incoming ship since it clearly has reached port safely, having concluded its journey in peace. 79
>
> --Exodus Rabbah 48:1

Just as in the above passage we find demonstrated through analogy, that old age, death and departure need not be something dreaded or feared, so, too, should we, as educators, provide the necessary background for adolescents so that they may also deal with and confront death as something natural and unavoidable, thus removing much of the stigma, terror and dread associated with the subject. In this chapter, we shall explore what educators suggest is the proper way to introduce the topic of death to adolescents. We will also examine several programs on death education already being applied, and provide critiques on how these programs might be improved to meet our specific purposes, based upon what we have learned in our previous research.

Death is an event; it is the actual loss of life. It is the culmination of the dying process and the cause of grief and bereavement by those loved ones remaining. The individual's last growth period prior to death is dying. Family members at this time experience a feeling of anticipated loss. Bereavement is the realization of loss of a loved one. It is the

period when loved ones learn to cope with the loss of someone near.

The interrelationship of death, dying and bereavement is associated with the concpet of loss. Death is the actual loss, dying the anticipation of loss and bereavement is learning to live with the loss. [80]

Death education, like sex education, deals with a strong taboo in our culture. Unlike sex education, the lack of death education does not produce such visible outcomes such as pregnancy, or venereal disease, but it does contribute to misunderstanding, fear and lack of preparedness for a reality of life.

So that young people may better deal with death of a personal level, it is vital that they be presented with a program designed to help them develop an understanding of death as part of life. Because our prior studies indicated that the peer group is of prime importance in this stage of their lives, a starting point for such a program would be to communicate with groups of adolescents, and to structure the program according to the specified needs of these students. In this way, through mutual peer support, approval and cooperation, such a course can prove to be meaningful and acceptable to the students.

In exploring the topic of death, the educator should use direct language in his explanation and eliminate euphemisms. Death is not s subject which should be presented through non-direct, mollified terms. Adolescents especially need to be exposed to terms such as casket, embalming, funeral, terminal, cremation, burial and hearse.

The many physical changes occuring during adolescence bring with them deep-psychologcal reactions. During a period in which self-definition assumes a primary role, the adolescent will move away from the family and veer more toward recognition and acceptance by his peer group. In attempting to formulate a program for the adolescent which deals with the highly sensitive issue of death, all educational planning must be sensitive to his changing familial and social role as well as to the feelings of confusion and/or insecurity coming from these changes. There are a variety of mixed feelings experienced by young people faced with death. "The sense of grief, of loss, of emptiness, of the meaninglessness or unfairness of a particular death is based on a sense of the undone."[81] For a program on death to provide meaning and understanding, the particular sensitivities and needs of the age group must be of first consideration.

Fear often magnifies the matter of grief. The youth may ask who will be next? Fear derived from the sense of the tentativeness of and the fragility of life is an extremely natural feeling. If fear is confounding for the youth, the sense of relief which may momentarily strike is all the more confusing. Such an emotion is probably as normal and as universal as grief.

Guilt feelings follow these feelings of relief experienced in relation to death or when these adolescents believe that in some way they are responsible for the death. Introspection first occurs during adolescence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Erik Erikson, in his 1968 study of the adolescent , discussed the fragility of the "new" identity of the adolescent. The attainment of a new self-concept many times brings with it feelings of loneliness, vulnerability and sensitivity to criticism. The event of a

death would only magnify this confusion of feelings for the youth. In assuring them it is a common human experience, these young people may be spared suffering some of the guilt.

Common human experiences related to death are protest, pain and hope. In protesting, the person cannot quite believe his loved one is dead. Pain is signified by despair and disorganization. In hope, we find the reorganization of life.[82] This secular effort to deal with death is offset by Judaism's proscribed laws and rituals concerning death. Through observance of the rites surrounding each period or mourning (shiva, shloshim, and year), the Jewish mourner gradually is returned to all aspects of society.

Appropriate death education at all levels should help to focus on the issues of aging and death in an effort to sensitize the students to the special needs of the aged and the terminally ill.

As a subject, death has been rejected by our youth-adulating, progress and future-oriented society. Our concepts of death are culturally defined as are our role expectations and behavior. Children are discouraged from visiting hospitals, cemeteries, homes for the aged, etc. as if sickness and dying were something to conceal in order to protect the young. As previously mentioned, children see countless deaths on television by the age of 14, but they are not allowed to see of visit a terminally ill patient.

> When this absurdity is corrected, death education will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable so that home and school are consistent in their effort to reduce guilt and lessen tension and anxiety. 83

Most of the research conducted in school settings over the past years has centered on the ability of death education to alter the students' attitudes. In general, instructional units of courses of study appear to change attitudes positively. That is, anxiety over death seems to be lessened though the fear of dying does not appear to be changed.[84]

While some still question the need for formal death education, most authorities are convinced that it should be offered as a phase of education- But when should it begin and when should it end? Should it be dealt with in the form of direct confrontation, i.e. a course or unit expressly designed to deal with death and dying? Or, should it be woven into the fabric of current instruction, an "ad-hoc" method?

In support of the ad hoc method, one can reason that if death, like sex, birth and aging, is and should be treated as an integral part of life, it should also be so taught, not isolated or magnified. When death occurs in students' readings, etc. it should only then be dealt with, thus enabling a class to keep an emotionally loaded subject in proper perspective. On the other hand, by establishing a mini-course or unit, we are simply pinpointing an area of significant adolescent concern.

In planning a program on death education, educators should ask themselves several simple (and difficult) questions. The least appropriate question is whether death education is necessary at all. Death education will occur whether we like it or not. Like sex, death is a very badly kept secret; everyone will eventually learn about it. The average child in Western society, though more secluded from the fleshy realities

of death, will, in his childhood, witness some 20,000 deaths through the media. Here, though the actors and cartoon characters continue to be killed, they never die. They return the following week, same time, same station.[85] One feels cheated, when, in real life, our dead ones do not return. Each and every child, everyone among us, will learn about death. Our choices don't extend to whether anyone will learn about death, but rather to how they will learn.

In the following pages, we shall examine what various educators say is necessary to properly teach this subject and we shall also evaluate their suggestions according to our specified requirements.

In death education, according to counsellor Pauline M. Allen, a forum for discussion and information should be provided, rather than dogmatic directions.[86] According to her study on death education, she finds it disturbing to hear educators say that they will confront the students with their own deaths. This, she finds presumptuous and perhaps even dangerous. Students will absorb and select at their own rates.

Educators must be aware of their students as individuals and how they are emotionally affected by the course material presented. It is unlikely that students choose a course on death purely by accident; students bring their different needs and problems to the subject. In order to help determine the thoughts and experiences of the students, a questionnaire might be used on the first day of class, according to Allen. This will provide a starting point from which to begin dis-

cussion on some of the issues and it will also give information on what areas to be sensitive to the individual student. Since the materials need be digested both intellectually and emotionally, small classes are suggested. One way for an educator to become available to students is to come to the classroom early and stay after the class is over. This allows students to approach casually rather that requesting specific appointments, which might prove uncomfortable for them.

Allen's sensitivity to the needs of the adolescent is what makes her opinions useful to our study. Her suggestions regarding the non-confrontational approach, small classes, and awareness of the students' individuality indicate the appropriateness of her goals. In studies on the adolescent previously cited, the underlying theme remained the great changes and sensitivities of the age group. Although her suggestions are secular in nature, the incorporation of these ideas into our Jewish framework would provide a workable and viable program toward meeting our goals.

In another article, "Death Education: An Urgent Need for the Creative," D. Smith and S. Brige outlined several points that would serve for investigation and self-preparation for any teacher regarding death education:

1. Death is a part of the rhythm of life and, as such, is not a forbidden topic.

2. Psychologically, the fear of death is evidenced in the fear of all the "little" deaths in life, i.e. failures, loss of friends, a wrenching from security.

3. Death should be talked about sensitively, not morbidly.

4. Ideas that serve in crises are "pre-formed" and so should be allowed to be developed from early youth on.

5. Children can be helped to understand the biological significance of death.

6. The concepts of death should be discussed and dveloped according to the expressed need and interest of each individual child. 87

In addition to Smith and Brige'a article on teach self-preparation, Leon Hymovitz, in "Death as a Discipline: The Ultimate Curriculum," published in February, 1979, suggests that schools have a clear charge to be aware and responsive to the need of "humanizing" death. Consistant with the age, maturity, readiness and receptivity of the learners and consonant with the willingness and preparation of parents and staff, the following goals for such a course are offered:

--to teach that death and dying are part of life.

-- to help students to manage realistically with the idea of their own death and the deaths of significant others.

--to help implement necessary institutional and attitudinal changes through death education.

--to appreciate the impact of death upon the human creative impulses in music, art, religion, literature, and philosophy.

--to broaden the conceptualization and interpretation of the meaning of life's end in order to live more fully in the time given to us.

--to understand our common destiny as part of the effort to cherish, to signify, and to respect, individually and collectively, our cultural, religious, historical and artistic contributions. 88

Both the aforementioned articles coincide with the basic goals of our Jewishly-oriented death education program. Although secular in nature, both articles provide the bases for implementing any such program. Smith and Brige stress the need for proper teacher sensitivity and preparation while Hymovitz moves on to more fundamental matters, such as course sub-topics and goals. The Jewish educator, in adapting these

concepts to his own program, must realize the usefulness of these ideas as well as their limitations. In order to fulfill our needs and goals, additional teacher training must include not only the universal aspects of death, but the particular aspects as well. In what ways does Judaism deal with death and grief situations that differ from secular ways? How does religion play an important role in this life-cycle occurrance? How do our feelings about God interplay in such a situation? In the previous chapter, psychologists Cole and Hall stress the feelings of security and kinship found by all, including adolescents, in religion. A well-planned program should therefore include such concepts. In summation, the ideas espoused in these two articles may be of validity and use to us, in our program, with the addition of more particularized educational matter, i.e., of Judaic content.

Death is a difficult subject. If educators choose to deliberately arouse the emotions of their students, they must also be concerned that they will be able to calm them again. In Hymovitz' article, he adds that the creation of a supportive, trusting classroom environment, gradual introduction of disturbing material, careful review of all curriculum and media materials and the establishment and evaluation of goals are some of the ways to avoid serious pitfalls in the classroom.

In Goals for Death Education, Audrey Gordon and Dennis Klass list the following four goals in structuring a death education course:

1. To inform the students of facts not currently widespread in society.

2. To help students deal with feelings about their own deaths and that of others.

3. To make students informed consumers of medical and funeral services.

4. To help students clarify their values on societal and ethical issues. 89

Considerable discussion, fed by sensational stories in the media, has been devoted to the beginning and the ending of life. The Quinlan case and others similar to it have provided a framework for much of this discussion.

Crase and Crase, in "Emerging Dimensions of Death Education," emphasize the need for a thorough re-examination of the curriculum now being offered to students. What should be taught? Should course content reflect some kind of standardization? In addition, it was suggested in the article that the validity of a typical death education course as a viable change agent has not been firmly established. How can death education best be presented to a student audience? Will the process contribute to depersonalization and cause students to thwart feelings? Finally, do students come to grips with anything of significance? They also suggest that some formal process be instituted to ensure that those who teach are qualified and capable of handling such sensitive issues. Having heard a speech or read a book by Kubler-Ross does not qualify one as a teacher of death education.

The key to the successful implementation of such a course lies with the instructor. His feelings and personal philosophy on death should be examined. Another question the teacher must ask of himself is whether or not he fears death. If the answer is yes, it should be determined whether death itself is feared, or rather the dying process? Crase and Crase further question the importance of a teacher coming to terms with his own death. Few of us at a visceral level ever fully accept the fact

of death.[90] Having gone through this self-realization process, we should be able to see one of the basic reasons for teaching about death--the students' well-being.

Many of the ideas and philophies cited in this article are obvious and basic to educators. Teachers, of course, must examine and deal with their own feelings on death and must be properly trained. The examination of curriculum and the possible standardization of this subject matter, however, is an issue which must be examined carefully. There should be no such thing as a "standardized curriculum" on so sensitive a subject. The issues discussed and educational aids implemented must be chosen according to the needs of the specific group of students involved. Would a public high school program on death be able to serve the needs of a parochial high school,without major modifications? The answer here is most likely negative. Crase and Crase also question the validity of such a program. In our previous research and citings in this chapter, we find that most educators suggest that the subject matter be dealt with, either through a specific program or within the daily course offerings, such as in literature or history. If Crase and Crase doubt the usefulness and significance of such a program, how are we then to prepare young people for the eventuality of the loss of a loved one?

I must disagree with these authors regarding their above-stated doubts. This children will not be better off not having had some training and exposure to the subject of death. Of course, all of us will learn to deal with grief through practical experience. The question remains, however, whether there isn't a better way for us to prepare ourselves?

In "Put A Little Life In Your Death," Charles R. O'Briend outlined the following topics which may be included in a unit:

1. Religious Beliefs
2. Rituals
3. Stages of dying
4. Types of funerals
5. Insurance
6. Attitudes toward death and dying
7. Heaven-hell concept
8. Death philosophies
9. Euthenasia
10. Types of dying (physical, mental, social)

He also suggested several teaching activities to complement the lesson:

1. Visit a cemetery
2. Visit a funeral home
3. Invite coroners, doctors and lawyers to speak
4. Write poems
5. Make up tombstones and epitaphs
6. Write your own obituary
7. Write our wills
8. Make up a life inventory
9. Role play
10. Interview other students
11. Look up laws on death. 91

O'Briend's suggestions provide an all-encompassing guide to the creation of a death education program. However, upon reading of his activities and topic outlines and in trying to adapt them to our needs, we disagree with his omission of time for discussion and introspection by the students. During a period of his life in which he is separating himself from the family and is beginning to develop his own ideas regarding life and death, the inclusion of a forum for self and peer expression is vital to the meaningfulness of this course. Of added importance also would be for students to speak not only with professionals regarding death, but the "ordinary" people of all ages who have experienced the death of a loved one. In essence, although O'Briend has included many important topics and has suggested educationally sound activities, we cannot accept his planning without the adequate inclusion of time for the adolescent to reflect and share thoughts with his peer group.

Another study aimed at identifying affective reactions to death and the sources of these attitudes was undertaken in a central Illinois high school with a student population of 1,050. The students were predominantly white with a variety of socio-economic backgrounds being represented.

349 subjects were chosen for the study; 182 were freshmen and 167 were seniors. (This represented 70% of the freshman class and 76% of the senior class). A ten-item questionnaire was used to examine students' reactions to death and dying. (8 forced choice items and 2 completion sections). The completion items gave students an opportunity to define death and to describe some of the bases of the personal emotions associated with it. This exercise was intended to highlight student attitudes toward death and to determine those aspects of death which might be of particular concern to death education.

Most of the students in the sample appeared to think about death frequently (10.9%) or sometimes (57%). This group of 237 adolescents characterized its feelings about death by choosing the following words: natural (113), sad (86), frightening (80), and confusing (67).

The death of a family mem ber or close friend was identified by 34.8% of the total population as having had the greatest influence on their views of death. Among those who had not lost someone close to them, a subgroup of 80, religious teachings and conversations with friends were listed as most significant. More than half (51.2%) of the students

indicated value in discussing death.

The following graph indicated the breakdown of discussants selected by freshmen and seniors:[92]

	Freshmen	Senors	Total
Friends	110	106	216
Parents	66	36	102
Ministers	22	26	48
Counsellors	11	7	18

The percentage of students who think about death frequently or sometimes and who express value in discussing it, as well as the number who term death "frightening," after having experienced the death of someone close to them, suggests that schools are acting appropriately when they initiate death education programs. Too often, a disproportionate emphasis is placed upon informational aspects. The expressed fear and confusion noted by students indicates the need for an exploration of attitudes and emotional reactions to death.

This study refutes the doubts previously expressed by Crase and Crase regarding the usefulness of a death education program. The students' admission of the value in discussing death and their fears as well as other thoughts on the subject stress the need for the institution of such a program within the school system. For our purposes, it is most interesting to study the above graph and to note the responses of the freshmen , those students between the ages of 14 and 15. The importance of the peer group and peer acceptance is highlighted by the fact that over 50% of the students would select friends with whom they might

discuss this subject. Clergy ranked a low third in this list of four. In using these findings to prepare our own program, we must recognize the prominance of and acceptance by the peer group in the planning and implementation of our course. A lecture-type course, whether secular or religious in nature, would not be educationally and psychologically sound in this case. The peer group is the key to the success of such a program. Only through understanding the psychological needs and wants of the group and blending this with well-organized and structured activities can the educator achieve a sound and meaningful learning experience.

Another study, conducted in New York by Dr. Joel B. Walowelsky, undertook a curriculum review on death education among four parochial high schools. Sixteen adminstrators and teachers of religion at these schools were interviewed. Of the four schools, two were Roman Catholic with enrollments of about 1,500 each; the other two were Yeshivot with enrollments of about 800 and 250 respectively. All four had formal courses in religion, but only one school is each system had a formal course on death education.

General educators, according to Walowelsky, argue that death education can be taught in humanities, social studies, health education or biology classes. The religious educators interviewed thought that "although a discussion of death might come up tangentially in these courses, in their schools the proper place for dealing with death was in their religion courses.[93]

The study found that in both parochial school systems, serious discussion

of these issues relating to death were incorporated as part of the general concerns of the religious ssytem; when schools organized religion courses topically, whether in Yeshivot or in Roman Catholic schools, death was taken up as a specific topic. One principal of a school that did not offer a formal course on death education indicated that "in preparing for the interview, I discussed with members of our religion department why we didn't have a course on death education, and we found that we actually cover most of the important topics in our regular religion courses."[94] We must question here, however, if the topic is discussed and dealt with in as thorough a manner as in a distinct course.

Religious educators would not simply adopt programs designed for secular high schools. The objectives of the secular programs, according to Walowelsky, can be broadly divided into two groups. The first basically consists of facts and skills that are to be imparted to the students; the second includes values and attitudinal changes that are to be affected in the student. These death education programs inform the students as to the availability of social services, such as support for widows and families of the terminally ill; what options are available to adults , such as organ donation; and how to protect themselves financially by learning about wills, funeral costs, etc. As welcome as these presentations might be in a religious school's class program, the main thrust of the religious school curriculum is designed to guide the student toward the community's support system by offering emotional and institutional supports to cushion the impact of death.

Death education programs in the secular schools include a form of values clarification or sensitivity training. "Implicitly, or explicitly these programs assume that members of the United States society have an unhealthy view of death and a dysfunction in interrelationships that can be resolved or at least helped through such death education courses."[95]

The religious educators saw a need for clarifying values, but sought to go one step further in developing values. In general, religious school educators agreed that high school students should have the opportunity to clarify their values and express their fears, but they believed that it is unnatural and ultimately unhealthy to initiate this within the context of death and that it is unproductive to "clarify" values when the teacher and school must maintain a neutral stance.

Students in these religious schools are taught to support each other in times of crisis because that is the general educational policy of their respective schools rather than something touching on death in particular. The religious educators have developed a service system to help the mourner because they see their schools as part of the living religious community. Their educational emphasis is to educate the student to identify with and be part of their respective religious communities. In their opinion, secular public school courses probably cannot provide a meaningful substitute for those students who do not identify with a religious system.

> Death education courses have a worth in public school systems as a back door entree to teaching values; in a religious school, they are but a specific application of a more encompassing system of value education. 96

In summarizing Dr. Walowelsky's study, we find death education dealt with in the optimum manner--in the religious arena, taught in religious high schools meeting daily, as opposed to after school or once a week as would be in most cases. Although religion offers a structure and support system through community involvement not offered in the secular system, I feel that those interviewed have taken a rather narrow viewpoint as to the quality and meaningfulness of death education programs offered outside the religious arena. Also, one must ask how relevant to the students it is to have death studied primarily through bible, scripture, and religious law. Would this provide the same relevance as would a course on the topic which dealt with more contemporary aspects such as wills, visiting cemeteries, and the like?

Similarly, Dr. Walowelsky stated that secular death education programs labor under the assumption that Americans have an unhealthy and dysfunctional attitude toward the subject. Although his statement has validity, does the program offered in the parochial school system operate under a different assumption? Also, assuming that the death education program taught in the secular high school is done is a sensitive, caring manner, would this peer support system not provide a parallel to the community support system developed by the religious community? Again, though Dr. Walowelsky's research has given insight into death education courses offered by the parochial system, I feel that too little credit has been given to the importance and the potential validity of secular programs offered.

In summarizing this section of our chapter, we find the juxtaposition

of the secular writers with that of the parochial educator. Walowelsky, in his studies within the religious and non-religious arenas, concludes that death may best be taught within the context of religious studies. He stresses that while secular programs provide useful information regarding facts and skills, very little is done toward developing values. The secular educators, he continues, strive to change attitudes toward death and to clarify existing values. Walowelsky emphasizes the importance of religion in such a program so that values may be developed via knowledge of laws and customs.

The educators cited here all agree on the importance of curriculum and proper teach er training, while most agree on the propriety and use of such a program. The basic question, however, concerns where such a program may best be implemented--as a course unto itself, or incorporated within various other academic subjects? Also, can such a program be effectively taught in secular schools, or, as stated by Walowelsky, is the religious school the best vehicle through which to impart this information?

Although I find Walowelsky somewhat closed-minded when assessing the worth of the secular programs in his study, I must, however, agree that the religious arena is the better forum through which to impart knowledge and values regarding death. I disagree with Walowelsky however, in that these values may be properly taught within other subjects, such as Torah, Law or Talmud. Students need adequate time for reflection and discussion of such an important subject. The tangential discussion of the subject for a portion of the class period

would not provide the proper outlet for the students' expressions of doubt, fear and similar emotions. Also, the subject of God, insofar as life and death is concerned, must be given adequate study time.

In meeting the aims of our proposed course, we find that many of the secular goals previously cited coincide with our Jewish goals. We agree with Counsellor Pauline Allen's stressing the need for sensitivity to the adolescent and in viewing each child according to his individual needs. Educators Smith, Brige and Hymovitz accurately report the importance of proper teacher training and curriculum review. Other educators have given us good program suggestions and sub-topics, such as O'Briend, as well as salient statistics regarding the psychological needs of the students in regard to this issue. We can easily incorporate many of these sound educational presentations when creating our own program.

In summation, a good program on death education would incorporate the findings and suggestions of our secular educators within a religious school framework. The program should be offered as a course within itself, so that adequate time for discussion and reflection be provided. Based upon our previous research, the psychology of the age group should be of utmost consideration and all educational planning must concern itself with the heightened importance of the peer group, and the need for their self-expression, understanding and acceptance.

In this latter part of the chapter, we shall be presenting and analyzing

several programs on Death Education. The latter three programs, being secular, Christian and Jewish, will be discussed using materials provided at the end of this section. Each program conbines basic information as well as adolescent reaction to death and has been the subject matter of recent high school and religious school curricula.

Before beginning an in-depth review of the three above-mentioned programs, a noteworthy article concerning a secular "mini-course" offered to adolescent students at the University Laboratory School of North Illinois University in De Kalb will be discussed.

The original idea and impetus for the course came from students who had visited a funeral home and had returned full of questions. In preparing the course, the teachers found that in teaching death, they would be teaching many other things as well.

> Death by its very nature involves science and medicine, social studies and sociology, psychology, history, art, literature music, insurance and law. 97

At the beginning of the course, the teachers attempted to determine attitudes, knowledge and concerns of students so that the class might be tailored to suit the interests of the students. After formal discussion, the students were asked to write down questions thay had regarding death and death related topics. Some questions were: do people always die with their eyes open; does your blood change color when you die; how much money does a nice funeral cost; are graves always dug six feet deep; why are funerals so sad; how is the body prepared for burial, and why is black always used to represent death?

In addition to collecting their questions, teachers asked for student

response to a questionnaire:

> Do you believe in any sort of life after death?
>
> Do you have any fears or feelings about death or dying?
>
> What is the definition of death?
>
> How would you explain death to a young child?

As the unit progressed, services of resource people were called upon to address the class, such as the funeral director, school psychologist, artist, lawyer, doctor and representatives of major faiths. In addition to listening to the speakers, students developed frames of reference through background readings. Two field trips, one to a funeral home, the other to a cemetery, added to their knowledge.

> If teachers were free to formulate an axiom for subject matter to be included in the curriculum, perhaps such an axiom would be this: subject matter for today's education must have universality, must be intrinsically interesting, must be intellectually challenging, must have both personal and social relevance, and must prepare students for life. We believe that teaching about death meets these criteria. 98

Although the article presented this mini-course in an outlined form, we can find in it the basis for an educationally sound program which would meet our goals. The incorporation of other subjects, such as art and literature, provide added stimulus in such a course. The fact that the program begins with a questionnaire indicates that the teacher is sensitive and caring to the individual needs of the students. Sound educational planning here included the use of resource people, such as clergy, lawyers, etc. as well as field trips to cemeteries to confront death on a more actual level. Obviously, religion and God are not discussed due to the secular nature of the institution.

All of the above-stated suggestions can be included in the planning of

our Jewish program. The activities and projects cited here are creative and interesting. The incorporation of these ideas within a framework including God and religion will provide for an educationally sound and effective course.

The first program to be examined in one offered by the New York City Public School system. The course was created by Thomas Heinegg, a high school teacher and counsellor. This program is a secular program aimed at meeting the needs of a wide background of high school students. The course is introduced and distributed to the students in an outline form (see attached at end of chapter)[99], rather than in a workbook or text. The course requirements and instructional objectives are provided and discussed at the onset of the course so that the students have an overview of all materials and subjects covered as well as gaining an understanding of their responsibilities and assignments for the course. This program was offered as a semester course meeting once a week.

In this program, homework assignments and research reports were an integral part of the structure and implementation of the course. Also, the teacher is the one who chooses all subject matter to be taught and discussed. In such a course, the structure is more tightly woven and the teaching methods are more traditional.

As previously mentioned, the course requirements and instructional objectives are distributed during the first session of the course. Upon reading the 13 course requirements, one is impressed by the number and variety of reality-oriented activities. Mr. Heinegg immediately exposed the more difficult aspects of dealing with death, as exemplified by the assignment where the students visit a funeral home and prepare a funeral expense report. In an included worksheet on the funeral expense report, Mr. Heinegg asked the students to include in their assignment several difficult and painful aspects of preparing for a

funeral; i.e. the cost of removal of the body, cremation and casket selections. To further reinforce the practical importance of such an assignment, the students discussed with family members the types of funeral arrangements they wished made. This activity is good in that it may open up lines of communication between parent and child and may offer a forum for the family to discuss the child's attitudes and fears surrounding the death of a parent.

Within the instructional objectives of the course, the students were asked to define various terms dealing with death (such as euphemism) as well as Kubler-Ross' five stages of death. Sensitive issues such as suicide, euthenasia and old age in America were explored and discussed. This course was geared toward the mature high school student. Ethics, morality, and anxieties concerning death were explored through discussions in each class. Although the instructional objectives were outlined on a single page, each of the eighteen objectives offered comprise self-containing lessons within this unit. Guidelines for several assignments including the funeral and hospital expense reports, were represented as well as medical and legal definitions of death.

The delicate subject matter of suicide, so volatile and increasingly prevalent among today's adolescent population, was first introduced through a true/false exercise containing 25 statements concerning suicide. A reading on prevention of suicide was offered as a balance to the subject.

Legal questions on death such as when is a person legally dead were

offered and explored. Many important aspects of death, such as wills and changing of wills on a death bed, were presented and discussed. This lesson made the students more aware of the universality and finality of death and that people should be well-informed and prepared for dealing with it.

A discussion on old age was introduced through the reading of a New York Times article entitled, "How Old is Old?" This article, anonymously written, dealt with the depression and despair of a middle-aged professor who was retired by the university which employed him. The discussion which ensued after the reading of this article involved the use of the media, immortality and an ideal age to be for the rest of one's life.

Finally, the students received a bibliography within their packet of goals, objectives and worksheets. Traditional views on death, such as found in Gunter's Death Be Not Proud and Agee's A Death in the Family were included as well as excerpts from works such as Zorba the Greek and Hale's The Man Without a Country. Not all books included in the bibliography were selected; some were excerpted while others were frequently used for reference.

There are many excellent features in Mr. Heinegg's program that should be incorporated within any such course, including our own. The students are exposed both to practical issues, such as funerals and costs, as well as to the more thought-provoking and delicate issues, such as suicide and euthenasia. In addition, the students' thought processes

are challenged by the fine selection of outside readings, including the New York Times article on old age and books such as Gunther's Death Be Not Proud.

Although I was most impressed with the variety and the scope of this program, I have several major hesitations regarding this course insofar as its goals coinciding with ours. In the very first session, upon the distribution of the course requirements, the students are abruptly introduced to the stark realities of the topic. A lack of sensitivity in the planning is manifested here. A more appropriate method would be to gradually introduce the students to the topic. This is especially essential since the students involved come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. (By contrast, a religious school class is usually smaller, more intimate and homogeneous). This reality-oriented course could be excellent; however, more care must be taken to first understand the needs of the participating students. The use of the questionnaire, as suggested by previous educators in this chapter would serve as a better indicator of the needs of the students and thus in hsaping the course itself.

In an interview with Mr. Heinegg, he underlined the fact that class discussions followed all activities, reports and projects. However, the course seems too reality and practically oriented and not personal enough to suit our needs. Although vital aspects of life and death are introduced and discussed, there seems a lack of personalization within the course itself. Perhaps in such a heterogeneous grouping, the structure lends itself better toward being highly secularized rather

than emotional and revealing. The question arises as to whether an intimate and sharing experience can be achieved within the public school setting? It is my belief that it is indeed possible. With minor revisions in the curriculum, such as the establishment of smaller groupings and intimate discussion of the matter, the course would fulfill its academic goals of providing facts and practical information regarding death as well as filling an emotional need to express fears and anxieties.

In summation, Mr. Heinegg's course is highly intelligent, challenging and thought-provoking. It would be improved, however, were more time spent in planning and implementing "sensitivity-type" exercises and activities to deal with the strong emotions surrounding the subject.

The second program to be examined is a death education guide for the teacher. "A Matter of Life and Death, "[100] written by S. Heckman and published by the Brethren Press, provides suggested frameworks for the educator in planning the course. This program is geared for older youth and has also been used by senior high school groups in Christian camps, retreats and meetings.

The program explores vital life and death matters in an intelligent, mature and sensitive manner. The goals of this program are manifold; however, several points are outstanding. The course aims at exposing students to the reality of death. Since so many people are shielded and sheltered from the subject, this program strives to confront them with its eventuality. Also, the exercises within the booklet aim to better sensitize the students to suffering and sorrow. In addition, a primary goal is to present the student with practical facts and skills so that he may deal with death in a more knowledged fashion. Finally, this course's underlying theme is to relate all of these matters of life and death in a Christian sense.

This booklet was written specifically for the Christian educator and its introduction leads into procedures for planning the units. The educator is encouraged to include several students in the planning of the course. This excellent suggestion not only provides a learning experience for students but also promotes responsibility and leadership. After the framework of the course is chosen (length, material to be covered, aims, objectives and purposes) by the teacher and the students, six sample sessions are outlined, each followed by additional activities and

articles known as "Learning Resources." The course planners pick and choose the lessons and resources they feel more beneficial to their group and to the aims of the course. Alternate activities, such as slide shows, lecture and poetry readings are also suggested. Each session lasts one and a half hours and provides a variety of activities. Since this is a guide for the teacher, specific instructions are indicated next to every sub-topic of a unit to aid in better preparing the lesson and in motivating and involving the students. Although some of these suggestions are very elementary and are not of great use, they are nonetheless included so that the course guide may be as comprehensive as possible.

Each session ends with the fifteen-minute worship period. Several students are asked to take part in the leadership of the prayer services. These services are prepared in advance to the session and the prayers chosen reflect upon the lessons learned in the unit. The students, of course, conduct the services themselves. Here, again, we find another example of student involvement. The prayers recited may have more meaning since the group is involved in their planning and preparation.

The six possible sessions cited in the booklet are: 1) Why do people have to die?: 2) Is the taking of human life ever justified?; 3)How can I live when I know I'm dying?; 4) How can I deal with grief?; 5) What is immortality about?; 6) How do we relate to matters of life and death in the Christian sense?

Every lesson is broken down into four or five sub-topics, varying from ten to forty minutes in length. In the first lesson, after having read

and discussed selections from the Bible and other literature, the students are asked to complete a questionnaire on death, a sample of which is provided in Learning Resources section.

Special topics such as capital punishment, suicide, euthenasia, and abortion are dealt with in the next unit. Through the use of current events (the cases of Gary Gilmore and Karen Quinlan), charts, biblical quotations and role-playing, the students are exposed to these subjects. In the discussions following each activity, the students are given a chance to reflect upon their attitudes and values concerning these death-related matters.

The third session deals with living with dying. In this session, the students are confronted with their own mortality through the reading of the story of Betsy, a 16-year old girl dying of leukemia. A few days before her death, Betsy wrote a poignant account of the meaning of Easter. Rather than being morbid, Betsy reflected on the beauty of nature, the joy of love and the gift of life. Althoug this story reflects the joyousness of Betsy's spirit despite her suffering and approaching death, one must ask whether the students can truly appreciate her spirit. The more prevailing reaction to death, especially for an adolescent whose emotions are so tentative, would be depression and despair. They haven't even begun to live their lives--how can it end so quickly? This article may very well serve to frighten and confound the students and not meet its aim of accepting premature death with grace.

The five stages of accepting death, as defined by Kubler-Ross, were then

introduced. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance were discussed through group work and through role-playing activities. Following discussions on these activities, when responses and feelings were shared, the lesson, as usual, ended with a prayer session.

We must question whether this unit does indeed answer the question, "How can I live when I know I'm dying?" The unit's basis is Betsy's statement made a few days before her death and readings on memories of Betsy made by her friends. Although the activities surrounding these readings and the discussion of Kubler-Ross' stages of responses for death do elicit discussion and reaction by the students, I do not feel that the chapter deals with this issue in a realistic and practical manner. Most students would not react at Betsy did. More emphasis should have been placed on discussing these fears and other reactions were they to be in Betsy's circumstances.

The course continues with the unit on dealing with grief. After reading an excellent work, "The Day My Father Died," by J.W. Mathews, the students reflect upon the "sterilization" of death in our society. The passage describes the death of a 92-year old man as viewed by his son. The family was insistent upon a "natural" burial, and were dismayed by the embalming process, by the satin-lined coffin and by the artificial grass covering the burial site. The issue of society's tendancy to deny death arises and discussion ensues. The next half-hour includes a choice of activities. The students either write letters of condolence or role-play family death situations. In each exercise, the aim is for the student to gain insight into grief situations through dealing with them in these activities.

The main subject matter to be covered in this lesson, however, is funerals. The students list details on planning a funeral and develop ideas for the worship services involved. This activity is composed of the students working both individually and in groups and using their denomination's prayer book and resources for planning a funeral. Students are given the right to both express, challenge and defend their opinions.

An interesting sidenote in this chapter is a suggestion for the students to plan the "celebration" of their own deaths, rather than for a loved one. This might prove a challenging exercise since it provides a different, more personalized perspective to the issue. The fact that death in the Christian sense carries with it a sense of hope, rather than despair, is noted and is emphasized as the basis in planning the project.

The course ends with units on immortality and the Christian sense of life and death matters. The first unit here discussed has the students, broken down in to two groups, deciding whether they, in fact, would like to live forever and then discussing the why's and why not's of their answers. Death's inevitability is then acknowledged. The five modes of immortality, according to Dr. Robert Lifton are then explored. They are: biological, creative, religious, natural and experiential transcendance. Through these means, according to Lifton, human beings develop concepts and modes of thought which provide for a sense of significance and continuity. Each mode of immortality is dealt with through the use of literature, records, personal experiences and art.

A great deal of these exercises are meaningful and relevant both to this

program and could easily be adapted to our Jewish program. In dealing with Lifton's biological mode, the students are urged to share their knowledge of their own ancestors, family history stories, and the like. Important questions dealing with the importance of tradition are asked. Such questions as, "What traditions do you share with your grandparents?" and "How do you identify with your ancestors?" are broached in the attempt to forge a biological tie to our past and to realize that this type of immortality does exist.

Similar educationally sound exercises deal with the creative and natural modes of immortality. Can we "live" through the work that we leave behind? Which people are remembered for their life's work and why? The educator is encouraged to deal with these issues through the use of poetry, music and art.

There was one particular activity in this unit with which I disagree. I cannot accept the educational planning which suggests a visit to a graveyard so that the students may fantasize about the person buried there and to fabricate a story about the person. One of the aims of this program is to deal with practical matters relating to death. Although the students' learning is enhanced through multi-sensory experiences, the above-stated exercises are educationally unsound. It detracts from the seriousness of the unit and adds a levity inappropriate to the issue. A visit to a cemetery can and should be a sobering and reflective experience for the students. In such a parochial community, a better exercise might be for the students to visit the grave of a civic or religious leader and to discuss why he is remembered. Psychologists in our previous chapters have noted that the adolescent is moving away from child-like

fantasies and toward more reflective and realistic experiences. Making up stories does not provide a suitable forum for the expression of feelings and ideas.

Christian attitudes towards life and death are explored in the final chapter. The unit begins with its dual interpretation of Lifton's religious mode of immortality. Life continuing in another form after physical death is evidenced through accounts of people having returned from the brink of death as well as from those having witnessed the death of others. Also, through Christian teachings, we learn that G-d sustained us throughout our lives and will continue to do so in death.

After having read and discussed several articles on the above, the activity continues with a values continuum line. Students stand along that line at the point of their current beliefs on the subject. One end of the continuum would represent "no life after death;" while the other end of the line would indicate the belief of life in some form after physical death. Stressed is the fact that no one knows the real answer to this question.

To underline the Christian sense and content of the course, the final exercise of the program is the reading and discussion of New Testament accounts of death and resurrection. The prayer session ending the unit and the course acknowledges the Christian belief in death as a triumph, not as a tragedy.

I was most impressed with this program on Death Education. Through the use of a clear and detailed format, the teacher is guided through the

planning and preparation of a meaningful and motivating program. Research into the psychology of the adolescent has shown that the peer group is of prime importance. Also, the best way to gain the interest and support of the adolescent is to involve him in responsible activities. This program combines these two findings. The students share in the planning of both the course itself and of the very important prayer services. This involvement heightens the students' acceptance of the subject matter due to their personal input into the material covered.

The variety of activities suggested in the program also add to the vitality of the course. The readings offered are excellent and appropriate. Through the use of the Bible, contemporary literature, news articles, and poetry, the program underlines the fact that death is part of life. The passages were thought-provoking, sensitive and motivational. Due to the students' having some control into the selection of the readings and in the program in general, they will be more prone to participate actively and to appreciate the value of the material covered. The program itself is non-threatening. Although it delves into death and feelings concerning death in the first unit, the students are re-assured that there are no right or wrong answers on the subject and all answers will be respected. The class is broken down into smaller groupings for many of the activities. This intimate grouping promotes more open expression and sharing and is more conducive to eliciting personal responses from the students.

Since this is a program for the high-school student, the course matter includes highly sensitive issues such as euthenasia, suicide, and abortion. As each lesson is broken down into four or five sub-topics, the students are offered a multi-sensory experience through the use of records, films,

discussions, speakers and art. Also, the variety of the subject matter adds to the liveliness and stimulation of the course and to the participation of the students.

An excellent example of the high quality of the activities offered is the role-playing situation. This not only represents an "active" exercise, but also may serve as a vent for feelings and frustrations of the quieter student. In the session dealing with grief, the students are asked to role-play several grief situations. An example of such a situation surrounds a 16-year old trying to comfort a friend whose mother has recently died. The students, after acting out the roles, are first asked how they felt while doing it. Afterwards, the groups discuss their feelings and offer suggestions that would be helpful in such situations. This activity heightens sensitivity to the subject and also personalizes the experience to the student. Also, through exposure to such activities, the student may be better prepared to deal with his own grief and to comfort others in their bereavement.

The religious aspect of the course is subtly handled. Although most of the material offered and covered is of a more general and secular nature, the lessons each end with a prayer service so as to reinforce the Christian basis of the course. In this manner, each lesson ends with a meaningful religious experience tied into the secular material. Students feel that this program is different from the typical Sunday school fare.

This program is educationally sound and can be adapted to suit the needs of other religious groups. My hesitations with the guide surround the

immediate exposure to serious and sensitive materials, as with Heinegg. Although the first lesson handled this well, a better procedure would be to first deal with generalities and later to begin the exploration of feelings. Also, students are asked to read long passages aloud. While this may be appropriate for younger students, it can become tedious if the reading is extensive and the students' interest would be lost.

The course as presented is successful in meeting its set goals. Through diverse exercises and activities, the students are exposed to the eventuality of death. They are sensitized to suffering and grief, and they are equipped with factual and practical information regarding death, funerals, etc. Finally, through readings and prayer services, all the above is linked to Christianity's views on life and death. The goals for our proposed program, later to be expressed, are similar with the obvious exception that ours is a Jewishly-oriented program.

There are several aspects of this Christian program which must be modified to meet our Jewish needs. Although the inclusion of prayer is important in such a parochial unit, I feel that it would be more appropriate for a Jewish unit of study to include various prayers concerning death such as Kaddish, Yizkor or El Mole Rachamim, rather than specific prayer sessions. A program can very well delve into all religious aspects of the subject without ending in prayers. A more appropriate method of introducing prayers concerning death in a Jewish program would be through attending Sabbath services when the Kaddish is recited by the entire congregation. Other prayers should be studied and evaluated in class without the formality

of an organized prayer session. In this way, students feel that they are not being forced to pray. The adolescent is permitted to choose whether or not he will participate. Prayer should be a personal decision and has more meaning if done voluntarily, with "kavanah." Many of the other activities, including those surrounding suicide and euthenasia,are excellent and can well be included in our program.

This is a highly intelligent, activity-oriented and humane program that can and should be used by educators of all religions. The detailed and concise lesson offerings can be used by the educator in planning and modifying his own program. "A Matter of Life and Death " is an excellent, lucid, and thought-provoking guide. It is educationally sound in its efforts at creating an outstanding approach to dealing with this sensitive issue.

The last program to be examined is "Death, Burial and Mourning in the Jewish Tradition, "[101] by A. Marcus, S. Bissel and K. Lipschutz. This program is presented as a mini-course and is graded from the 5th to the 12th grades. This course aims at introducing students to the subject of death within the Jewish context. Its goals are to 1) provide the students with important and practical knowledge of Jewish funeral customs and prayers; 2) teach liberal Jewish practices on death and compare them to the more traditional practices; 3) juxtapose Jewish death customs with those of other nations; 4) explore emotions such as grief and fear; 5) contemplate subjects such as afterlife; and 6) achieve all of the above through poetry, readings, and songs as well as through group discussions.

Upon examining the workbook, (see attached), it would seem that the course is geared to the younger adolescent, perhaps one of eleven or twelve years of age. There are several very elementary exercises in the booklet which lack the sophistication to motivate an older adolescent. An example of this is found on the first page. The student is asked to list things with and without beginnings or ends. While this is an excellent introductory exercise for a 5th grader, I doubt whether a 12th grader would find this a stimulating enough introduction to such an important course. The older student would "turn-off" at the beginning of the program.

On the other hand, this first session combines both secular discussion and religious involvement through working with the Torah scroll while reading Genesis. It begins to draw out feelings about "endings." This gradual introduction to the topic, I feel, is good because the student

approaches the material very slowly. The subject matter is more objective and non-threatening. Since most students approach a death education course with mixed feelings, fear being one of them, it is educationally sound to first begin with more neutral exercises and later to introduce the more sensitive material.

As the booklet continues, through poems and biblical quotations, the authors stress that life and death are closely related and that death is part of living. The students' creative resources are tapped when they are asked to comment upon the passage in Ecclesiastes, "To Everything There is a Season." This second lesson, in contrast with the first, is more introspective rather than activity-oriented. The lesson ends with the question, "What is it about death that makes us afraid?" We must, however, question the appropriateness of ending the lesson with such a question. Are the students to spend the rest of the week thinking about what makes them afraid of death? Rather than emphasize the negative aspect, fear, a better question would be, "What are your feelings about death?"

Again, I feel that this second lesson is also geared toward the younger adolescent. Writing down thoughts on death and sealing them away in an envelope would find more appeal in a 5th grade class as would the exercise in which they think of a "good" time for each of the things mentioned in the Ecclesiastes passage. For the older adolescent, a discussion on thoughts and fears on death would be more suitable; perhaps a role-playing situation would create a more meaningful experience to better meet the goal of exploring emotions. Our studies indicated that the older adolescent

finds the peer group very important-- the more things are shared among the group, the more they begin to understand and to relate both to each other and to the subject matter.

The course continues with readings on Jewish funeral and mourning customs. These readings are short and provide adequate information on burial customs, prayers (such as the Kaddish) and the mourning calendar. Following each passage are activities based upon the previous readings. The section ends by juxtaposing Jewish liberal practices with the more traditional ones.

This section also introduces and underscores the concept of community involvement with the mourner, so essential in Jewish tradition. From the introduction of the work of the Chevra Kadisha through the mitzvah of paying a shiva call, the student is made to understand the importance of our responsibility to the bereaved. Thus, a moral issue is introduced. Several of the exercises involved in this section are good; such as analysing the important things to be said in a eulogy. The students start thinking and a creative outlet is provided for their feelings. Although these exercises are also somewhat elementary, the secondary school student will be able to relate and find added understanding through them. This section is also non-threatening through the primary use of factual material.

Funeral customs of other groups and nationalities are briefly introduced, followed by a short exercise comparing these ways to our Jewish ways. This sections provides somewhat of an interlude; i.e. distant cultures are involved

and there is less of a personalized, emotional attachment to the material. Although this section might seem secondary, it does provide the student with insight and information as well as a respite from the more difficult material. I feel this section is appropriate to the goals of the course and is well-placed within the unit. It serves as a bridge between examining facts and examining feelings. Although it does break up the momentum of the course, this is necessary due to the seriousness of the subject matter to follow. It allows for the students to relieve themselves emotionally from the personalized sense of the material and to recharge these energies for the lessons yet to come.

Anger, disbelief and grief are the emotions dealt with through various exercises in the section following. Through the use of a movie, the students are asked to comment upon a boy's reaction to the death of a grandfather and to offer suggestions for improving the film. This lesson has great merit. It combines film, discussion, introspection and sharing of ideas with one another. It meets the goals of the unit insofar as emotions are explored and analysed through a varied selection of activities. It provides a forum for information as well as for creativity and is appropriate for all levels. The grouping of four to five students for discussion is educationally beneficial since students may feel less inhibited in smaller groups. They are more likely to share private thoughts and emotions in such a framework.

Emotions surrounding death are dealt with toward the end of the program. Before beginning to deal with death and in sharing personal feelings, a trusting classroom must be created. By this time, the students have had several occasions through which to explore death, its rituals and customs.

By being more familiar with the subject matter, they should now be better able to express their feelings.

The section on grief, however, is inappropriate for the adolescent classroom and should not be used in a program which would meet our goals. The student is asked to look at the world as if wearing "sad" glasses. Viewpoints on such subjects as school, family and the future are shared. It is very difficult to believe that a 14-year old would relate to an exercise in which he views the world through "sad" glasses. Although the questions asked in this section are acceptable, the motivation for the lesson must be improved. More reactions to these emotions should be drawn from the students themselves. Rather than through drawing or writing, more time should be used to involve the students in introspective sessions where they can share grief and guilt experiences among themselves rather than through reading and commenting.

The unit continues with its presentation on Jewish attitudes regarding an afterlife. Biblical, Talmudic and Kabbalistic sources are used to present an overview on Jewish attitudes. Present day Orthodox, Conservative and Reform viewpoints on afterlife are expressed as well. The section ends with a beautiful poem dealing with remembering the dead found in Gates of Prayer. This section combines factual material with thought-provoking readings. The poem, authored by Rabbis Sylvan Kames and Jack Riemer, forces the reader to analyse another type of afterlife--living on in the memories of loved ones. Other means of exploring this topic should have included thoughts on visiting a parent's grave before the High Holydays or before the marriage of a child and asking why this is done? Can this be considered an afterlife? Questions

such as these not only provoke thought, but also provide comfort to the student who may already have confronted death on a personal level.

The unit ends with "The Joys of Living." Students are asked to comment upon a midrash dealing with responsibility to future generations and to list things they wish to accomplish during their lifetimes. Through readings, both secular and religious, the student learns to value life itself and to appreciate its blessings. Two of the readings in this section, from Anne Frank's diary and from "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," show the resiliance of the human spirit, despite the conditions of the world. The third reading is taken from Thornton Wilder's Our Town and deals with a dead woman who is given the opportunity to relive one day in her life. All three readings are excellent and appropriate as they impart to the reader a sense of the joy and beauty there should be found in living.

The fact that the program ends with life is important. After having dealt with death and all factors surrounding it, the student ends the program with the realization that life is a cycle--there is a time for everything, death included. Their time now is to live. The studying of the midrash dealing with the elderly man planting trees and exploring pertinent teachings of the rabbis and sages tie this final lesson within the Jewish context. The suggestion of planning a Siyyum, a celebration usually done at the conclusion of studying a tractate of the Talmud, also adds to the Jewish dimension of the lesson.

My overall impression of the booklet is a positive one. The readings offered were good. The selections provided were a blend of the Judaic and the secular

and were meaningful and appropriate. Also, the subject matter covering Jewish laws and rituals surrounding death was concise and well-presented.

I feel that the use of this program should be limited to younger students. There is a lack of stimulating material for the older adolescent as the exercises and activities are of an elementary nature. In order to make this Death Education course more suitable for a teenager, the program should involve the students more in the planning and the implementation of the exercises, projects, etc. as done in the Christian program previously discussed. More attention should have been paid to discussing feelings and attitudes, so vital in meeting the needs of the age group. Although the program does provide for some communication, it seems to be more of a tradional unit, in which the teacher teaches and the students absorb. Although this is certainly appropriate for a grade-school child, the needs of the adolescent differ. As was revealed in the previous chapter on the psychology of the adolescent, peer involvement, interaction and acceptance are the prerequisites for a successful treatment of such a program. Adolescents learn to introspect through sharing and discussing. A trusting classroom atmosphere so necessary for such a course is created in this way.

The secondary school teacher may make good use of this program through modifying it to suit the needs of the group being taught. This course is educationally sound as it includes a blending of various activities to stimulate participation. The subject matter is first presented in a very general manner and proceeds to more sensitive, difficult material at a later

stage. The student is also allowed a break between the factual and emotional units through the studying of rites of other cultures. The statement gearing this program from the 5th to the 12th grades should be changed to reflect the elementary nature of the program. The intellectual and emotional needs of a ten-year old differ radically from those of a 15-year old. The same program cannot adequately meet the needs of both groups.

After having researched and studied the psychological needs of the adolescent as well as suggestions made by educators as to how best to introduce the subject, we now include our summary statement on what is needed in our course on death for the Jewish school.

Although the programs previously described do include some or all of our goals, our program will be geared to the Jewish adolescent and will better strive to meet the emotional needs of the age group. The lessons should impart information, provide insight, challenge thought processes and promote sharing of feelings.

The basic goals of our program will be to 1) introduce the subject of death in a gradual, non-threatening manner; 2) create a trusting classroom environment through the encouragement of peer dialogue, discussion and projects; 3) provide facts and skills regarding Jewish aspects of dealing with death; 4) explore how Liberal Judaism differs from traditional Judaism regarding this issue; 5) solicit the cooperation of resource people, such as Rabbis

and social workers, in order to better deal with sensitive or religious issues; 6) to finish the course with stress on life; and 7) impart all the above information, discussion and skills through the diverse use of poetry readings and stories.

In the next chapter, a course outline on Death Education for the 14-year old Jewish adolescent will be presented and explained.

UNDERSTANDING DEATH

TOM HEINEGG, INSTRUCTOR

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance is imperative because the course is both theoretical and experiential.

2. You must complete all the instructional objectives.

3. Unless otherwise stated, ALL REPORTS MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN.

4. Write a four page critical analysis of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book On Death and Dying.

5. Write a one page report determining the average cost of a funeral. State the source of your information and all inclusive services. (Hint: Go to funeral parlor)

6. Write a one page report determining the average cost of staying in the intensive care unit of a hospital for a one week stay. State source of your information and all inclusive services.

7. Prepare a group presentation in oral form. Specifics to be announced.

8. Write a last will and testament.

9. Write your own obituary. See newspaper for style.

10. Essays of approximately 100 words or less:

    1. Write the biological and psychological definitions of death.
    2. Which are you more afraid of death or dying?
    3. Should the fact that you are going to die be a motivation for living?

11. State 10 phenomena that contribute to the fear of death

12. State 10 Euphemism for the word death or dying.

13. Interview your parents and family members and find out what kind of funeral arrangements they would like.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To write the biological definition of death
2. To write the psychological definition of death
3. To determine whether America is a death-denying society
4. To write the phenomena that contribute to the fear of death
5. To define the five stages of death as propounded by Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross.
6. To define the word euphemism and to explore in discussion and writing the nature of euphemisms used in regard to death
7. To state how death attitudes fluctuate when an individual is relating to different age groups.
8. To determine the average cost for a funeral.
9. To write a last will and testament.
10. To speak to peers who have experienced close personal deaths and identify the specific words or actions of sympathetic mourners or friends that produced positive and/or negative responses.
11. To compare the different attitudes between the death of a close personal friend and the death of a political figure.
12. To state the facts and fallacies concerning suicide.
13. To write the legal problems associated with the death of an individual.
14. To explore in writing and discussion the situational ethics involved with specific death-related case studies.
15. To determine the age or life point where individuals stop aspiring to be older.
16. To determine the average cost of intensive care coverage in a hospital setting.
17. To define cryogenics and explore in discussion its implications for the future of America.
18. To define euthanasia and determine if it is ever justified.

FUNERAL EXPENSE REPORT

Include atleast the following items in your report :

1. Removal of the body
2. Care and preparation of the body
3. Securing permits
4. Use of the chapel
5. Use of the Prep Room
6. Arrangements and supervision
7. Hearse
8. Casket (Price Range) and outer casket
9. Open grave
10. Grave site
11. Mausoleum (Price range)
12. Minister's Fee
13. Death Certificate
14. Cremation

HOSPITAL EXPENSE REPORT

1. Hospital Room
2. intensive care unit charge
3. physician services
4. drugs
5. daily intravenous feedings
6. special equipment (heart monitor etc.)
7. private duty nurse
8. heart-lung machine

Medical or biological definition of death

After four years (1971-75) of studying more than 500 dying patients in nine medical centers across the country, medical experts from the American Medical Association (AMA) have created a new medical definition of death which they feel confident fulfils all moral, ethical, and legal requirements. Under the new defintion a person may safely be declared dead "if he is in a coma, has no brain activity as measured by an electroencephalograph, he has no reactions such as swallowing, coughing, and pupillary movement, his pupils remain large, he has a temperature below 90 degrees, and there is no clinical or chemical evidence of drug intoxication. "

Legal definition of death

In March 1975 the legal profession also revised its definition of death which had stood unchanged since 1906 (a person is legally dead when his breathing and heart beat has stopped). It took the 180-member committee of the American Bar Association (ABA) Medicine and Law Section 18 months and at a cost of $200,000 to arrive at its current definition of death : "For all legal purposes, a human body with irreversible cessation of total brain function, according to usual and customary standards of medical practice, shall be considered dead."
According to Edwin Holman, AMA attorney, the new definition of the ABA appears to coincide with the policies of the AMA.

FACTS AND FALLACIES OF SUICIDE

Tom Heinegg, Borough Supervisor

FAL 1. Men attempt suicide more often than women.

FAL 2. Blacks attempt suicide more often than whites.

FACT 3. Single people commit suicide more often than married people.

FAL 4. The young commit suicide more frequently than the elderly.

FACT 5. Suicide is among the ten leading causes of death in the U.S.

FACT 6. The most typical American suicide is a white Protestant male in his forties, married with two children.

FACT 7. No one is 100 percent suicidal.

FAL 8. People who talk about committing suicide generally won't do it.

FA 9. People are not permanently suicidal.

FA 10. Suicide notes clearly indicate that many suicides are atleast in part the result of a faulty reasoning pattern.

FA 11. Suicide runs in families.

12. Suicide strikes much more often among the rich.

13. Most suicidal people are ambivalent about living and dying.

14. Most suicides occur within months of a previous suicidal attempt.

15. Suicidal persons give many clues and warnings regarding his intentions.

16. Suicides most often occur at night.

17. All persons who commit suicide leave a note.

18. Many suicides could be classified as romantic suicides.

19. Suicide is the first leading cause of death among teenagers in New York City.

20. Most teenagers attempt suicide at home.

21. Teenagers of both sexes prefer attempting suicide by taking overdoses of drugs.

22. Most teenage suicides occur during the winter months.

23. Most teenagers who commit suicide succeed on their first attempt.

24. More women die of suicide than do men.

25. A large inheritance of money can trigger a suicide.

Excerpted from The Psychology of Suicide : How to prevent Suicide by Edwin S. Shneidman and Philip Mandelkorn

Before you finish reading this page, someone in the United States will try to kill himself. Atleast 60 Americans will have taken their own lives by this time tomorrow. More than 25,000 persons in the United States killed themselves last year, and nine times that many attempted suicide. Many of those who attempted will try again, a number with lethal success. And here's the irony: except for a very few, all of the people who commit suicide want desperately to live.

At one time or another almost everyone contemplates suicide. It is one of several choices open to man. Yet any debate of suicide's sin or merit is best left to the academiciians, the theologians, and the philosophers. Few suicidal persons would listen closely. Most of them are deeply troubled men, women, and children who are submerged in their own despair.

No single group, nor color, nor class of people is free from self-inflicted death. Rich or poor, male or female, Christian or Jew, black or white, young or old- to some extent every category of man suffers death by suicide. However, there appear to be some statistical differences. In the United States, the number of men who kill themselves is three times higher than that of women (though women attempt suicide more than men); whites twice that of Blacks; college students half again as much as their noncollege counterparts(for collegians, suicide is the third leading cause of death-only accidents and cancer take more lives); single people twice that of those married; and among adults, it is more frequently the elderly who kill themselves.

Suicides are much less accurately reported in some places than others; nevertheless, suicide is among the ten leading causes of death in the United States. Of every 100,000 persons in this country, each year 11 choose suicide. In contrast, Hungary has 26.8 suicides per 100,000; Austria 21.7; Czechoslovakia, 21.3; Finland, 19.2; West Germany and Sweden, 18.5; Switzerland, 16.8; Japan, 16.1; and France, 15.5. Most other countries report suicide rates lower than the United States, including Italy, 5.3, and Ireland, 2.5.

The most typical American suicide is a white Protestant male in his forties, married with two children. He is a breadwinner and a taxpayer. The sorrow his untimely preventable death brings to his family and community is considerable. Costs begin with the city or county ambulance fee. The cost of the coroner's time and facilities soon follows. Widows' and survivors' benefits and insurance must be added. Then there is the heightened probability of subsequent indigent relief. Recent studies indicate that the surviving children of suicide victims more often require mental health care. Mental and physical care for a suicide's survivors usually must be provided by the city or county to whom the suicide has irrevocably bequeathed this responsibility.

Over the Years, a suicide can cost his community at least $50,000. Counting all the taxes that he would have paid over the next quarter century, in the end, a suicide may cost his community a great deal more.

Why do Men kill themselves ?

For troubled men, each day is different. Why do men kill themselves ? This is the first question asked by someone who knew the person who successfully committed suicide. Certainly he was tragically upset. But this alone does not explain why he took his own life. So many other people carry heavier burdens in their daily lives, yet persevere. What made this person different from those others ? Why did he give up ? Men have been puzzled by suicide for centuries. Only in the last 50 or 60 years, however, have any scientifically tenable explanations taken shape.

One theory still highly regarded today was proposed initially by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, late in the nineteenth century. Suicide, he asserted, is the result of society's strength or weakness of control over the individual. According to Durkheim, there are three basic types of suicide, each a result of man's relationship to his society. In one instance, the "altruistic" suicide is literally requied by society. Here, the customs or rules of the group demand suicidr under certain conditions. Historically, Japanese committing hara-kiri are examples of altruistic suicides. Hindu widows who willingly cremated themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands were also examples of altruistic suicide. In such instances, however, the persons had little choice. Self-inflicted death was honorable; continuing to live was ignominious. Society dictated their action and, as individuals, they were not strong enough to deft custom.

Most suicides in the United States are "egoistic"- Durkheim's second category. Contrary to the circumstances of an altruistic suicide, egoistic suicide occurs when the individual has too few ties with his community. Demands, in this case to live, don't reach him. Thus, proportionately, more men who are on their own kill themselves than do church or family members.

Finally, Durkheim called "anomic" those suicides that occur when the accustomed relationship between an individual and his society is suddenly shattered. The shocking, immediate loss of a job, a close friend, or a fortune is thought capable of precipitating anomic suicides; or, conversely, poor men surprised by sudden wealth, have also, it has been asserted, been shocked into anomic suicide.

As Durkheim detailed the sociology of suicide, so Freud fathered psychological explanations. To him, suicide was essentially within the mind. Since men ambivalently identify with the objects of their own love, when the are frustrated the aggressive side of the ambivalence will be directed against the internalized person. Psychoanalytically, suicide can thus be seen as murder in the 180th degree.

While these perceptive men, half a century ago, evolved their own distinctive theories to explain suicide, authorities today are melding these theories. As an outgrowth of Durkheim's original thinking, sociologists now feel they can explain suicide in the United States as partly resulting from the peculiarities of this culture. Dr. Herbert Hendin has written that suicide is a "barometer of social tension". The psychologists meanwhile understand suicide in terms of various levels of pressure on man, which sometimes parlay into suicide. Thus, a primary cause for suicide might be a traumatic experience during early childhood or youth, a physical handicap, or any of various fundamental psychological disturbances. An individual may be so affected by any of these primary problems, that his outlook, manner of thought, or perspective will sustain further impetus to commit suicide.

With these underlying tensions pulsing inside a person who is already somewhat suicidal, the end of a love affair, a failed examination, a serious illness, almost any unfortunate experience can precipitate an attempt at self-destruction.

Suicide Notes

Fortunately, no one is 100 percent suicidal. Psychologists today realize that even the most ardent death wish is ambivalent. People cut their throats and plead to be saved at the same moment. Suicide notes often illustrate the fatal illogic of the suicide person, the mixing of cross-purposed desires: "Dear Mary, I hate you. Love John." "I'm tired. There must be something fine

for you. Love, Bill. " These simple, but pathetic messages are actual suicide notes. Like the iceberg's tip above the surface, they hint at the awesome mass below. When a man is suicidal, his perspective freezes. He wants to live, but can see no way. His logic is confused, but he cannot clear his head. He stumbles into death, still gasping for life, even in those last moments when he tries to write down how he feels.

Though overflowing with genuine emotion, a suicide note is usually written with a specious logic that demonstrates the confusion of its author. These notes often instruct someone to do something in the future. There is an implication that the suicidal person will be there in the future to insure that his orders are carried out. Other notes reflect a sad desire to punish persons close to the suicide, as if he would be able to observe the pity and tears he has created. Employing bizarre logic, still others identify their own death with suffering, and kill themselves because they are suffering.

No one knows what it is like to be dead. At best, one can only imagine what it would be like if one were alive to watch-an invisible personality- at one's own funeral. Often, such an attractive fantasy intoxicates the suicidal mind, and tips the scale to death. But until the very moment that the bullet or barbiturate finally snuffs out life's last breath-while the ground is rushing up-the suicidal person wants terribly to live. No doubt, he also wants to die. But it is an ambivalent wish-to die and to live. Until he dies, a suicide is begging to be saved. Before his death, the suicidal person leaves a trail of subtle and obvious hints of his intentions. Every suicide attempt is a serious cry for help.

This cry can be heard, and suicide can be prevented-reason enough for communities to establish suicide prevention services. Since people who kill themselves also want to live, and since their acute suicidal states are temporary-that is, given the opportunity to clear their heads, almost all would choose to live-help should be offered to the suicidal. The increasing financial cost of a suicide to a community simply underscores compassion's plea for suicide prevention. And there is yet another reason.

Vanishing Attitudes

The victims of suicide are not only those who die by their own hands. The families-the wives or husbands, brothers and sisters, parents, and especially the children-of a suicide are undoubtedly stigmatized. There is an ones associated with suicide that has nothing to do with the loss of life. A suicide in the family irrevocably affects the relatives. The mode of death forever after is mentioned by the family in whispers, if it is mentioned at all. They would rather their loved ones die of almost any other cause, no matter how painful or expensive. There is a taint, a stigma, an aura of shame that envelops the family of the suicide and marks even the closest friends and associates. The guileless remark, "her father committed suicide," is never forgotten by anyone who hears it. Suicide is never totally forgiven.

People have been killing themselves since the beginnings of recorded history, probably ever since there has been the species. Yet, the action has always been condemned, with only occasional and specific exceptions, by most other men. And suicide is still very much taboo today.

Probably the present attitude stems from the long history of suicide's condemnation. Suicide is and always has been an action that contradicts the valuation of human life, a basic democratic and social ethic. Throughout the years, various societies have responded to this insult by many crude and cruel means. The bodies of suicides have been dragged through the streets, hung naked up-side-down for public view, and impaled on a stake at a public crossroads. The dead man could not be punished, of course. But his widow and children could be.

Early British practice was to censure the suicide's family formally, deny the body burial in the church or city cemetery, and confiscate the survivor's property.

As a violation of one of the Ten Commandments, suicide has been called a crime against God, a heinous offense punishable in hell, of course, but also in man's courts.

With the rise of humanism in the eighteenth century, attitudes toward the suicidal person shifted. He came to be seen, not as a mailicious criminal, but as a lunatic. As such, he fared little better, though. The mentally disturbed have been treated as society's pariahs until only recently. Even today, they are not fully accepted.

But times and attitudes have changed. Scientists have come to take a more enlightened stand on suicide, notably in the last few decades. Although the act of suicide is still socially taboo in the Western world, fortunately education and mental health advances have encouraged its study, and the effective treatment of the suicidal has begun. Most of the early state laws outlawing suicide and punishing attempts have subsequently been revoked. Those still on the books are rarely enforced. The courts have begun to interpret suicidal deaths as results of mental disturbance. In the wake of current professional studies and news articles on their findings, the public is beginning to realize that suicides can be prevented.

Clues to suicide

Almost everyone who seriously intends suicide leaves clues to his imminent action. Sometimes there are broad hints; sometimes only subtle changes in behavior. But the suicide decision is usually not impulsive. Most often, it is premeditated. Although it might be done on impulse, and to others appear capricious, in fact, suicide is a decision that is given long consideration. It is not impossible, then, to spot a potential suicide if one only knows what to look for.

Fully three-fourths of all those who commit suicide have seen a physician within atleast four months of the day on which they take their lives. When people are suicidal, a state of mind that comes and goes, there is no single trait by which all of them can be characterized. Always, however, they are disturbed, and often they are depressed. They feel hopeless about the direction of their lives and helpless to do anything about it. Under the mammoth weight of their own pessimism, they sink to their death.

Usually their attitude reflects itself in various verbal or behavioral "clues". Most obvious are the self-pitying cries of those who threaten, "I'M going to kill myself." They usually mean it, atleast unconsciously. They just haven't decided how or when. If conditions in the suicidal person's life do not change, he will soon set the time and choose the method of his death. All verbal indications should be taken seriously. Dejected or angry asides such as "I want to die. This is the last straw...my family would be better off without me...I won't be around much longer for you to put up with"—all are real clues to suicide, and too seldom taken as such.

There are also behavioral hints, some quite obvious. A suicide attempt, no matter how feeble or unlikely to succeed, is the starkest testimony of the suicidal state. "She just wanted attention," is the exasperated comment that often follows a suicide attempt. Indeed, that is exactly what she wanted. Without it, she may well succeed in her next attampt. Four out of five persons who kill themselves have attempted to do so atleast one time previously. Of course, there are less pointed behavioral clues to suicide. Though not so readily discerned, they predict a suicide most accurately. Once a person has finally decided to kill himself, he begins to act "differently". He may withdraw to become almost monklike and contemplative. He may drastically reduce eating or refrain from conversation and ignore normal sexual drives. He may either sleep more soundly

or suffer from insomnia. He may have a will drawn up, or, often, act as if he were going on a long trip. In the final days of his life, frequently he gives away what for him have been highly valued material possessions. College students give away their skis, watches, and cameras. Wealthier men and women make outright money grants of cash to relatives and friends.

Occasionally, the situation itself may be the final straw, and is the crucial indicator of imminent suicide. People already suffering from suffocating depressions often kill themselves on learning-or believing erroneously-they have a malignant tumor. Singly, any of these rather unexpected acts or remarks is not particularly significant, but clustered, they predict suicide.

These are the clues to suicide. They are not difficult to recognize. But it is not so easy to determine just how close the troubled person actually is to a suicide attempt. Trained professional or volunteer staff members of any suicide prevention service can prevent a suicide.

The suicidal crisis

Suicidal crises almost always concern two people: the suicidal person and the "significant other." The therapist must determine who this is: father, wife, mother, lover, or whoever. The "significant other" person in his life must be made aware of the situation, and, if possible, become involved in the life-saving efforts. Sometimes, really only a little help is needed during the period of suicidal crisis. A person who verges on suicide also clings to life. Should the posture of the "significant other" momentarily shift in this crucial relationship, there is no guarantee that the story will have a happy ending. But the suicide for the moment, has been averted. Fortunately, people are not permanently suicidal. Even for those whole daily lives are as gloomy as the black despair inside their minds, the suicidal mood ebbs and flows like the tides.

Subintentioned death

There is still another aspect of death which does not appear on death certificates today. This is the "subintentioned" death. Among the modes of death listed today-natural, accident, suicide, and homocide-t here is no space for the subintentioned death. But authorities now realize that those same pressures that work fatally on the vicitims of suicide sometimes move more subtly.

No one knows how many accidental and natural deaths are caused by the subintentioned wish to die. Some people want to die, but have not reached that state where they will act consciously on a suicidal desire. Instead, they begin to live more carelessly and unconsciously imperil their lives. A chronically ill person who stops taking his life-saving medicine is an example. Depressed college students who drive recklessly are others. Fate, they seem to be saying, will make the crucial decision. But they are giving death the edge.

Generally today, these deaths are ruled as accidental. But it has been proposed that the prior attitude of the victim toward his death be assessed as intentioned, subintentioned, or unintentioned- and thus reported on the death certificate in addition to the usual cause and mode of death.

Some people are eating away at their own lives. If they do not have the resolve to commit suicide overtly, they can still offer up their lives to chance. Sooner or later, many of them will succeed in killing themselves..or permit some disease to kill them. Whether these subintentioned deaths are called accidental or natural, they are nonetheless results of death-oriented behavior. Suicide prevention efforts can also save many of these death-prone persons.

LEGAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the civil rights of dead and dying people ?
2. Are relatives required to respect the wishes of the dead person as to the funeral arrangements, donation of body parts etc. ?
3. When is a person legally dead ?
4. For what reasons is a body exhumed ?
5. For what reasons is a body given an autopsy ?
6. Must a doctor sign each death certificate ? Where are death certificates kept ?
7. Should everyone write a will ? Why ? Why not ?
8. How does a person go about writing a will ?
9. At what age should a person write a will ?
10. Why are wills contested ?
11. In what cases does the state receive the estates of dead persons ?
12. What are the laws concerning the transportation of dead bodies ?
13. How is an estate divided up if there is no will ?
14. If an individual is involved in a common law marriage, is the spouse of the dead person entitled to the estate of the latter ?
15. If a will is drawn up by a person in a very legal fashion and then on his deathbed decides to change that will on a sheet of plain paper, which will is honored ?
16. If a person is too poor to afford the burial of a dead person, who pays for the funeral expenses ?
17. Can the immediate family of a very poor person be required to assume the financial obligations or debts incurred by that person if he dies ?

P. 7

How Old Is Old?

By Anonymous

I have recently been retired. I use the passive voice deliberately. This retirement was no act of mine; it was forced upon me by a computer that simply threw up a name to be discarded. It was no act of an administrator who rationally considered the worker and her work. The worker, with an excellent record of attendance, responsibility and reliability, whose vigor and willingness were in no way diminished, had to be dismissed. The years of experience were less than nothing.

For some time I had been uneasy, aware that however fit I might be, students, growing up in a society in which the emphasis is on youth, would think of me as diseased. After all, old age is a disease in America. The aged person becomes a leper, to be put away in an institution, or, if lucky, and affluent, in an expensive colony, separated from the rest of mankind.

I found myself beginning to feel apologetic for my continuing tenure. I felt that I should do as everyone said, go away and make room for a younger person, someone with little or no experience, whose chief asset would be youth, and therefore with more right to the position.

Accordingly, when that dire notice arrived, my reaction was to disappear quietly, to let no one know that I had been struck down with that dread "disease." I was no longer an active, intelligent human being, but a supernumerary to be put out of the way. I wanted no testimonials to my condition. I was ashamed.

Walking about my own neighborhood in the light of day, I would not reveal the truth to inquiries about my idleness. I was on leave, I was writing a book, I was on sabbatical. I could not confess that I was now a relic. I edged away from organizations for the retired, shunning my own kind. I refused to take advantage of the privileges for "senior citizens," continuing to pay full fares, full charges.

But some things are unavoidable, and the whole apparatus of Social Security hit me: papers to be filled out, official ukases to be interpreted, the mimeographed word to be construed, the muddy language of the computer to be painfully transmitted to the understanding, figures to be added up again and again.

Just now, when this great change in my life is taking place, and I need a structured routine, the structure is cut down under my slipping feet. I get up in the morning, just as early, or even earlier, for now I cannot sleep, then go through the household chores, and have nothing further to do.

There is not the stimulation of a shared experience with colleagues, the preoccupation with the work. There is only the lonely house and the lonelier walk. Entertainment soon palls; the freedom of one's own time, the time that stretches endlessly, is not used. But there is also the prickling awareness that that very time is limited, that it must be used at once, or it will be gone. And then one thinks, "What the hell, let it go, it doesn't matter."

Everything seems to be coming to an end anyhow. With the cut in income there is also a cut in benefits, to which I am no longer entitled. So I begin to worry about money: Should I spend it all now—there's so little future left; or should I watch every penny, I may get sick and need private nurses; there will be no one to take care of me when I'm destitute. Should I move, can I afford it, is it worth the effort?

Then there is the question of relationships with former colleagues. I have the time, but they're working, taking on new loads; they're occupied. I must proceed carefully so as not to intrude into their precious time, careful not to injure the fragile bond, careful not to become an annoyance.

Some of these colleagues have expressed envy of my freedom. I used to bewail the fact that I had not enough free time; there were so many things I wanted to do. Now I have all that time, but not the will to do anything. I used to bake bread on those Sundays when I had five sets of papers to mark. I managed to find the time and the energy. Fatigue? It was well-earned fatigue, I had a right to pamper myself. Now I have no right, I have not earned it, I cannot go on that long trip.

The doctor tells me I am "in very good shape." My mind is teeming with ideas, but no one wants them. I don't want to fill in the time before I die. I want to use the time. I need to work, not make-work, not a hobby, not volunteer work. I need a job. I want my old job back. I was good at it.

To be considered unfit for the very job for which I was trained, in which I have many years of experience, is the cruelest kind of rejection.

Then I am truly unfit, no good at anything. There is no longer any incentive to work; there is only the overwhelming fear of further rejection. Nothing else matters, nothing else affords any kind of compensation.

The writer, who requested anonymity, was assistant professor of English in the City University system.

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LIFE AND DEATH

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

A Youth Elect Series unit for older youth

Written by Shirley J. Heckman

This resource is produced for use by senior high youth groups in Sunday evening or through-the-week meetings, in retreats and lock-ins, in summer or holiday camps and conferences. It is produced by and for the churches participating in Christian Education: Shared Approaches. Description of the unit was prepared by the youth resource team of Living the Word Approach, and approved by the publishers' team of CE:SA.

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DEATH WILL VISIT ALL ALIKE

woodcut by Hans Holbein

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

BY SHIRLEY J. HECKMAN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Christians believe that life is given to us each day as a gift from God. Our faith as Christians also enables us to accept death in our lives as a reality. The New Testament helps us to understand that, as human beings, we share in the life-death-life cycle of all of God's creation. Also in the New Testament are writings and accounts which state clearly the understanding that whether we are living or dying, whether we are dead or alive, we are the Lord's.

However, few of us take seriously preparation for our own deaths and the deaths of those we love. Apparently believing that we own our bodies, we act as though we are not going to die. Nor do we act as though we expect those we love to die, either. It is as though we expect the creator of the universe to make an exception of us and for ours. We speak in jest, as Ben Franklin is said to have done, that "in this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes." Many of us spend much more of our life energy being concerned about our taxes than we do about our deaths.

Not too many years ago, young people grew up having experienced death. People used to die younger. Sometimes people died at home. In these days, though, people are protected from death. More of the young survive. Many more live to be old. People die in hospitals rather than at home. Children and youth are barred from many hospitals.

Not only are we protected from death, we are constantly presented with distorted images of death, particularly on television. Experience of death is second-hand, robbed of much of its reality. All of us, including youth, need to confront the reality of death as a part of our lives as one of the ways of enhancing the meaning that is present with us.

In addition, the gospel centers around a life and death matter.

And now—I must remind you of the gospel that I preached to you; the gospel which you received, on which you have taken your stand, and which is now bringing your salvation. . . . I handed on to you the facts which had been imparted to me: that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised to life on the third day, according to the scriptures. (New English Bible, I Corinthians 15 selected)

Our understandings, and hence our life of faith, can be distorted by fear of death, misconceptions about death, and our inability to express our beliefs about life after death. Life can be enriched, even illuminated, as we are able to live knowing that we will surely die.

This unit provides plans and resources which can be used by and with young persons 15-19 years of age as they explore their feelings associated with death, accept the reality of death, become more sensitive to suffering and sorrow, and gain skill in being an enabling presence with those around them who experience death and dying.

It is hoped that an exploration of these life and death matters will provide an opportunity for those involved to relate to their lives more meaningfully. They may grow in their ability to receive each moment as given without fear of death but with a confident faith enriched by a Christian heritage within a Christian community.

The sessions outlined in this unit deal with questions such as:

1—Why do people have to die?
2—Is the taking of human life ever justified?
3—How can I live when I know I'm dying?
4—How can I deal with grief?
5—What is immortality about?
6—How do we relate to matters of life and death in a Christian sense?

PLANNING THIS UNIT

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

The stated purpose of this unit is to provide an opportunity for persons . . .
. . . to explore their feelings associated with death,
. . . to accept the reality of death,
. . . to become more sensitive to suffering and sorrow,
. . . to gain skill in being an enabling presence.
How does the stated purpose need to be changed so it is appropriate for your group?
How many sessions?
How long each session?
Who is going to be involved?

Who will do the planning and provide the leadership? Persons learn more if they are involved in planning for their own learning. If your group doesn't already have a way for youth involvement in planning, think of three or four of the youth who could work with you on details for this learning experience.

What resources are needed for planning? Consider having enough copies of this book so each of the persons involved in the planning process and in leadership will have one to use.

Steps in Planning

In the following description, it is assumed that more than one person will be involved in the planning process. That is not re-stated in each of the steps. Wherever the word "you" is used, read it as a plural "you" including both youth and adults who are doing planning.

1. Read quickly through the whole book. Note places that caught your attention, making a preliminary list of the sessions, ideas and page numbers. Mark in the book those activities that seem to you to be appropriate in your group.

2. Re-read the section on alternatives given below the session outlines which follow this listing of steps in planning. Consider which of these would be exciting and/or helpful in your group.

3. Talk together. Share ideas about what each of you thinks will be workable. Make newsprint or chalkboard lists by sessions.

4. Decide which activities will accomplish the purpose you have agreed to.

5. Look carefully at the worship resources provided. Re-write the ideas in your own words. Put the prayers into more contemporary language if that is better for your group. Worship, if it really is worship instead of simply saying words, happens out of one's own experience, so adapt what is suggested so it becomes appropriate for your situation.

6. Decide on what leadership is needed for each activity chosen. Make assignments for leader roles and functions.

7. Order films, filmstrips, other resources in advance. If you expect persons to read related books, be sure to have them available ahead of time.

8. Figure out some way of evaluating what happens. Some possibilities

—Use the questionnaire in Learning Resource #3, page 10, as a before and after check to see what changes happened.
—Note what biblical events, poetry, music appear to have been meaningful through identifying what was included in funeral (memorial) services and used in creative art and/or writing.
—Be aware of the ways in which the participants respond in role plays with supportive and nurturing behavior.
—Be aware of times when the group is a community which answers yearnings of persons, offering fulfillment of their needs to belong, to love and be loved, to communicate and to commune with others. Evidence of these experiences can be found in the ways they respond to each other, whether and how they listen, how deeply they are willing to share with each other, ways of responding to someone who cries or expresses emotion.

Any evaluation must necessarily be related to the objectives chosen. Because of the arenas of life on which this unit touches, the purposes of the sessions as outlined and for the unit as a whole are necessarily abstract. As you are doing planning, think about and plan for ways in which you, the planners, can evaluate what happens to persons during these learning experiences.

9. Relax and have fun. The planning itself and the experiences planned are more likely to be effective and moving if they are fun to experience. Humor, laughing, smiling are all ways of relieving tension within a group as well as being very human ways of responding to life and death matters.

SIX POSSIBLE SESSIONS

Session I—Why Do People Have to Die?

This session provides an opportunity for sharing attitudes about death, exploring images of life and death, and dealing with the inescapability of death.

I. 10 min.—Introducing the unit and session.

II. 15 min.—Listening to one idea about immortality and responding to it.

III. 35 min.—Filling out a questionnaire and talking about it.

IV. 20 min.—Using and discussing statistical charts.

V. 10 Min.—Worship.

Session II—Is the Taking of Human Life Ever Justified?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for identifying one's own values related to capital punishment, suicide, murder, abortion and/or euthanasia.

I. 10 min.—Introduction.

15-20 minutes considering three/four of the following:

II. Capital punishment.
III. Suicide.
IV. Murder.
V. Abortion.
VI. Euthanasia.
VII. 10 min.—Worship.

Session III—How Can I Live When I Know I'm Dying?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for finding out about the stages of response to impending death, identifying emotional and psychological needs of the terminally ill person, and experimenting with ways of relating supportively with terminally ill persons.

I. 5 min.—Introduction.

II. 25 min.—Hearing the story of Betsy, who knew she was dying and discussing memories of those in a youth group with her.

III. 10 min.—Identifying the stages of response to the knowledge of impending death.

IV. 40 minutes—Practicing ways of relating to a terminally ill person.

V. 10 min.—Worship.

Session IV—How Can I Deal With Grief?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for recognizing the need to grieve, for thinking about ways of responding to one who grieves and beginning to plan a funeral service.

I. 10 min.—Introduction.
30 min. doing either II or III.
II. Writing a letter of condolence.
III. Role-playing situations involving grief.
IV. 40 min.—Beginning to plan a funeral.
V. 10 min.—Worship.

Session V—What Is Immortality About?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for becoming aware of the means through which persons create a sense of immortality and considering examples of the modes of immortality.

I. 20 min.—Considering how life would be if we didn't die.
II. 10 min.—Identifying "modes of immortality."
III. 50 min.—Choose among the following:
1) biological—20 minutes.
2) creative (a) list people remembered—20 minutes. (b) read and write obituaries—20 minutes or go on a field trip to a graveyard.
3) natural—10 minutes.
IV. 10 min.—Worship.

Session VI—How Do We Relate to Matters of Life and Death in a Christian Sense?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for reflection on the reports of those near death about the passage from life to death, for discussion of biblical accounts of the resurrection, and for struggling with our understandings of life and death in a Christian sense.

I. 5 min.—Introduction and review.

II. 25 min.—Consideration of reports of those near death.

III. 45 min.—Bible study of resurrection accounts and faith statements.

IV. 15 min.—Worship.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

To be used instead of or in addition to those suggested in the session outlines:

1. Create a slide-tape show that picks up on the themes of the sessions. Maybe something like:
...explanation of death to children who are 5-8 years old in story form.
...death as a part of the life cycle.
...images that express the modes of immortality.
Find a time to share the group's creation with others in the congregation—perhaps as a part of worship, a family night supper, an adult church school class, etc.

2. Take an opinion poll of persons in the congregation, perhaps using Learning Resource #3 and comparing the answers of the adults and the youth and talking with some of the people who answered about the differences and similarities. Include in a survey of persons in the congregation questions about their favorite funeral hymns, Scripture, music and other resources. Also include questions about preferences about cremation, burial, having the body present at a service or not. Ask about preparation for death like making a will and planning a funeral service.

3. Get a lawyer or estate planner to come to talk with your group and your parents about why people need to make wills and what's involved in estate planning.

4. Listen to music like the requiems of Berlioz, Verdi, Mozart or any other that persons know or can find that is expressive of ideas related to death and dying.

5. Use films or filmstrips instead of some activity listed in a session. See pages 31-32 for some possibilities. You may know of others. Be sure to check far enough in advance that you can be sure of the schedule that you want.

6. Watch the television listings for programs that are dealing with any of the issues that are touched in this unit. Plan for ways in which you can watch the program together and talk about it.

7. Ask people to read books written about people who are dying and report to the group. See the listing on page 32 for some suggestions. You may know of others.

8. Create your own original drama out of James Agee's ***Death in the Family*** and present it as a reading play.

9. Read poetry like that of Dylan Thomas ***And Death Shall Have No Dominion*** or ***Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*** or Robert Frost's ***The Death of the Hired Man*** or John Donne's ***Death Be Not Proud*** or John Greenleaf Whittier's ***Love Can Never Lose Its Own*** or ***The Eternal Goodnsss***. Ask a teacher of literature at school for other ideas.

10. Create your own poetry as a response to life and death matters. Check in poetry books. Ask your literature teacher at school for help. Try different forms of poetry—sonnet, haiku, free-verse, etc.

11. As a response to poetry, music, moving prose that may already be included in the sessions, consider these ways . . .
...illustrate them in a variety of art forms.
...set them to music.
...write a letter to the creator of the poem, prose, music affirming or disagreeing with the point expressed, giving your reasons.

12. Consider making some of the suggested activities into learning centers.

SESSION I—WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE?

This session provides an opportunity for sharing attitudes about death, exploring images of life and death, and dealing with the inescapability of death.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 10 min.—Introducing the unit and session—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and "Asher Lev."

II. 15 min.—Listening to one idea about immortality and responding to it—"The Immortal Ones of Luggnagg"—from Gulliver's Travels.

III. 45 min.—Filling in a questionnaire and talking about it.

IV. 10 min.—Using and discussing statistical charts.

V. 10 min.—Worship.

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. INTRODUCING THE UNIT AND SESSION

Before doing this activity:

1. Ask three persons to be ready to read the parts of the narrator, Asher and Papa in Learning Resource #1, "My Name Is Asher Lev" (p.8).
2. Ask someone to be ready to read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

Begin by saying something like:

To introduce our study, let's listen to two witnesses—one from the ancient past out of the Old Testament and another from modern time. As these two selections are read, listen to what they are saying about life and death, about death and dying.

After both selections have been read, have each read again separately. After the second reading of the Ecclesiastes passage, ask questions such as:

What words or phrases do you remember?

What times in your own experience come to mind during the reading?

After the second reading from Asher Lev, ask questions such as:

Have you had experiences similar to that of Asher?

Do you agree that something that is yours forever is never precious?

II. LISTENING TO ONE IDEA ABOUT IMMORTALITY AND TALKING ABOUT IT

Before doing this activity:

1. Ask someone to be ready to read Learning Resource #2, "The Struldbruggs, " (p. 9).

Let's listen to another piece of literature which provides some images about immortality. This one raises the possibility of never dying. In Gulliver's Travels, ***Jonathan Swift, the author, has his hero visiting many strange places. One of the places was the island of Luggnagg. Listen to this description of Gulliver's visit to Luggnagg.***

After the reading of "The Struldbruggs, the Immortal Ones of Luggnagg," ask questions and make comments such as:

Does this version of immortality seem reasonable to you? List ways in which your ideas about "never dying" would be different from these.

What would happen to religious experience in the Christian sense if humans never died? Would the Christian message of life after death, life in spite of death, make any sense?

If the group is unable or unwilling to answer these questions, indicate that our study together will continue to deal with issues such as these.

III. FILLING IN A QUESTIONNAIRE AND TALKING ABOUT IT

Before doing this activity:

1. Have copies of the questionnaire, Learning Resource #3, (pp. 10-11) available.
2. Be sure pencils are available and that there is a place on which to write such as tables or books, magazines that can be held on their laps.

Pass out the questionnaire. Say something such as:

To get at some of our own ideas about death, dying, and life in spite of death, let's use a questionnaire that may raise some questions about our opinions on these issues. Mark the questionnaire with your name or some other mark of identification. At the end of our study, we may want to use this same questionnaire to tell ourselves what changes, if any, might have been made in our ideas. Please fill in the questionnaire without talking about it. Have the answers be your own responses. There are no right or wrong answers. After everyone has finished marking the questionnaire, we'll talk together about some of the ideas on it. If you have questions, raise your hand and we will try to answer them. Work as quickly as possible, putting down the first responses that come to mind.

After they are through marking the questionnaire, go through it, choosing some of the questions and answers for group sharing. Questions such as #1, #5, #7, and #8 appear to be relatively easy to talk about. With Question #1, ask persons to raise their hands as you read each of the possible answers. If any are willing, ask them to tell about their first personal involvement with death. With Question #5, ask persons to stand in the four corners of the room with those who answered the question the same way. Ask one person in each of the four groups to share a reason for the answer given. With Question #7, again have persons stand in the four corners of the room, giving comments on their answers. With Question #8, ask persons to stand along an imaginary line with "yes" at one end, "no" at the other and "it depends" in the center. Ask persons to tell why they answered as they did. If there are other questions that persons want to discuss, feel free to do so. Be careful that one person is not allowed to dominate the discussion but that as many as want to have the opportunity to share.

IV. USING STATISTICAL CHARTS

Before doing this activity:

1. Draw Charts A and B on newsprint or a chalkboard. You might want to duplicate them for each person to use.

Note: all figures are for the U.S.A. and are 1974 data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

CHART A

LIFE EXPECTANCY

	year born	male	female
Yourself	1960	67	73
Your parents	1940	61	65
	1930	58	62

CHART B

LIFE EXPECTANCY, at age 15

	whites	all others
Females	63	59
Males	56	50

After looking at Charts A and B, ask questions such as:

What differences are there between males and females? between people your age and the age of your parents? between whites and others?

What significance is there in these differences?

V. REFLECTION AND WORSHIP

Before doing this activity:

1. If hymns suggested are not familiar to your group, choose other similar ones.
2. Ask persons to take part in the leadership during worship ahead of time in order that they may be prepared. Different persons might be asked to be worship leader, be song leader, and lead in prayer.

The following ideas, resources and prayers are suggested for worship. Feel free to substitute others and to make changes that will make the experience of worship happen in your group.

WORSHIP LEADER: ***As our invitation to worship, let us listen to the words of the psalmist from Psalm 90:1-6, 9-10.***

HYMN: GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY or O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

PRAYER: ***O thou great God, who brought us into being and who sustains us throughout all of life, enable us as we consider these issues of death and life to fear not death. We know that each moment we live is given as a gift from you, God. May our contemplation of our own death and that of those we love be undergirded with a sense of your power and mercy. Make us sensitive to the value of what we have that we may be open to your love flowing through us. In the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.***

LEARNING RESOURCE #1

NARRATOR — . . . my father looked at a bird lying on its side against the curb near our house.

ASHER—Is it dead, Papa?

NARRATOR—I was six and could not bring myself to look at it.

PAPA—Yes.

NARRATOR—I heard him say in a sad and direct way.

ASHER—Why did it die?

PAPA—Everything that lives must die.

ASHER—Everything?

PAPA—Yes.

ASHER—You too, Papa? And Mama?

PAPA—Yes.

ASHER—And me?

PAPA—Yes.

NARRATOR—Then he added in Yiddish.

PAPA—But may it be only after you live a long and good life, my Asher.

NARRATOR—I could not grasp it. I forced myself to look at the bird. Everything alive would one day be as still as that bird?

ASHER—Why?

PAPA—That's the way the Ribbono Shel Olom made the world, Asher.

ASHER—Why?

PAPA—So life would be precious, Asher. Something that is yours forever is never precious.

From MY NAME IS ASHER LEV, by Chaim Potok. Copyright © 1972 by Chaim Potok. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

LEARNING RESOURCE #2

THE STRULDBRUGGS, THE IMMORTAL ONES OF LUGGNAGG

Gulliver in his travels came to Luggnagg. Among the people living on this island were the Struldbruggs who were immortals. They lived among mortals.

Upon hearing about the immortals but before meeting any of them, Gulliver was very excited about the possibilities of immortality and gave a great speech. In it he stated the possibilities of living forever, of not dying as ordinary mortals do. He would choose a dozen of them, from the most ancient to contemporaries. His choice would be of those whose remembrance, experience and observation was astute and who had led lives of useful virtue both publicly and privately. He listed the advantages of such a long-range point of view, of being able to re-experience history, of great discoveries which could be made through such interaction. He enlarged on many topics "which the natural Desire of endless Life and . . . Happiness could easily furnish me with."

When he had ended, his speech was translated. There was some laughter during the interpreter's translation. Finally, the interpreter "said, he was desired by the rest to set me right in a few Mistakes, which I had fallen into through the common Imbecility of human Nature, . . ."

The interpreter then began to tell Gulliver about the Struldbruggs, starting with comments about his observation during his travels away from Luggnagg that long life is the universal desire and wish of all people except the people of Luggnagg for whom "the Appetite for living was not so eager, from the continual Example of the Struldbruggs before their Eyes." The Interpreter pointed out that Gulliver had, in his statements, "supposed a Perpetuity of Youth, Health, and Vigour, which no Man could be so foolish to hope, however extravagant he might be in his Wishes. That, the Question therefore was not whether a Man would chuse to be always in the Prime of Youth, attended with Prosperity and Health; but how he would pass a perpetual Life under all the usual Disadvantages which old Age brings along with it."

After this introduction, the interpreter gave the following account of the Struldbruggs who "commonly acted like Mortals, until about Thirty Years old, after which by Degrees they grew melancholy and dejected, increasing in both until they came to Fourscore." When they got to be eighty years old, which is the normal life span of mortals on Luggnagg, they had all the "follies and infirmities" of the old and more which arose from the dreadful prospect of never dying. "They were not only opinionative, peevish, covetous, morose, vain, talkative; but uncapable of Friendship, and dead to all natural Affection, which never descended below their Grand-children."

At eighty, their marriages were dissolved. They were declared dead legally so their heirs could inherit. They were put on a small allowance, which they supplemented through asking for a token of remembrance called a SLUMSKUDASK as a way of getting around the laws forbidding begging. They were unemployable, not able to purchase land or take leases nor be witnesses in court.

At ninety, along with losing their teeth and hair, they have lost their memories. When they talk, they forget names of things. They can't read because their memories fail between the beginning and the end of the sentence. Because the language of the country is always changing, they lose the ability to communicate after about two hundred years. They are despised and hated and the birth of a Struldbrugg who is born with a particular mark on the face is considered ominous. "Besides the usual Deformities in extreme old Age, they acquired an additional Ghastliness in Proportion to their Number of Years, which is not to be described."

Gulliver moves into the conclusion of this description by saying "the Reader will easily believe, that from what I had heard and seen, my keen Appetite for Perpetuity of Life was much abated. I grew heartily ashamed of the pleasing Visions I had formed; and thought no Tyrant could invent a Death into which I would not run with Pleasure from such a Life."

From Jonathan Swift, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, Part III, Chapter X, p. 177-184, Norton Critical Editions, N 301

LEARNING RESOURCE #3

1. Who died in your first personal involvement with death?
___A. Grandparent or great-grandparent
___B. Parent
___C. Brother or sister
___D. Other family member
___E. Friend or acquaintance
___F. Stranger
___G. Public figure
___H. Animal

2. To the best of your memory, at what age were you first aware of death?
___A. Under three years of age
___B. Three to five years of age
___C. Five to ten years of age
___D. Ten years old or older

3. When you were a child, how was death talked about in your family?
___A. Openly
___B. With some sense of discomfort
___C. Only when necessary and then with an attempt to exclude the children
___D. As though it were a taboo subject
___E. Never recall any discussion

4. In your opinion, at what age are people most afraid of death?
___A. Up to 12 years
___B. Thirteen to 19 years
___C. Twenty to 39 years
___D. Forty to 59 years
___E. Sixty years and older

5. If you could choose, when would you die?
___A. In youth
___B. In middle age, prime of life
___C. Just after the prime of life
___D. In old age

6. If you had a choice, what kind of death would you prefer?
___A. Tragic, violent death
___B. Sudden but not violent death
___C. Quiet, dignified death
___D. Suicide
___E. Homicidal victim
___F. There is no 'appropriate' kind of death
___G. Other (specify) _____

7. What efforts do you believe ought to be made to keep a seriously ill person alive?
___A. All possible effort, transplantations, kidney dialysis, etc.
___B. Efforts that are reasonable for that person's age, physical condition, mental condition, and pain
___C. After reasonable care has been given, a person ought to be permitted to die a natural death
___D. A senile person should not be kept alive by elaborate artificial means

8. Would you want to be told if you had a terminal disease and a limited time to live?
___A. Yes
___B. No
___C. It would depend on the circumstances

9. If you were told that you had a limited time to live, how would you want to spend your time until you died?
___A. I would satisfy my pleasure needs (travel, sex, drugs, other experiences)
___B. I would become withdrawn—reading, contemplating, praying
___C. I would be concerned for others (family, friends)
___D. I would attempt to complete projects; tie up loose ends
___E. I would make little or no change in my life-style
___F. I would consider committing suicide
___G. I would do none of these

10. How important do you believe mourning and grief rituals (such as funerals and wakes) are for the survivors?
___A. Extremely important
___B. Somewhat important
___C. Undecided or don't know
___D. Not very important
___E. Not important at all

11. If it were entirely up to you, how would you like to have your body disposed of after you die?
___A. Burial
___B. Cremation
___C. Donation to medical school or science
___D. I don't care

12. To what extent do you believe in a life after death?
___A. Strongly believe in it
___B. Tend to believe in it
___C. Uncertain
___D. Tend to doubt it
___E. Convinced it doesn't exist

13. What does death mean to you?
___A. The end, the final process of life
___B. The beginning of a life after death, a transition, a new beginning
___C. The joining of the spirit with a universal cosmic consciousness
___D. A kind of endless sleep, rest and peace
___E. Termination of this life but with survival of the spirit
___F. Don't know
___G. Other (specify) _____

14. What effect has this questionnaire had on you?
___A. It has made me somewhat anxious and upset
___B. It has made me think about my own death
___C. It has reminded me how fragile and precious life is
___D. No effect at all
___E. Other (specify) _____

SESSION II—IS THE TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE EVER JUSTIFIED?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for identifying one's own values related to capital punishment, suicide, murder, abortion and/or euthanasia.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 10 min.—Introduction. 15-20 minutes on considering three or four of the following:

A—Capital punishment—"Vigil at Utah State Prison."
B—Suicide.
C—Murder "Double-death survivor."
D—Abortion.
E—Euthanasia—a role-play.

II. 10 min.—Concluding comments and worship.

Before doing this activity:

1. Decide which of the areas suggested should be used during the session. Your introduction will be determined by your decision. You may want to be prepared for all five discussion areas and have the group decide the order in which they want to consider the issues.

2. You might want to print out the suggested Scripture or have someone use them as the basis for posters. You would then have them in front of the group during the whole discussion.

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. INTRODUCTION—Say something like:

Last week we talked about how death comes to us all. This week we want to talk about killing, about ways in which human life is taken and what, if anything, the resources of the Christian faith can provide to us. To get started with our exploration, let's make a list of ways in which human life can be taken other than through natural causes or accidents. (Some possible answers might be—abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, murder, suicide, war.)

Indicate or determine with the group the areas with which the session will be concerned. Then say something like:

First, let's get a context from the Scripture about killing and the taking of human life. Read the following in unison or responsively with half of the group reading each phrase:

EXODUS 20:13
ROMANS 14:7-8
I CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

A. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Recall the Gary Mark Gilmore case in which he was executed in January '77. In the days just prior to his execution, a group of persons protesting the resumption of executions held a vigil at Utah State Prison. Have someone read from Learning Resource #4 (p. 15) excerpts from an article written by Sylvia Eller who participated in that vigil. After the reading, use the following information not quoted from the article as a basis for discussion:

In other parts of that article, Sylvia Eller gave four reasons why she opposes the death penalty. Listen to her reasons and think about whether you agree or disagree with her point of view:

1. The death penalty is used primarily against those who are male, black, poor and poorly represented. Of approximately 350 persons currently on death row, almost half are black, only a handful are female, almost all are poor.

2. The finality of the death penalty. Innocent persons have been deprived of their lives because of faulty evidence or prejudiced juries.

3. The act of killing brings into question the consistency of our values. If we hold that life is sacred, how can we take the lives of those who have already shown their disregard for the lives of others?

4. Only a few of those who murder someone else are executed. Between 1930 and 1970, 50,000 first degree murders were committed but only 3334 people were put to death for these murders. Do you agree or disagree with her reasons? Why or why not?

B. SUICIDE

Choose which of the following fits your group.

1) Suicides among young people have increased in the past twenty years:

SUICIDES PER 100,000 for AGES 15-24

	1950	1960	1970
White females	2.7	2.3	4.2
Other females	1.7	1.5	4.1
White males	6.6	8.6	13.9
Other males	5.3	5.3	11.3

Suicide rate for all ages combined is 16.0.

After looking at the chart, ask questions such as:

Firearms were used as the means of suicide by 58% of all males and 30% of all females in 1970. How might gun control legislation affect the rate of suicide?

What factors can you think of that might account for the increase in number of suicides among young people?

What are some reasons why persons might commit suicide?

How might a youth group be supportive of each other when some of the identified 'reasons for suicide' are present in a person's life?

2) Ask if any of the group have known anyone who committed suicide. If they are able and willing to do so, ask them to share the story. As the story is shared or afterward, ask questions such as:

Did the person threaten to commit suicide?

What appeared to be the cause of the action?

What might be factors that would influence a person considering suicide not to do it?

3) Check with the pastor about whether "suicide" funerals have been conducted. If so, ask the pastor to share with the group. Appropriate questions might be:

How do the funerals for suicides differ from others?

What ways might be helpful to families of those who commit suicide?

4) In addition to the above ideas, or instead of them if the group hasn't had experience with suicides personally or is unable or unwilling to talk about such experiences, use the biblical stories of Saul and Judas as a means of considering some of the same issues raised above. I. Samuel 31:3-4 and Matthew 27:3-8. Discuss the situation of each and how despair over feeling there were no other possibilities might have driven them to suicide.

C. MURDER

1) Biblical stories about murder include the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:8-11) and the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18). "Am I my brother's keeper?" could be related to our need to take responsibility for persons around the world who have less than we do. Others starve while we waste food; thus, indirectly, we are also murderers. Herod's fear and rage could be connected with that of the Nazis in their extermination of the Jews. Neither of these biblical incidents would be easy to consider with youth.

2) Have someone read Learning Resource #5 "Double death" survivor (p. 15). After the group hears the story, ask questions such as:

If this situation had been developing in our community, how might we have been helpful so Mary Anderson might not have been driven to murder her husband?

What could have been done?

Are there persons in your neighborhood or congregation with whom you could relate—before it's too late to help?

What are some concrete ways in which youth might relate with older people so their desperation and isolation might be lessened?

Before doing this activity:

1. Decide which of the suggested activities would be most appropriate for your group. If you decide to use the chart, make a copy of it on newsprint or the chalkboard.

2. Chart information from U. S. National Center for Health Statistics.

Before doing this activity:

1. Check to see if your denomination has made a statement on abortion. If so, you will want to use it in this discussion.

D. ABORTION

Ask the group to list some of the issues related to abortion. Some answers might be—an unwillingness to take any human life, the question about when the fetus becomes or is human, bringing unwanted children into the world, possible damage to the mother's health or life, the unwillingness of women to bear children that are the result of rape.

If discussion develops around any of the areas listed, encourage it. If not, raise further question by asking the group members to identify the point at which the fetus becomes human. When this was considered by a group of eighth-graders in a church in Idaho, their range of answers included: at conception, when the mother feels the baby move, when the child is born, when the child begins to talk since that is a primary difference between humans and other animals.

Before doing this activity:

1. Consider having the situation written out on a chart or duplicated so group members have it available for easy reference during the role-play.

E. EUTHANASIA—(Mercy-killing)

The Karen Quinlan case received much publicity when the courts were trying to decide if her parents had the right to remove her from life-sustaining machinery. With the development of more sophisticated medical equipment and with increased questioning about when life really ends, that same kind of decision must be made by many people. Ask the group to consider the following situation:

Your 23-year-old sister is on equipment which keeps her alive but in great pain. She is unable to have medication for the pain because it exaggerates her condition. Although she has been patient with her increasingly painful physical situation for the four years since it first developed, she is now asking to have the equipment removed. She says that she wants to be allowed to die in peace. Your family has decided to allow that to happen. One of the members of the youth group has said that your family's decision is the same as murder.

Ask two volunteers to play the parts of the two youth-group members. Continue the role-play only a few minutes before stopping it to allow the group to reflect on it. Ask each of the persons in the role-play to share with the group how it felt to be in that role. Invite the group members to ask questions of the role-players. Ask the whole group questions such as:

What understandings about the Christian faith were evident in the role-play?

How does the Scripture which we looked at earlier (see Activity I above) relate to this situation?

After talking about the first role-play, ask another pair to try it. Follow the second playing of the roles with sharing by the players of their feelings. Ask the group questions such as:

How did this playing differ from the first?

What learnings are there for us in this experience?

II. CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND WORSHIP

Conclude the session prior to worship by saying something like:

During this session we have looked at the question of whether the taking of human life is ever justified. We have identified some of the times and situations in which persons have decided to take their own lives or that of others. Regardless of our uncertainties about the issues we've been considering, the resources of the Christian faith provide us with an operating framework within which to live. Out of that conviction, let us turn now to a time of worship.

HYMN: SAVIOUR, LIKE A SHEPHERD LEAD US and/or GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH

PSALM 130:1-6—consider using the King James Version because of its particular poetry.

PRAYER: ***O thou who has created us free beings, lessen our times of despair. Let us experience the light of your forgiveness in the dark moments which come to us all. Protect us from our own anger and that of others. Be with those who feel impelled to strike out at themselves and at others that they may see possibilities for action other than the taking of human life. May we rest confident in the knowledge that whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Send us forth as those who experience your redemptive power, your undemanding forgiveness, and your overwhelming love. In the name of the Christ. Amen.***

LEARNING RESOURCE #4

VIGIL AT UTAH STATE PRISON

"We, the undersigned, are here as representatives of national religious bodies to join with persons of this State and this community who are compelled by their faith to witness against the use of power by government to impose the penalty of death as punishment for wrongdoing.

"We are deeply concerned that this nation is facing the resumption of executions, after nearly a ten-year moratorium, by the scheduled execution of Mr. Gary Mark Gilmore at sunrise on Monday, January 17, 1977, at the Utah State Prison."

Our all-night vigil began at sunset Sunday evening, January 16, with a worship service. Some 50 people gathered just outside the prison gates to ask for God's forgiveness and mercy—for ourselves, for the nation, for the executioners, for Gary Gilmore, and for the families of his victims. Our religious witness against the death penalty was embodied in the concept that no person is beyond God's reach, that God desires life rather than death.

I think the feelings of the group were best summed up by several lines of a prayer from the night before: "In your eyes, O God, no one is ultimately incorrigible, and no one beyond the reach of your redemptive power, your forgiveness, and your love. Therefore we pray for all those across this nation facing death at the hands of the state, mostly the nobodies, the poor, the powerless, the beaten, the unskilled. It is for them we pray, as we pray for Gary Mark Gilmore, whom you love."

Excerpts from an article by Sylvia Eller, Criminal Justice Coordinator, World Ministries Commission, Church of the Brethren, published in the April 1977 issue of ***Messenger***.

LEARNING RESOURCE #5

"DOUBLE DEATH" SURVIVOR

They'll look after Mary now, but too late to help.

Ernst Anderson used to enjoy sitting in his wheelchair on the small porch behind his second-floor apartment, watching the neighbor's kids play in the yard next door.

Mary did it all. She took care of Ernst, and his body and mind failed. She kept the house, kept him clean. At 76, and suffering terribly from arthritis, she asked no help for her 83-year-old invalid husband.

And nobody offered.

Somewhere along the line it got to be too much for her; no one knows just when.

It happened during the early evening of Feb. 3, sometime before dark in the apartment at 4214 W. Cullom Avenue. Mary must have prepared, laying both a knife and a razor near her husband. Then she took the razor and cut her husband's throat, elbows, and wrists.

Then Mary turned the razor on herself, slicing at both arms, as deeply as she could into her wrists and elbows. Perhaps it was the fear or the pain that held her back, for those cuts didn't do the job. She lived.

Police say Mary called them to the apartment that night. She apparently had passed out, awakened much later, and decided to seek help.

Now, when there's little that can be done, some of Mary's neighbors are worried about her, worried she'll have to suffer the agony of a trial for killing her husband.

Someone will look after Mary Anderson from here on—the government, a hospital, or the prison system.

Some of the folks on Cullom Avenue are sorry for that. Just as they're sorry for an attitude they've shared with thousands of others, an attitude phrased by a sad-faced young girl:

"Nobody wants to be bothered with old people."

Excerpts from an article by Robert Unger, Chicago Tribune, Sunday, February 20, 1977, Section 1, page 8.

SESSION III—HOW CAN I LIVE WHEN I KNOW I'M DYING?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for finding out about the stages of response to impending death, identifying emotional and psychological needs of the terminally ill person, and experimenting with ways of relating supportively with terminally ill persons.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 5 min.—Introduction.

II. 25 min.—Hearing the story of Betsy, who knew she was dying, and discussing memories of those in a youth group with her.

III. 50 min.—Identifying the stages of response to the knowledge of impending death and practicing ways of relating to a terminally ill person.

IV. 10 min.—Worship.

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. INTRODUCTION—Say something like:

Betsy Ziegler was 16 when she died a few days after Easter 1974, after eight years of struggle with leukemia. She and her family were active members of a Church of the Brethren congregation. At her funeral, a friend of hers made the following witness:

"Friendship can't die. Betsy's still very real to me and always will be. Growing up together we learned about things that can't be taught in any other way than to live them. Her illness added another dimension to her life. Each new experience was to her a challenge whether it was a barrier to climb or another friend to love. She was willing to share those experiences with me and with others. From her sharing we discovered a lot. She had so much to give and she really did give. That was simply the kind of person she was all her life."

During this session, we are going to hear a statement Betsy made about the meaning of Easter to her and consider the comments which the friend just quoted and others said about her three years after her death. Then we'll look at the stages of response that have been identified as those which persons who know they are dying go through. Finally we will practice some ways of responding supportively with terminally ill persons.

Betsy's friend continued her witness with:

"What moved me most was the tape recording which Betsy made on what Easter means to her. I smiled as she talked of other Easters because I remembered so vividly what she went through in her triumphs over her sickness. Then I ached as she touched a little on her agony, and I remembered how many times it threw her down, again and again. When the tape had finished, I was in tears. The tears were unique to anything I have ever felt. They were not tears of sorrow or joy or happiness or pain or any other emotion and yet they were somehow all of those things together. I can only try to describe them as tears of life and acceptance of everything life means. It was a totally new feeling, but I think it explained to me what life is all about—so today I can rejoice, not in Betsy's death, but in her life.

Before doing this activity:

1. Decide who is to read Betsy's statement, Learning Resource #6, page 18.

2. Consider having different persons read the comments of the youth group members on Learning Resource #7, page 18.

3. Check the listing on pages 31-32 for books and movies that may be mentioned.

II. Hearing Betsy's statement on Easter and comments made three years after her death by those in her youth group.

On Easter Sunday 1974 only a few days before she died, Betsy's tape-recorded short statement on "What Easter Means to Me" was heard. It was part of the focus for the worship "Morning Has Broken" which was evident in the arrangement of the worship center, the music, and the other words of the service. In a voice made slightly hoarse and gruff from medication, pain and intensity, she said:

Have someone read her statement. Be ready to receive any comments made after the reading. Some people may be in tears. Be ready for the young people to explore their feelings. When the group appears ready, say something like:

On Easter 1977 eight of the young people who had known Betsy gathered to talk about their memories of her life and death. Listen to what they said:

Have persons read the comments. Again, be ready for conversation about persons that your youth may know or have known who were in similar situations.

Ask whether any recall books or movies about persons who knew they were dying. Ask how persons who were family and friends to the dying ones reacted to the situations.

III. Read through or have someone else read through the descriptions of stages of response. Then divide the group into five sections and do either or both of the following: Role-play being with a person who is terminally ill or complete sentences about responses. Say something like:

Let's divide into five sections and draw numbers from a box (hat, whatever) to get the section's assignment of a stage with which to work. In each section decide which of the following your small group wants to do:

1. Role-play the visit to the hospital or the arrival of the ill person at a meeting of the youth group.

2. Complete the sentence: "In talking with someone who is in the (assigned) stage of response to impending death, I would . . . " Work for 10 minutes and be ready to share with the rest of the group your work. Identify which stage of response you are working with. If completing sentences, write them out on newsprint so the whole group can see them.

Encourage the small groups to use their imaginations and feel free to respond honestly. Receive the work from each group, moving in order through the stages. After all have been presented, ask questions such as:

Which responses felt to you as though they'd feel good if you were the dying person? In the role-plays, how did it feel to be the one playing the dying person? Were the ways suggested helpful in your opinion? If we were doing it again, how would you change your responses? What changes would you suggest in the work of other groups?

IV. REFLECTION AND WORSHIP

Picking up on their responses out of their work, move the group toward worship with singing. "Morning Has Broken" was a favorite of Betsy's as was "Amazing Grace."

Psalm 46

John 16:20-22, 33

Hymn: Abide With Me, My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Prayer: *O Thou who sees all the suffering, injustice, and misery in the world, have pity, we implore thee, on the work of Thy hands. Fill our hearts with deep compassion for those who suffer and hasten the coming of your kingdom of justice and truth. In the midst of our selfish attention to our own wants, pains and needs, enable us to be present to others that we may respond in patience, humility, and love to the wants, pains, and needs of others. In the name of the one who suffered on our behalf, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Before doing this activity:

1. List on a chart or chalkboard, the stages of response to knowledge of impending death:
   DENIAL
   ANGER
   BARGAINING
   DEPRESSION
   ACCEPTANCE
   And through it all, HOPE

2. Have written out the descriptions of the five stages given on Learning Resource #8, page 19. If you are able to mimeograph or photocopy the whole list, do so. If you must make only a single list, be sure to include the "And through it all: Hope" paragraph with each of the stage descriptions.

LEARNING RESOURCE #6

A statement made by 16-year-old Betsy Ziegler a few days before her death.

Easter for me the past couple of years has meant much pain and sorrow, happiness and change.

Easter of '72 I think I learned much of the real meaning of Easter. The summer before I had become sick at the St. Petersburg conference and with treatment lost all my hair. I'd gone through a winter of much fear and unhappiness, wearing a wig and trying to fit back into society.

On Easter morning I'd spent all the day before making a special new dress to wear with my special new hair. The day was beautiful and sunny with a little breeze blowing, and after the service a friend and I went outside. The feeling was something I'll never be able to describe. I felt alive again in the beautiful sunshine with the breeze blowing through my hair. A feeling of new life and real joy filled me and I felt I knew part of the real meaning of Easter.

Easter the next year brought sickness again with my first treatment of radiation on Good Friday. On Easter Day I felt miserable, with my eye swollen so badly I was ashamed to be seen. The next day I was put into the University of Chicago Hospitals to remain for over a month.

But after I got over the first treatment of radiation I felt quite well and was able to be up and about. The whole hospital experience was something I'll never forget. I learned a special kind of faith. In meeting a wonderful friend who had a beautiful faith in me and all mankind, I learned what it is really like to never give up hope.

Again my hair came out, but this time I was able to make the experience work in my favor—to learn to be truthful with people, to trust in them as I would want them to trust in me. I'll never forget some of Maxine's last words to me: "And, please, Betsy, never give up hope." And she herself kept up this hope until her death in early August of this past summer.

This Easter again finds me sick, but the love of many wonderful friends and family has kept me going. I think I finally proved to myself that God is love—the beautiful supportive love that is in all these people, each very unique and very special in a different way.

I don't have the strength to be at church or even in the bright sunshine. But I was given another very special gift this Easter—the gift of life presented to me by a very special cat. My old black cat and I have been through much together the past eight years—my downs when I felt she was my only friend in the world and her kittens that seemed to make her the proudest, happiest cat in the world. This year she again brought me her special gift—four tiny new babies, each so tiny but so perfect. Two tiny little ears and stubby little tails perfectly placed on each one, and even five tiny claws on each tiny foot.

I've learned much of the meaning of Easter. Why as a little girl I always wanted a new dress, for it symbolized new life after the dark winter and pain of Good Friday. Easter is a time of change and new life, a time which often brings some sorrow and pain. But the fulfillment, the happiness that it brings also is so much more wonderful. I send my special greetings to each of you. May you also find some special Easter message, whether it be a tiny crocus, pushing through the hard ground or a special sparkle in the eyes of a sick loved one.

LEARNING RESOURCE #7

MEMORIES OF SOME WHO KNEW BETSY

Betsy died soon after Easter. At her funeral service, the tape was again played as a part of the celebration of Betsy's completed life.

Three years later, on Easter Sunday, 1977, a group of young persons who had known Betsy gathered to reflect on their memories of her life and death. Some of their comments included:

Remembering Betsy is why I came home this weekend, I think. I was remembering the Easter that the tape was played. I went over to Zieglers yesterday and had a really good talk with Mrs. Ziegler. Betsy and I were really close friends, but most of what we talked about then were just ordinary things—about her hair which was an important thing to her, about feelings, about friends and how school was going. Yesterday I was really realizing that there was a part of Betsy that I didn't know very well. I don't know who really did. That was the part of her that was so much older, the kinds of things she was thinking about and going through—the feelings of facing death that we never talked about much. I think that was something she carried herself a lot. And yet, sometimes I felt as if she wanted to break that, as if she would have liked to have talked about it.

In response to the question of why didn't she talk about it:

I think she was afraid of imposing that on other people. There was such a big difference between where we were—between the rest of the junior highs and where she was. She spent months in a hospital where people her age and much younger were terminally ill. She saw people dying. One of her closest friends, Maxine, died.

It was kind of a private thing with her. To talk about it, place it on other people is really something because of the fear that they won't know how to handle it. I don't think we would have known either.

During this time we had some discussion in our youth group about it. We talked about it some. In our small group we even talked a little about talking to Betsy directly about it and decided we didn't know how.

One time she was at a meeting and was down. She was kind of complaining. The youth adviser got on to her about self-pity and she talked back to him about it. At the time I was kind of upset with him because it seemed to me that her reaction was a normal response to her situation.

How was she included in the life of the group?

She was always full of life. Even though she had this disease so long, she kept bouncing back. I remember one Sunday when someone told me before church that she was back in the hospital. I went up to usher in the balcony and Betsy came walking up and I was surprised. She was always making an effort to keep plugging along and striving.

She went along on the youth canoe trip last summer even though she wondered how wise that was and other people said she shouldn't try it.

We had small groups going that year. Betsy was in one also. As she got sicker she couldn't go out. People would go to her. People would come and we had the group meet at her house.

LEARNING RESOURCE #8

STAGES OF RESPONSE TO
THE KNOWLEDGE OF IMPENDING DEATH

FIRST STAGE: *Denial and Isolation*

"No, not me, it cannot be true," finally gives way to "Oh, yes, it is me. It was not a mistake." Fortunately or unfortunately very few patients are able to maintain a make-believe world in which they are healthy and well until they die.

SECOND STATE: *Anger*

When the first stage of denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment. The logical next question becomes: "Why me?"

THIRD STAGE: *Bargaining*

The third stage of bargaining is less well known but equally helpfully to the patient, though only for brief periods of time. If we have been unable to face the sad facts in the first period and have been angry at people and at God in the second phase, maybe we can succeed in entering into some sort of an agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening: "If God had decided to take us from this earth and did not respond to my angry pleas, maybe a more favorable response will come if I ask nicely."

FOURTH STAGE: *Depression*

When the terminally ill patient can no longer deny her illness, when she is forced to undergo more surgery or hospitalization, when she begins to have more symptoms or becomes weaker and thinner, she cannot smile it off anymore. Her numbness or stoicism, her anger and rage will soon be replaced with a sense of great loss.

Two kinds of depression have been observed. A reactive depression comes in response to the pressures that the illness has generated—change in appearance, financial burdens, shifts in family situations, loss of ability to function normally. Encouragement and concrete help with sharing of how the pressures are being handled is appropriate in response to this kind of depression.

The other kind of depression is preparatory rather than reactive. It begins to take into account impending losses. The patient is in the process of losing everything and everybody. Encouragement and reassurance are not helpful with this kind of depression which is usually a silent one in contrast to the first type. Few or no words are needed—better a touch of a hand, stroking of the hair, or just silent sitting together. Prayer may be asked for.

FIFTH STAGE: *Acceptance*

If a patient has had enough time (i.e., not a sudden, unexpected death) and has been given some help in working through the previous stages, then a sense of acceptance may be experienced. Acceptance is not a happy stage. It is almost without feelings. It is as if the pain had gone, the struggle were over. With the finding of some peace and acceptance, the dying patient's circle of interest diminishes. News of the outside world may not be welcome or even heard. Visitors may not be desired. If they come, the communication may be more nonverbal than verbal. It is a time for being with the person dying—listening to the song of a bird, silently available for touch of a hand, a look, a relaxing if the dying person makes those responses.

AND THROUGH IT ALL: *Hope*

The one thing that usually persists through all the stages is hope. It may be hope that a cure may be found, that the whole experience is a nightmare that will go away, that the pain and suffering may have a purpose. Whatever it is called, patients maintain at least a little bit of it and are nourished by it in difficult times. Appropriate hope continues in the midst of the stages. A family's maintaining a sense of hope that denies the reality of the impending death may become an added burden with which the dying patient must struggle.

SESSION IV—HOW CAN I DEAL WITH GRIEF?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for recognizing the need to grieve, for thinking about ways of responding to one who grieves and beginning to plan a funeral service.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 10 min.—Introduction—Reading "The Day My Father Died."
Either II or III—30 minutes.
II.—Writing a letter of condolence.
III.—Role-playing situations involving grief.
IV. 40 min.—Beginning to plan a funeral.
V. 10 min.—Worship.

Before doing this activity:

1. Ask someone who is a good reader to be ready to read Learning Resource #9 (p. 22), THE DAY MY FATHER DIED.

2. You will want to decide whether your group is more likely to respond to writing letters or role-playing. Another possibility would be to have two groups working at the same time on the projects described in II. and III.

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. INTRODUCTION

Begin the session by saying something like:

Grief is a natural response to the death of someone loved. Our culture has tried in many ways to hide death from us. One of the ways has been through the ways in which dead bodies are made to look young and funerals try to mask the reality of death. Listen to this account by a man who wrote of his responses when his father died.

After the reading, persons in the group may want to discuss some aspects of the reading. Encourage them to do so. If discussion doesn't emerge naturally, don't worry about it. The issues apparent in the reading will be dealt with in other ways during the session. You might want to say something like:

During this session, we will be focusing on grief and funeral services as a way of coping with grief. The activities planned include . . . (share with them what has been chosen out of the following for the rest of the session).

Before doing this activity:

1. Be sure that you have paper like stationery and pens or pencils.

II. WRITING A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE

Ask each person in the group to take 15 minutes to write a letter of condolence to a friend who has experienced the death of a loved one. Say something like:

A close friend of yours has just experienced the death of someone close—like a mother, father, sister. Decide what the relationship is between your friend and the one who died. Write a letter of condolence. After the letters are finished, we'll exchange them and talk together about what words or ideas appear to be most helpful.

After 10 to 15 minutes (or whenever they appear to be through writing), suggest that each gives the letter to another person. Give them time to read the letter received. Then ask questions like:

How did the letter make you feel?

What words, phrases or ideas were helpful?

Someone who felt good about the way the letter was written, read it. Let's make a group list of what was most helpful and least helpful.

If there is time or inclination, compose a group letter incorporating the most helpful words, phrases and ideas.

III. ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS

In each of the following situations, read the sentence given and ask for volunteers to play the roles. After each brief role-playing, ask the players to describe how they felt. Do this before the group talks about the playing. Ask questions such as:

Did it seem real?

How else could things have been said?

What feelings would likely be present that would need to be dealt with in such a situation?

The situations:

1) A mother tells her two children, an eight-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl, that their father has been killed in an accident.

2) A sixteen-year-old tries to comfort a friend whose mother died three days before. It's the friend's first day back at school.

3) A fifteen-year-old explains their brother's death to a six-year-old sister.

IV. PLANNING A FUNERAL

Planning for a funeral needs to include the service itself as well as a variety of other details. Section 1 below deals with the details other than the service. Section 2 includes planning for the service itself. To introduce this activity, say something such as:

Imagine that someone close to you has died. You are responsible for the details that must be taken care of related to that death. We'll plan the experience in two parts: 1) the details other than the service itself when you'll be working individually and in pairs and 2) the funeral or memorial service on which we'll work together first.

1) DETAILS OTHER THAN THE SERVICE ITSELF

As a group, make a list on newsprint or chalkboard of the details that must be taken care of. The list might include things such as: who to call first—the pastor or the funeral director; who to notify and how; writing an obituary or other public notice of the death; how to dispose of the body—donating parts or all of it, cremation, burial; what kind of service—funeral with the body present, memorial service without the body present; cost of a casket and other services; where the service should take place—home, church, funeral parlor.

As you make the list, try to keep the group from discussing the issues; telling them that they will each have a chance to indicate preference on each item. After the list is complete, ask each person to write out on a piece of paper preferences on each item. After finishing, each can find another person with whom to share decisions.

After they have had a chance to do the one-to-one sharing, be ready for any group discussion that emerges from their work. It is likely that some of the decisions will be defended with vigor. Don't let differences of opinion get in the way of their consideration of issues. You might want to ask "why?" in relation to some decisions. Allow persons the right to their opinions. There are no right or wrong answers—only intuitions about what might be most helpful in a time of grief.

2) THE SERVICE ITSELF

Using the resources for funerals provided by your denomination, guide the group in outlining what needs to be included in a funeral service. Suggest the possibility that a funeral service is an experience of worship for the people present so it might be appropriate to include something in each of the three acts of worship—confession, praise and dedication.

NOTE: It would be possible to move through the activities above about planning as though they were for the persons involved rather than for someone they love. Planning for the celebration of one's own death provides a different perspective. Be careful that the exercise doesn't become morbid. For the Christian, the contemplation of death carries with it a sense of hope rather than despair.

V. WORSHIP

For worship, you might want to use some of the resources that have been worked with in the planning exercise above. Otherwise, you might say something such as:

This session we have been working with how to deal with grief and how the celebration of one's life and death can express that which is held most important in one's life. For our worship, we are using some of the resources that have been helpful in coping with grief through the years:

SCRIPTURE—John 14:1-7, 25-27—consider using the King James Version because its poetry has been comforting to generations.

HYMN—LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT and/or ROCK OF AGES and/or ABIDE WITH ME.

Before doing this activity:

1. Have available for use your denomination's book of worship or pastor's manual, hymnals, books which provide helps for funeral planning. One book with practical helps is A MANUAL OF DEATH EDUCATION AND SIMPLE BURIAL, Celo Press.

PRAYER. *Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.*

O God of peace, thou hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence we shall possess our souls, now by the might of thy spirit, lift us into thy presence, that we may be still and know that thou art God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LEARNING RESOURCE #9

J. W. Mathews THE DAY MY FATHER DIED

(In the following, the statements which appear in parenthesis are adapted from the original.)

The family had already gathered when I arrived in the little New England town. We immediately sat in council. The first task was to clarify our self-understanding. The second was to embody that understanding in the celebration of Papa's death. Consensus was already present: THE ONE WHO GIVES US OUR LIFE IS THE SAME THAT TAKES IT FROM US. From this stance we felt certain broad implications should guide the formation of the ceremony:

DEATH IS A VERY LIVELY PART OF A MAN'S LIFE AND NO LIFE IS FINISHED WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH.

DEATH IS A CRUCIAL POINT IN THE HUMAN ADVENTURE WHICH SOMEHOW TRANSPOSES TO EVERY OTHER ASPECT OF LIFE.

DEATH IS TO BE RECEIVED IN HUMBLE GRATITUDE AND MUST EVER BE HONORED WITH HONEST DIGNITY.

To symbolize the dignity of our father's death, the family thought to clothe him in a pine box and to rest him in the raw earth. (A sister and brother-in-law went to make arrangements. They asked for a $100 coffin. The undertaker said that only paupers were buried in $100 coffins. After they left the undertaker placed Papa in a $275 casket. When the family returned and insisted on a simple pine box, the undertaker reluctantly agreed.)

Immediately it was opened, another mild shock came. The pauper's coffin was exactly like any other coffin—pillow, white satin, and all. Except the white satin wasn't really white satin. It was the kind of shiny material you might buy at the ten-cent store. Everything was simply cheap imitation. We had hoped for something honest. Despite the disappointment, we took the pauper's box. And Papa was transferred to his own coffin.

(Several hours before the funeral, I went to have some time alone with my father's body.) I can scarcely describe what I saw and felt.

My father, I say, was ninety-two. In his latter years he had wonderfully chiseled wrinkles. I had helped to put them there. His cheeks were deeply sunken; his lips pale. He was an old man. There is a kind of glory in the face of an old man. Not so with the stranger laying there. They had my Papa looking like he was fifty-two. Cotton stuffed in his cheeks had erased the best wrinkles. Make-up powder and rouge plastered his face way up into his hair and around his neck and ears. His lips were painted. He . . . he looked ready to step before the footlights of the matinee performance.

I fiercely wanted to pluck out the cotton but was afraid. At the least the makeup could come off. I called for alcohol and linens. A very reluctant mortician brought them to me. And I began the restoration. As the powder, the rouge, the lipstick disappeared, the stranger grew older. He never recovered the look of his ninety-two years but in the end the man in the coffin became my Papa.

The sun had already fallen behind the ridge when we came to the burial ground. It was on a remote New England hillside. . . . I remember clearly the sharp, cold air and how the very chill made me feel keenly alive. I remember also how the dark shadows dancing on the hills reminded me of life. But I remember most of all the clean smell of God's good earth freshly turned.

I say I smelled the fresh earth. There was none to be seen. What I did see is difficult to believe. I mean the green stuff. Someone had come before us and covered that good, wonderful raw dirt, every clod of it, with green stuff. Everything, every scar of the grave, was concealed under simulated grass. Just as if nothing had been disturbed here. Just as if nothing were going on here. Just as if nothing at all were happening. What an offense against nature, against history, against Papa, against us, against God.

I wanted to scream. I wanted to cry out to the whole world, "Something *is* going on here, something great, something significantly human. Look! Everybody, look! here is my father's death. *It* is going on here!"

The banks of flowers upon the green facade only added to the deception. Was it all contrived to pretend at this last moment that my father was not really dead after all? Was it not insisting that death is not important, not a lively part of our lives, not thoroughly human, not bestowed by the Final one? Suddenly the great lie took on cosmic proportion. And suddenly I was physically sick.

This time I didn't want to scream. I experienced an acute urge to vomit.

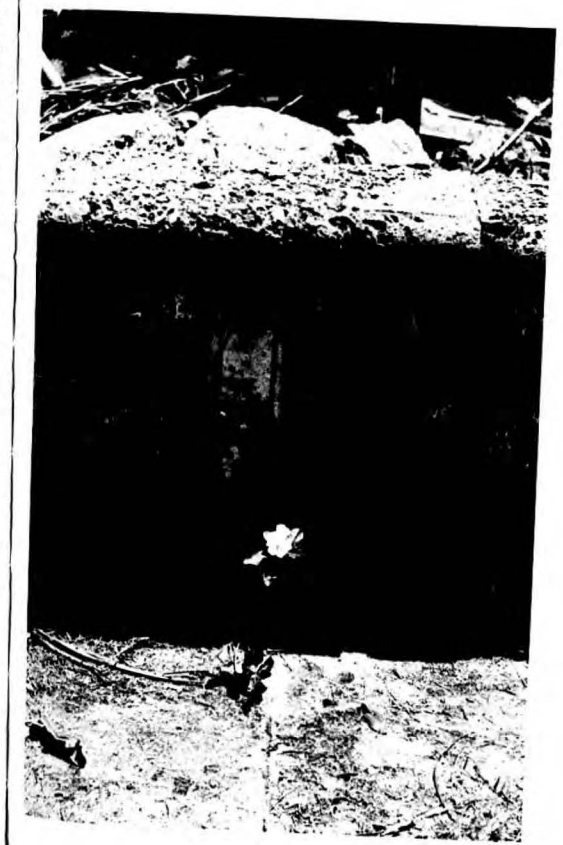
A sister sensitively perceived all this and understood. She pushed to my side and gave me courage. Together we laid aside the banks of flowers. Together we rolled back the carpet of deceit. God's good wonderful clean earth lay once again unashamedly naked. I drank it into my being. The nausea passed.

(The funeral rites had three parts. First was the remembering of the great ones of the faith—Abraham, Amos, Paul, Jesus, Luther.) The heroic words from Job is what I meant to recite: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. What came from my lips were the words of Paul, "If I live, I live unto the Lord, if I die, I die unto the Lord; so whether I live or whether I die, I am the Lord's."

(The second part of the service was to sing a song, a song special to Papa. The hymn was written by a friend of Papa's.)

God moves in a mysterious way.
his wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps on the sea
and rides upon the storm;
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
and scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter
and He shall make it plain.

(The third part was to affirm that Papa's death was good because creation is good.) This I symbolized. Three times I stooped low, three times I plunged my hands deep into the loose earth beside the open pit, and three times I threw that good earth upon my Papa within his grave. And all the while I sang forth the majestic three-fold formula, IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. (And some of the people present said AMEN.)



SESSION V—WHAT IS IMMORTALITY ABOUT?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for becoming aware of the means through which persons create a sense of immortality and considering examples of the "modes of immortality."

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 20 min.—Considering how life would be if we didn't die.

II. 10 min.—Identifying "Modes of Immortality."

III. 50 min.—Exploring some of the "Modes of Immortality." Choose among the following: (1) biological—20 minutes. (2) creative—(a) list—20 minutes. (b) field trip to graveyard or obituaries—20 minutes. (3) natural—10 minutes.

IV. 10 min.—Worship.

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. As an introduction to consideration of immortality, help the group consider what life would be like if we didn't die. Remind them of the story of the Struldbruggs suggested for Session I, Learning Resource #2, p. 9. If it was not used in Session I, it could be used here. To start the session, say something such as:

Have you ever thought it would be great to live forever? Let's work on that possibility. Let's divide into two groups—one will be the group that doesn't die. The other group has discovered a medication that would allow them to live forever also. To prepare for this life-prolonging possibility, each group should meet separately first for no more than five minutes. Group one should list reasons for saying "yes" or "no" to recommending life forever to Group Two. Group Two should list reasons why they might want or not want to live forever. Group One will necessarily describe how life is, living forever. Is it the way it was with the Struldbruggs—just getting older? Or how is it?

After five minutes, call the groups together for the discussion. Ask them to identify who will speak for the group. Note that anyone can give ideas to the one speaking or can replace the one in the speaker's chair by tapping that person on the shoulder. Questions that might need to be injected into the discussion if they aren't raised by either group include: What does it feel like to live forever? What values are there in living so long? What changes have been seen in the longer lifetimes? How would life change if persons could live forever?

After a few minutes of interchange, ask the groups to vote with a secret ballot on whether to recommend that Group Two should be allowed to take the medication and therefore live forever. Count the votes in each group separately. Talk about what differences there are, if any.

Before doing this activity:

1. Have newsprint or chalkboards available for each group on which they can make lists.
2. The room should be arranged so each group can sit together facing the other group with a single chair in front of each group for the person speaking.

II. IDENTIFYING "MODES OF IMMORTALITY"

Make the transition to this activity by saying something such as:

Regardless of our vote about living forever, the reality is that all of us are going to die. At least that appears to be the case as far as we now know. Being human, we not only die physical deaths, we also work at ways of providing significance to life and of having a sense of continuity with the past and the future. A medical doctor, Robert Lifton identifies five modes of immortality as means by which humans develop concepts, images, and symbols that give them that needed sense of significance and continuity. He describes the five with these words:

Ask someone to read "Modes of Immortality," Learning Resource #10, p. 27. After the reading, note the listing prepared ahead of time.

Before doing this activity:

1. Have listed on a chalkboard or newsprint the following five words or phrases:
   1. Biological
   2. Creative
   3. Religious
   4. Natural
   5. Experiential transcendence
2. Decide who should read "Modes of Immortality," Learning Resource #10, page 27.

III. EXPLORATION OF SOME OF LIFTON'S CATEGORIES

Let the group know that all will have the opportunity for working on the religious mode of immortality in the next session.

1) EXPLORING THE "BIOLOGICAL" MODE OF IMMORTALITY

Get started by saying something such as:

Biological immortality concerns family and generational continuity. One dimension of that continuity is the passing on of traditions and the experiencing of having roots in the past. Another is the sense of relationship to the past through parents and grandparents and to the future through children.

a) The book and TV movie series "Roots" pointed up the way in which people yearn for a connectedness with the past. What are some stories from your family's past that you know? Those of you who have known your grandparents, what have you learned from them? What are some ways in which you identify yourself in terms of your ancestors? How does being related to people of the past enhance life in the present and give courage for the future? Or does it?

b) In the play "Fiddler on the Roof" one of the songs stressed the necessity of tradition as a way of keeping the values of the culture alive. What traditions are there in your family and in your congregation that help you to maintain a sense of continuity with the past? What traditions and values would you want to be sure to pass on to another generation—either your own biological children or to the young in general?

If someone in the group has a record or tape of the "Tradition" song from the musical, you might want to play it.

2) EXPLORING THE CREATIVE MODE OF IMMORTALITY

Get started by saying something such as:

Lifton describes the creative mode of immortality as that in which we live on through the work we do and the influence we have on others—the work of artists, scientists, thinkers, builders or the influence that ordinary people have on those around them.

a) Listing people and why they are remembered. Ask each person to make a list of persons they remember and a word or two about why they are remembered. Remind them to include all areas of life—personal, political, economic, cultural, from several periods of history and from places and cultures around the world. After about five minutes, ask how many are on the lists. Suggest that they work two more minutes and be prepared to share. Make a group list by having each person name three from the individual list. After getting names from each person, ask who else needs to be listed.

Reflect on the list by asking questions such as:

What categories of people do most of us remember?

What do people do that make us remember them?

Are any group of people missing from our list (women, people from other parts of the world)?

Why would that be so? If you had the possibility for having a conversation with one of the persons listed (or someone else not on the list), who would you pick and why?

Before doing this activity:

1. Have paper and pencils and a place where people can write. Have newsprint or chalkboard available for making the group list.

b) Visiting graveyards or writing obituaries. If you visit the graveyard, have each one pick out a gravestone and tell an imaginary story about the dead person's life and why they are remembered. Ask them to write their own epitaph—the few words or phrases to be placed on their gravestones—which picks up how they want to be remembered.

Or, look at the obituaries in a newspaper or news magazine. Ask them to write their own obituaries or a news-story—written about their own lives at the time of death on some chosen date in the future.

Before doing this activity:

1. Decide whether it would be more appropriate for your group to visit the graveyard to get information from gravestones or to use obituaries from newspapers or magazines as a source of statements about people's lives.

In either case, you will want to have a time of reflection about the experience, asking questions and making comments such as:

What did you like about this activity we've been doing?

What bothered you, if anything, about it?

What did you learn about yourself? about other people?

What things did you decide are important about your own life and that of others to remember?

3) EXPLORING THE NATURAL MODE OF IMMORTALITY

Introduce this mode of immortality with something such as:

The natural mode of immortality is that which is concerned with our relationship to nature itself. It's the natural cycle of the changing seasons, of the sense of the natural rhythm of seed, fruit, flower, seed.

Poetry, music and art provide images that are part of the natural mode of immortality. Use any of the following as resource for a discussion about the secular ways of Easter being an expression of this mode of immortality. After hearing or seeing the art pieces suggested, if available, ask questions such as:

Name some of the ways in which we celebrate Easter that are part of this mode of immortality. Betsy's statement on Easter (Learning Resource #6, page 16 used in Session III) spoke of cats and kittens, crocus blooming and new dresses.

a) Aaron Copeland's "Appalachian Spring" is a musical celebration of life renewed. Play the record and have persons share the images that came to their minds as they listened.

b) Picasso's painting "Guernica" has a single flower growing in the midst of the carnage. He placed it near the center about one-sixth up from the bottom of the painting. Copies of the painting can be found in art books from a library. A small copy of it was printed on page 16 of the 31 October '77 issue of ***Newsweek.***

c) Viktor Frankl in his book ***Man's Search for Meaning: From Death-Camp to Existentialism*** tells the story of a young woman who knew that she was going to die but who was cheerful in spite of that knowledge. In a conversation with Frankl, she pointed to the branch of a chestnut tree with two blossoms and told him that she often talked with the tree. When he asked her if the tree replied, she said "Yes." When asked what it said to her, she answered, "It said to me, 'I am here—I am here—I am life, eternal life.'"*

William Barclay in his commentary on I Corinthians 15:12-19 tells the story to illustrate the triumph of life over death. A Harvest festival was planned in a church in London during the war years. Among the gifts gathered for the thanksgiving service was a sheaf of corn. On Saturday night the church was bombed and in ruins. Months passed. When spring came, green shoots appeared and by autumn there was a flourishing patch of corn growing in the rubble.**

IV. WORSHIP
HYMN: FAIREST LORD JESUS
Psalm 145:8-9, 18-19
HYMN: O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO
Gospel: Matthew 6:25-30
PRAYER:

O thou great mystery, open our eyes and ears to all the ways in which the truth about life is revealed to us. Knowing that our physical life as we now know it does not continue forever, we need your help in translating the signs in the world around us that life goes on, that you, our God, will care for us whether we want that or not. In our concern for the past and our hope for the future, may we catch a glimpse of the possibility that the present holds for us. We see your truth reflected in the natural rhythms of life and in our own urges to be known beyond our lifetimes. May we so live that what we are and how we are remembered is known to be in your hands rather than in our own feeble efforts. In the name of the one who was able to use any situation for witness to thy truth, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

*_Washington Square Press_, New York, 1969, p. 109-110.
William Barclay, ***The Letters to the Corinthians*, St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1961 paperback edition, p. 166.

LEARNING RESOURCE #10

Robert Jay Lifton, M.D., in a filmstrip on "The Meaning of Death" uses the following words to identify ways in which human beings develop concepts, images, and symbols that give a sense of significance to our experiences, including death.

"I think all of us have a need to symbolize a sense of historical continuity. This is part of our sense of belonging to history and being part of our culture. And I think these symbolizations of immortality take place, broadly speaking, in five different modes.

"The first mode is that of the biological, or the biosocial, the sense that I have that I live on in my children in an endless chain of biological attachment.

"The second mode is what I call the creative mode, the sense that I live on through my works, whether these are the works of talented artists, or scientists, or the more humble impact of ordinary people on other people around them. The sense of what we do, the feelings that we express, have some sort of life beyond the moment in the way they continue to affect others.

"A third mode of symbolic immortality is the religious mode. That's the notion that one will live on in a life after death, but more universally. It's the idea of some degree of spiritual attainment that helps one to transcend death and accept it.

"A fourth mode has to do with one's relationship to nature itself, the idea of eternal nature. This was, of course, enormously important for the Japanese, as I discovered in my work with them, especially in relationship to the atomic bomb. And the appearance of cherry blossoms and other forms of natural growth eventually—after the bomb had fallen—was of the greatest importance to their sense of recovery and renewal.

"Finally, there is a fifth mode, and that is a psychic state so intense that time and death disappear. I call that mode that of experiential transcendence, but it is related to much of the interest in meditation."

From "The Meaning of Death" from DEATH AND DYING: CLOSING THE CIRCLE. Copyright © 1975, 1977, by Guidance Associates. Reprinted by permission of Guidance Associates.

SESSION VI—HOW DO WE RELATE TO MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH IN A CHRISTIAN SENSE?

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for reflection on the reports of those near death about the passage from life to death, for discussion of biblical accounts of the resurrection, and for struggling with our understandings of life and death in a Christian sense.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES:

I. 5 min.—Introduction and review
II. 25 min.—Consideration of reports of those near death
III. 45 min.—Bible study of resurrection accounts
IV. 15 min.—Worship

SUGGESTED PROCESS:

I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

You will, of course, need to adapt these words to fit what has actually happened during the previous sessions of this study.

Introduce the session by saying something like:

In our consideration of matters of life and death, we have dealt with the fact of physical death as part of being human, have practiced ways of being with persons who know they are dying, have begun work on how to deal with grief through funerals, and have begun to talk about modes of immortality. In this session, we will work with the religious mode of immortality. Robert Lifton describes the religious mode as the notion that one will live on in a life after death, but more universally. We'll look at the religious mode in two ways: First, many people are interpreting the experience of those who return from the brink of dying or those who report being with persons as they die as evidence of life continuing after physical death in another form. Second, the basis of the Christian faith rests on the conviction that whether living or dead we are the Lord's and that Christ showed us in his death and resurrection the truth that the One who created us and sustains us throughout life will not abandon us when physical life ends.

Before doing this activity:

1. Decide how to present the content from Learning Resources #11 and #12, pp. 30 and 31. Two persons could be asked to read the two accounts to the group or they could be asked to read them and report to the group on the content. Note that it will be difficult—if not impossible for the group to discuss the issues unless the content is presented to them clearly.

II. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF THOSE NEAR DEATH

Introduce this section by saying something like:

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Raymond Moody and others have interviewed persons who have returned from near-death experiences. An article by Daniel Goleman reports on this phenomenon. Let's listen as the article is read. Listen for whether you agree or disagree with the points of view presented. Think about whether the reports of these experiences are accurate. Another part of the same magazine article was an insert on the page called "The Art of Dying" about the Tibetan Book of the Dead. *As it is read, compare the viewpoints with those in the other article and with your point of view.*

Have the two accounts read/reported on. And as a way of getting the discussion going, ask questions like:

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is reported to believe that there is another existence after life and death on earth. How does her description fit with other ideas you have about death and the hereafter? Why is the complexity of death an issue related to believing or not believing the reports of those near death?

The Tibetan Book of the Dead *is reported to be about life instead of death, and that birth and death occur throughout life preparing us for the moments of physical death. Do you agree with their statement that "If we learn to deal smoothly with these small deaths, then the moments of physical death will not overwhelm us."*

You may want to do a values-continuum by indicating a line on the floor and asking persons to stand along that line at the point of their current beliefs. One end of the continuum would be "there is no life after physical death" and the other would be "life in some form continues after physical death." Those who are undecided could stand in the middle of the line.

Stress the fact that no one really knows the answer and that anyone's opinion is an all right one.

Ask whether anyone is able to talk about why they chose to stand where they did. They may not be able to state reasons, but only that it felt right.

III. BIBLE STUDY OF RESURRECTION ACCOUNTS

Ask groups of two or three persons to read the following passages and be prepared to report in their own words who was there, and what happened. You may want to have them list the basic ideas on a sheet of newsprint. In that way, the similarity of the gospel accounts will be evident.

Introduce this section by saying something like:

The resurrection of Christ is a central event in the Christian faith. It is recorded in all four of the gospels. Peter preached it. Paul wrote letters about it. Let's look at the accounts in three categories: the gospel accounts of finding the tomb empty, other stories of the presence of Christ reported in the gospels, and Paul's experience and writings.

In the descriptions below, it is not intended that these should be all that's possible to say about the passages. They are provided as possible responses that those reading the passages might make. The responses that are actually made may differ from these.

Before doing this activity:

1. You will want to read each of the Scripture passages that you intend to use. Decide whether it is appropriate for your group to use all that are listed. Be sure to include the passages from I Corinthians 15:1-11 and Romans 14:7-9.

THE EMPTY TOMB STORIES

Mark 16:1-8—Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James; empty tomb; young man saying 'he is not here'; trembling, astonishment, fear.

Matthew 28:1-10—Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; earthquake, stone at tomb rolled away; an angel saying "He is not here. Tell the disciples he's risen." fear, great joy. Jesus met them and told them not to be afraid.

Luke 24:1-11—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and others, found stone rolled away, perplexed; two men said "Why seek the living among the dead?" told apostles but were not believed.

John 20:1-18—Mary Magdalene found tomb empty; found Simon Peter and the beloved disciple; they went into the tomb and believed. Mary wept outside tomb; two angels in white; she turned and saw Jesus but didn't recognize him until he said her name; she went and told disciples.

OTHER APPEARANCES

Luke 24:13-35—two apostles on road to Emmaus; recognized Jesus in breaking of bread.

John 20:19-25—Easter night to apostles in Jerusalem. Thomas doubted.

John 20:26-29—eight days later.

John 21—at the sea when the disciples were fishing. Luke 24: 36-53.

If there is not time, only refer to these rather than having them read and discussed.

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE AND WRITINGS

Acts 9:1-9—Paul's experience on the Damascus road. I Corinthians 15:1-2 is a reminder by Paul that the gospel which he preached is

—an experience of grace to be received,
—that in which the Christian stands,
—the ground of salvation if it is held fast in memory.

I Corinthians 15:3-11—rehearsal of the events of Christ's death, resurrection, and resurrection appearances.

Romans 14:7-9—statement in four different ways that whether alive or dead, whether living or dying, we are the Lord's.

Be sure in your planning to provide enough time to read and talk about these.

IV. WORSHIP

All of us, without exception, must die. Death of a loved one involves grief, pain, sorrow, loss. For the Christian, finally, death is seen as triumph rather than tragedy, as victory rather than defeat. Life and death are linked together throughout the scriptures. One of Paul's witnesses is in I Corinthians 15:51-58.

Have someone read I Cor. 15:51-58 with passion and intensity as a statement of confidence of the Christian in the conquest of death. Follow the reading by moving immediately into the singing of one of the following (or some other appropriate hymn):

THINE IS THE GLORY
DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING?

Have this one read in several ways. In unison, responsively by phrases, with one person reading each phrase.

THE STRIFE IS O'ER, THE BATTLE IS DONE
I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES

Then read Romans 14:7-9 in whatever way the group was most involved at the end of the study time.

Sing another of the hymns listed.

Prayer: ***O God, the Author and Disposer of life, we acknowledge your power and right both to give and to take away. Though we understand not the mysteries of life or death, enable us to receive what comes to us as a gift from Thee. May we rest secure in the assurance that one who cares for us during our life will not abandon us at death. Preserve us from faithless doubts and anxieties that we may fully live in joy and peace, abounding in love and hope that we may express through our daily living our trust and faith. In the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.***

LEARNING RESOURCE #11

Raymond Moody Jr., a young psychiatrist, pieced together reports by 150 people that he describes in his book ***Life After Life.*** These people had either been resuscitated after being pronounced dead, had come close to dying through injury or illness, or had been with people who told them of their experiences as they died. The account does not represent any one person's experience, but contains the points that recur again and again, despite the variety of people reporting and despite the range of events that brought them to the brink of death.

Two researchers working independently of Moody have gathered similar evidence of life near death. Karlis Osis and Erlunder Haraldsson, of the American Society of Parapsychological Research, interviewed doctors and nurses in America and India who had been at the bedside of patients who spoke of their experiences as they died. Three out of four patients had visions of a religious figure or of deceased loved ones who had come to take the dying person away to another realm. Most of the patients consented to this invitation to die with serenity or elation. But those under the influence of medical factors that can lead to hallucinations—drugs, fever, brain injury—were more likely to be frightened, and even scream for help.

This evidence shows that people near death have certain common visions that differ from ordinary hallucinations and that vary according to culture. While Moody is reluctant to claim such evidence means we survive death, Osis and Haraldsson leave the question open, saying all their data allows for that possibility. Others, notably psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, believe that the end of the body is not the end of life.

Since her first case, Kubler-Ross has collected hundreds of similar stories from people who have been declared dead and then recovered. Although her research is independent of Moody's and of Osis and Haraldsson's, the reports of her patients match theirs in most major respects: they become detached from their bodies; they feel a sense of elation and wholeness; they are drawn toward a light; and they meet a being—often a deceased loved one—who helps them in the passage from life to death. From her research Kubler-Ross concludes that upon death, we leave the body behind and go on to another kind of existence. Arthur Koestler argues a similar point of view, based on recent advances in physics.

Kubler-Ross' certainty upsets many of her medical colleagues. They discount all the testimony of the dying as proving nothing about survival, but merely showing that many people share certain common near-death experiences.

Part of the controversy stems from the complexity of death. We do not die all at once. A human life has no sharply defined end. What we think of as the moment of death is actually a drawn-out sequence of biological events. The "deaths" of the organs and cells that form the human body occur at their own rates. The death of the whole person is a fleeting moment tied to no single, isolated organic event.

As yet there is simply no sure way to know. This is one scientific debate of which each of us, in the end, is the final judge.

LEARNING RESOURCE #12

Whatever reports from the brink of death tell us about survival, they do reveal that dying can be far less fearsome than commonly thought. The notion that the moment of death need not be a catastrophe and that, properly prepared, a person can die well, is an ancient one. Manuals on *ars moriendi*, the art of dying, circulated throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. Even today, in many traditional cultures people turn to similar lore to help smooth the passage from life to death. One of the best-known of such manuals is the ***Tibetan Book of the Dead,*** written in the 14th century, and first translated into English in 1927. It details the experience a person will have while dying and for several weeks after physical death, and tells how to deal with them. This book is only a small part of a massive Tibetan literature on death, dying, and how one should prepare to die well.

Recently the 15th Gyalwa Karmapa, the lama who heads the sect that transmits these instructions on dying, came from India to found a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in New York's Dutchess County. While he was here I read to him Raymond Moody's composite account of the dying person's experience (***Life After Life,*** Mockingbird 1975 paper $2.95, Bantam 1975 paper $1.95). This account from modern Americans agreed quite well, he said, with the traditional Tibetan version of the moments of dying. Most details, in fact, were identical: the initial confusion, the barrage of noises, the ascent through a tunnel, the vision of a light, the being who meets the dying person (a fearsome deity in the Tibetan account), and the review of one's life.

In a recent translation of the ***Tibetan Book of the Dead,*** the lama Chogyam Trungpa explains that while the text is ostensibly written for the dying, it is in fact about life.

For Tibetans, death is but one moment in a continuous flow of experiences that extend from before birth to beyond death. The way one has lived will determine how one meets death. In one sense, birth and death recur continually throughout a person's life. The large and small transitions of growth each entail a partial death of what we leave behind as well as a new beginning. At a different level, each moment creates an instant reality which in turn passes away. All life, then, is a rehearsal for dying. If we learn to deal smoothly with these small deaths, then the moments of physical death will not overwhelm us.

Depending on their own beliefs, Americans can either accept the ***Tibetan Book of the Dead*** as profound literal truth or reject it as an innocuous cultural delusion. Whatever our attitudes, it seems clear that, for those who accept it, such a manual is a useful tool for dying.

Moody found that most of those who had returned from near death no longer feared dying. But when they tried to tell others what had happened to them, they were met only by scoffing or indifference. The lack of a text similar to the ***Tibetan Book of the Dead*** in our own culture reflects our denial of the inevitable end. Perhaps the testimony from the border of death that Moody, Kubler-Ross, and others are gathering will someday form the basis of an American manual in the art of dying.

RESOURCES

Films and filmstrips available from Mass Media Ministries, 2116 North Charles, Baltimore, MD 21218 (301) 727-3270 or 1720 Chouteau, St. Louis, MO 63103 (314) 436-0418.

FILMS

GIFT OF LIFE—20 min., color, $20 rental, a poetic view of life from birth to death, emphasizing a Christian perspective, highlighted by scriptural text from The Living Bible—Psalm 139, I Corinthians 13, Romans 5, Psalm 23. Sessions I and VI

TO BE AWARE OF DEATH—15 min., color, $20 rental, one of nine films in the CIRCLE OF LIFE series—contains personal testimony of youth in a seminar setting about their experience with and feelings about death. Poetic images of death are shown. Session I

AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE—27 min., b & w, $17.50 rental, Academy Award Winner in 1963 for best live action short film—A man's feelings, perceptions, thoughts, realizations as he is hanged. Sessions II and VI

DEATH OF A PEASANT—10 min., color, $15 rental, a Yugoslav peasant escapes from a German firing squad. They chase him on horses. He manages to get to his own farm where he kills himself in a gesture of self-assertion. Dramatization of an actual event. Session II

BRIAN'S SONG—75 min., color, $150 rental, the friendship of Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo, teammates on the Chicago Bears, from its beginning at training camp in 1965 to its end with Brian's death from cancer in 1970 at the age of 26. Session III

DEATH BE NOT PROUD—81 min., color, $90 rental, sixteen-year-old Johnny Gunther is dying of a brain tumor—"A flowing affirmation of the nobility of even the shortest of lives." Session III and IV

THINGS IN THEIR SEASON—81 min., color, $75 rental, Peg Gerlach's "imminent death from leukemia forces words to be spoken, truths to be dealt with, and lives to be evaluated." Session III

THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY—30 min., color, $25 rental, the last six months of life of a man who knows he is dying of cancer. Session III

THE GREAT AMERICAN FUNERAL—54 min., b & w, $12.50 rental, documentary done by CBS news in 1963.

FILMSTRIPS

PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH—Two part color filmstrip set with tape cassettes. $50 purchase. Part 1 "Toward an Acceptance" Death is inevitable and all of us must deal with it. Five stages of reaction to dying are described. Session I and III. Part 2 "The Right to Die" examines ethical questions arising because modern technology can prolong life. Session II.

GRAMP. A MAN AGES AND DIES—one color filmstrip with tape cassette. $25 purchase. One family's determination not to let medical persons and hospitals decide for them how a loved one should be allowed to die. Session III and IV.

LIVING WITH DYING—two color filmstrips with cassette with leader's guide. $45 purchase. 1) all living things have a life cycle and death is a natural consequence of living. Session I and V. 2) the stages Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross proposes as inevitable ones as a person faces death. Session III.

OTHER AUDIO-VISUALS WITH SUPPLIER NOTED WITH EACH DESCRIPTION:

16 mm. Films:

THOSE WHO MOURN—5 min., color, purchase $80, rental $10, Cat. No. 8120 from Teleketics, 1220 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015—struggle of a woman to accept her husband's death moving through a consideration of mourning both on the personal and universal level. Views the cycle of birth and death as a total reality. Session IV.

MATTHEW 5:5—5 min., color, purchase $80, rental $10, Cat. No. 8123 from Teleketics, 1220 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015—sequence of images of transcendency, of resurrection, of the ongoingness of life after death. Session VI.

Slides:

TEACH ME TO DIE—available as 20 slides with record $15.50 Cat. No. 9561-R or as 20 slides with cassette $16.95 Cat. No. 9562-C from Teleketics, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015—Mystery of dying is seen by an elderly woman as a time of giving. Session III and VI.

Filmstrips:

DEATH & DYING—CLOSING THE CIRCLE—3-part color filmstrips with cassettes or records, Guidance Associates, 757 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Part One—"The Meaning of Death"—interviews with people and their attitudes toward death. Death as a three-part process: death anxiety, death guilt, struggle for meaning when loved one dies. Outlines five "modes of immortality." Session I and V. Part Two—"A Time to Mourn, a Time to Choose"—death rituals of other religions and cultures—describes alternatives to the usual. Session IV. Part Three—"Walk in the World With Me"—story of Eric Lund who died of leukemia at 22 as narrated by his mother. Session III.

BOOKS

See the film and filmstrip lists above for the descriptions of:

GRAMP—Mark Jury and Dan Jury, Grossman, paperback $5.95.

LIVING AND DYING, Robert Jay Lifton & Eric Olson, Praeger Publishers, $5.95.

ERIC—Doris Lund, J. B. Lippincott, hardback $7.95, paperback Dell $1.75. (see notes under Death & Dying—Closing the Circle)

DEATH BE NOT PROUD—A Memoir, John Gunther, Perennial Library, Harper & Row, 95¢.

SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS DYING—Martin Shepard, Harmony Books, $7.95—a guide for helping and coping with someone dying with line drawings done by his father who died at home in 1972 after prolonged cancerous illness. Includes interviews, quotations, a chapter of meditations.

CONCERNING DEATH: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE LIVING—edited by Earl A. Grollman, Beacon Press, $9.95, paperback $4.95. Twenty selections which deal with grief, children and death, law, insurance, coroner, funerals, cemeteries, memorials, suicide, being a widow or widower, as well as how to call on and write letters to those who mourn.

WE ARE BUT A MOMENT'S SUNLIGHT—edited by Charles S. Adler, Gene Stanford, Sheila Morrissey Adler, Pocket Books, $1.95—Fifty selections explore five broad aspects of death and dying. An essay introduces each section and each selection has preceding comments.

DEATH OUT OF THE CLOSET: A CURRICULUM GUIDE TO LIVING WITH DYING— Gene Stanford and Deborah Perry, Bantam, $1.95. Mini-course on death education, listing of poems, films, etc., lengthy study guides for several fiction and non-fiction books.

TOO YOUNG TO DIE: YOUTH AND SUICIDE—Francine Klagsburn, Houghton Mifflin, hardback $6.95. Suicide among 15-24 year-olds has increased rapidly recently. This book looks at reasons for suicides and ways of preventing them. Includes case studies.

A MANUAL OF DEATH EDUCATION AND SIMPLE BURIAL, eighth edition—Ernest Morgan, Celo Press, 1977, $2.00—64-page book with four parts—1) death education, 2) about funeral and memorial societies, 3) simple burial and cremation, and 4) how the dead can help the living.

OTHER TYPES OF RESOURCES

Perspectives on Death designed for use in public school includes four parts available from Educational Perspectives Associates, Box 312, De Kalb, IL 60015

1—Audio-visual package $55
   a. Funeral customs around the world, 110-frame color filmstrip with cassette
   b. Death through the eyes of the artist, 87 frames with cassette
   c. Death themes in literature—20-minute cassette of authors, poets, dramatists
   d. Death themes in music—18-minute cassette of classical, jazz, folk, modern music
2—An anthology of readings—$2.50—"The Individual, Society and Death"—193-page text with 24 selections
3—Student activity books for classroom use—$1.50
4—Teacher's resource book—$2.00—six-week unit with daily lesson plans, suggestions, bibliography and vocabulary listing

Horizons in the Life Cycle, Inc.,—a non-profit educational organization—Membership allows access to print and audio-visual materials on birth, aging, dying and other life cycle topics, an information packet sent six times annually, and seminars, workshops and conferences in the New York City area. Membership is $15 ($5 for persons over 65 years)—290 West End Avenue, at 74th Street, New York, NY 10023, (212) 873-0700.

Death, Burial & Mourning

in the Jewish Tradition

By
Audrey Friedman Marcus
Sherry Bissell
Karen S. Lipschutz

AN ARE MINI COURSE
STUDENT MANUAL

Written while in residence at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, California

Course: MC-108
Graded: 5th-12th Grades
Family Education
Time: 15-25 Hours

3945 South Oneida Street
Denver, Colorado 80237

Audrey Friedman Marcus Rabbi Raymond A. Zwerin

Art Director, William I. Teitelbaum Design, Diane Tishkoff

Beginnings & Endings

"In death two worlds meet with a kiss: this world going out and the future world coming in."

Talmud J. Yebamot 57a

LIST ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN THAT HAVE A BEGINNING AND AN END:

Books, days, seasons, conversations, the school years, the Torah,

LIST ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN THAT HAVE NO BEGINNING OR END:

Circles, the universe, time, the Torah,

You probably noticed that the Torah appeared on both lists. Is this possible?

With your group, read and translate Genesis 1:1-5 from the Torah scroll. These are the first verses in the Torah. Then help each other to roll the scroll to the very end and read and translate Deuteronomy 34. Roll it back again to the beginning, letting everyone have a chance to help, and once again read the Genesis passage.

Every year on the festival of Simchat Torah we finish reading the passage from Deuteronomy and begin again reading the Torah with Genesis. We leave the synagogue *not* with a feeling of sadness and ending, but in the spirit of joy which marks the celebration of a creation, a beginning, a birth. And so we see that the Torah has a beginning and an end and yet it goes on continually. Its cycle never ends.

Every life also has a beginning and an end, yet life goes on. New births occur every day and the cycle of life is never ending.

Sentence Completion:

When the Torah was rolled from Genesis to Deuteronomy, I felt _____

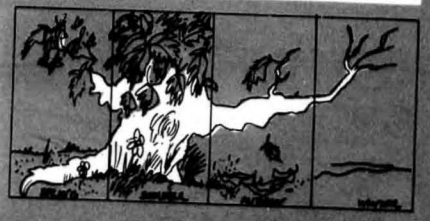
In what ways is the rolling of the Torah from beginning to end like life? _____

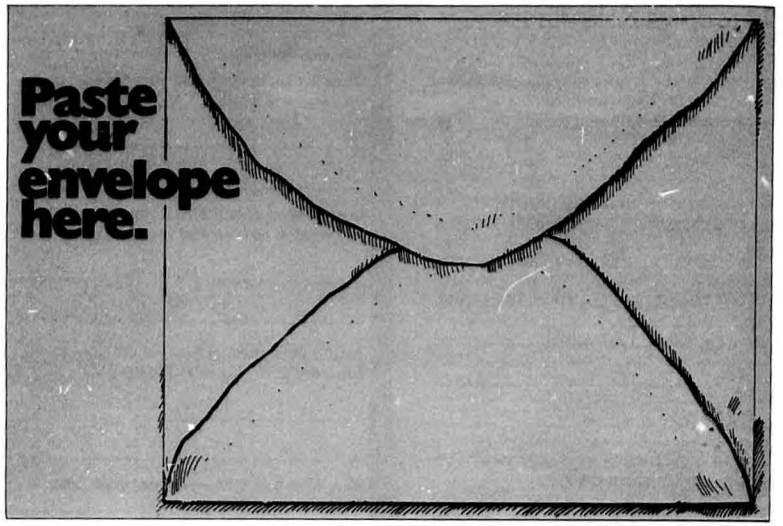
_____ Unlike life? _____

What is the difference between the story at the beginning of the Torah and at the end? _____

How did it feel to hear creation, death, and then creation again? _____

In the Jewish tradition a human being is compared to the scroll of the Torah. If the Torah is burned, Jews rend (tear) their clothes. This is also done when a person dies. The remains of both the Torah and a person are considered holy and must be respected. Each of us is said to write our own Torah scroll through our lives. Can you add any more ways that human life is like or unlike the Torah scroll?





My Feelings About Death

"A baby enters the world with closed hands as if to say, 'The world is mine;' a person leaves with hands open, as if to say 'I can take nothing with me.' "

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 5:14

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF AND WHAT DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SEE OR HEAR THE WORD DEATH?

Write down everything that the word suggests to you. Put your questions, thoughts, fears and wishes in the envelope provided by your teacher. You are the only person who will see what you write unless you decide to share some of them with the group.

One of the books of the Bible, Ecclesiastes, has this very famous poem in it. You may have heard it on a record called "Turn, Turn, Turn."

To everything there is a season,
And a time to every purpose under heaven.
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time for war, and a time for peace.

JPS Translation, 1917

Can you think of a good time for each of the things mentioned in the poem? Write your ideas in the space provided.

Did you think of a good time to die? Is there really a good time to die? What is it about death that makes us afraid?

Think about your answers to these questions. In the rest of this Mini-course you will be studying about death, burial customs and mourning in the Jewish tradition. You will probe questions about life after death and discuss some of the emotions people feel when someone they love dies. You will also have a chance to learn how some other cultures deal with death.

There is a place in the back of this booklet for your thoughts as the unit progresses, a kind of journal for questions, comments or notes you wish to make about our subject.

Death, Burial and Mourning Customs

"It is no challenge to die like a Jew; the real challenge is to live like a Jew."

The Chofetz Chaim

A Person Dies

According to Jewish tradition, a person is not left alone when dying, but is supposed to be surrounded by family and friends. If conscious, the dying individual makes a confesion *(vidui)* and then affirms his or her faith by saying the Sh'ma.

If a feather placed against the nostrils shows that the person is dead, the eyes and mouth are closed. All the water in the house is poured out, a sign that a death has occurred. Relatives and friends may ask forgiveness for anything they may have done which displeased the deceased. The body is removed to the floor with the feet toward the door. Unless it is Shabbat, a candle is lighted and placed at the head. At no time is the dead corpse left alone. The same respect and reverence which the person received in life is given in death. A *shomer*, or watcher, remains with the body until burial, staying awake and reciting Psalms.

From the seventeenth century on, each community had a *Chevra Kaddisha*, or Holy Society. Some communities still continue this practice; others are considering reviving it. Members of the *Chevra Kaddisha* care for the dead from the time of death until burial. It is a *mitzvah* and an honor to be a part of this group. Members perform the ritual called *taharah*, or purification. This means they cleanse and wash the body, and dry it. They then dress it in simple white shrouds, called *tachrichim*. Men are wrapped in a *tallit*, whose fringes have been removed, since the fringes *(tzitzit)* symbolize the 613 Commandments *(taryag Mitzvot)* and the dead no longer have to fulfill earthly requirements. No eating, drinking, smoking, singing or repeating negative remarks about the deceased are allowed in the room. The custom of preserving, or embalming bodies, is also forbidden. Many of the duties of the *Chevra Kaddisha* are now performed by funeral homes.

Usually the *Chevra Kaddisha* is the first organization to be formed in a community. Find out if your community has one. Look up the history of the group in your city.

Do you think every community should have a *Chevra Kaddisha?* Would you be willing to serve with such a group?

The Funeral

In the first century, Rabban Gamaliel ordered that all Jews, rich and poor alike, should be buried in simple white clothes and in a plain wooden box. In this way, all were equal in death. Cremation or burial in concrete vaults is not permitted.

Burial must take place as soon as possible, usually within a day after death. However, no burials may take place on Shabbat or on a festival. Often, in modern times, funerals are postponed for longer periods to allow time for distant friends and relatives to arrive.

Traditionally, funerals were rarely held in the synagogue except for great community leaders and scholars. However, the home, the synagogue, a chapel and the cemetery are all acceptable places for a funeral. At a traditional funeral there is no music. A bag of earth from the Holy Land is buried with the person, symbolic of the wish of many Jews to be buried there.

At the funeral family members and friends act as pallbearers and carry the casket to the graveside. To walk with the dead to burial is an example of *chesed shel emet* (a truthful, sincere act of loving kindness without hidden motives). Flowers are not encouraged, but a donation to charity should be made instead. Psalms are recited. A eulogy, or tribute *(chesped)* is usually spoken which praises the deceased and expresses the loss felt by the mourners and the community. A special prayer, *El Malay Rachamim,* is recited which asks God to give perfect rest to the soul of the dead person. The casket is lowered and everyone present helps to shovel the dirt and fill the grave. Although it may seem very harsh to ask mourners to do this, it actually helps them to realize the finality of their loved one's death.

Before the body is buried, family members rend, or tear, their clothes as a symbol of their grief and of the "tear" which the death has made in their lives. This is called *keriah,* and is a very old custom, dating back to the Bible (II Samuel 13:31). Sometimes this is done at the moment of hearing of a death, or before burial and after the funeral service. The following blessing is then said: "Blessed art Thou, the true Judge."

After the grave is filled,the mourner's *Kaddish* is said. Mourners leave by passing between parallel lines of those attending, who say, "May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." Before entering the house of mourning, all wash their hands.

What do you think are important things to be said in a eulogy?

Write a "eulogy" for a Jewish person you know or for a famous Jewish person:

In what ways do the rituals of a Jewish funeral help the mourners?

In what ways are they not helpful?

Why do you think we have funeral services?

Are funerals services or rituals for the living or for the dead?

Comforting the Mourner

In Judaism it is a sacred obligation to comfort the mourner and it is a *mitzvah* to pay a condolence call. Generally, these visits take place only after the burial, allowing time for the mourners to become ready to see visitors. The Mishnah states that immediately after a death, one should not try to console a mourner (Pirke Avot IV:23).

The first meal after the burial, the *seudat havra'ah,* (the meal of comfort), is provided by neighbors, friends or relatives. This was once the task of the *Chevra Kaddisha.* The meal usually consists of hardboiled eggs, bread and lentils. Eggs are a symbol of mourning, their roundness representing the continuous nature of life. Bread is the staff of life. We are not sure why lentils are served. Some say it is because they are round, representing either the wheel of fate that spares no one or the continuous nature of life's cycle. These reasons could apply to eggs as well.

At this time, mourners like to reminisce, to mention the good qualities of the deceased and the good times they had together. It is better to talk about the dead person than to ignore the death. The talking helps the mourners to work through their grief. The condolence call is not a time to be lighthearted and the atmosphere should not seem like a party. It is a time to show your concern and give comfort to the bereaved through support and by just being there.

Silence can also be comforting. Job's friends sat with him for seven days in silence (Job 2:13).

If it is not possible to make a condolence call, then a note or card should be sent expressing sympathy and letting the bereaved family know that you are thinking of them.

What are some things you could say to someone mourning a dear one?

Which would you prefer, silence or conversation during a condolence call. Why? How does silence usually affect you?

The following letter is an actual letter received by one of the authors when her father died.

Dear Audrey,

This note is to let you know that all of us who lose a parent share in some way each other's loss. I'm sure that you have many wonderful memories – as we do – that will enrich your daily reveries with heartwarming reflections. And they become increasingly more important as time goes by.

You have our understanding, our sympathy and affection.

Terry

Do you think that this is a good letter? Why or why not?

Write your own letter of condolence to a friend here:

The Mourning Calendar

The following descriptions of *Shiva, Shloshim* and the year reflect traditional mourning practices.

Shiva

Shiva begins on the day of the burial and ends the morning of the seventh day after morning services. During this time the mourner gradually comes out of the shock and begins to be able to talk about the loss and to be comforted by others. On Shabbat there is no mourning, but the *shiva* resumes when Shabbat is over. If a festival occurs during the week of *shiva,* then the *shiva* does not resume.

Shiva usually takes place in the home where the deceased lived. Mourners and guests sit on low stools or boxes. The mirrors are covered. No leather shoes are permitted, only slippers, canvas or rubber shoes. Men do not shave or cut their hair; women do not wear cosmetics. No festivities are allowed. Only the hands and face may be washed, but soiled clothes may be changed. A lamp is burned in memory of the deceased all week long. Morning and evening prayers are said at which time Psalms are read and *Kaddish* is recited.

Rank order the things you would want to talk about if you were sitting shiva:

___ Your memories of the person who died
___ A recent TV show
___ How sad you feel

Explain your ranking.

Shloshim

Shloshim is the period from the end of the *shiva* through the 30th day after burial. This period is also shortened if a major festival occurs during the 30 days. During the *shloshim* some of the practices of the *shiva* are continued, such as no shaving or haircutting, bathing or wearing new clothes. Weddings are not celebrated, no parties with music are permitted and mourners do not appear at public gatherings or places of entertainment. When these 30 days are over, mourning is over for all relatives other than a parent.

The Year

Mourning for a parent does not end until 12 Hebrew months have passed since the day of death. During all of this period, joyous events, dinners with music, theatres and concerts are avoided. *Kaddish* is said daily by sons for 11 months. If there is no son, a family will often hire someone to say the *Kaddish* each day.

A Prayer

Hallowed and enhanced may He be throughout the world of His own creation. May He cause His sovereignty soon to be accepted, during our life and the life of all Israel. And let us say: Amen.

May He be praised throughout all time.

Glorified and celebrated, lauded and praised, acclaimed and honored, extolled and exalted may the Holy One be, far beyond all song and psalm, beyond all tributes which man can utter. And let us say: Amen.

Let there be abundant peace from Heaven, with life's goodness for us and for all the people Israel. And let us say: Amen.

He who brings peace to His universe will bring peace to us and to all the people Israel. And let us say: Amen.

(From The *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,* edited by Rabbi Jules Harlow. Copyright 1972 by The Rabbinical Assembly. Reprinted by permission of The Rabbinical Assembly.)

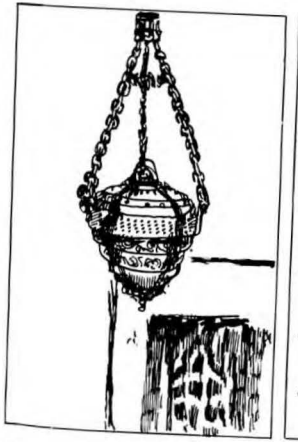
What do you think this prayer is about?

Does it have anything to do with death?

Why is it appropriate to say it at funerals and as mourners?

You probably recognized this prayer as The *Kaddish* which is said at various times during congregational services and by mourners at the conclusion of each service. The origins of this prayer are not known. Legend has it that angels brought it down from the heavens. Some believe that it was written by Jews in Babylonia during the exile. Because it is written in Aramaic, many believe that it was written by the Rabbis of the 1st or 2nd Centuries C.E.

We do not really know how the *Kaddish* was first used, but over the course of time this wonderful prayer found its way into our prayerbooks and into our hearts. With minor changes, the *Kaddish* is said at the end of biblical or talmudic public readings *(Kaddish d'Rabbanan* or Rabbis' *Kaddish).* It divides each section of the prayer service *(Chatzi Kaddish* or half *Kaddish).* Probably during the early middle ages, it became identified with mourners.



Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ. וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Congregation and mourners:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

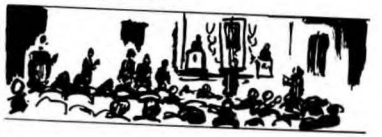
Mourner:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלָּא לְעֵלָּא מִכָּל־בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Actually, the *Kaddish* is a prayer of praise to God. A reading in *Gates of Prayer,* the New Union Prayer Book, mentions its wonderful power. "It keeps the living together, and forms a bridge to the mysterious realm of the dead." The reading poses the question, "Can a people disappear and be annihilated so long as a child remembers its parents?"



What is your response to this question?

Do you intend to say *Kaddish* for your parents? Why or why not?

Unveiling

Mourners are not allowed to visit the grave during *shloshim*, but may do so after that. Many Jewish people visit the graves of loved ones before Yom Kippur.

Sometimes an unveiling is held at the graveside at the end of the final mourning period. Psalms are recited, a brief eulogy may be said, the *El Malay Rachamim* and the *Kaddish* are said and a veil or cloth is removed from the headstone *(matsevah)*, and the inscription is read aloud.

Yahrzeit and *Yizkor*

Every year on the *yahrzeit* (anniversary) of the day of death (according to the Hebrew calendar), sons recite *Kaddish* for their mother and/or father. If they can, they conduct services and have an *aliyah* (are called to the Torah). A candle is lighted on the eve of the *yahrzeit* which burns for 24 hours. Some synagogues have memorial plaques with individual lights which are turned on when each *yahrzeit* occurs. Many people visit the grave on the occasion of the *yahrzeit*. Tradition recommends that the Torah be studied, that charity be given and that acts of loving kindness be performed especially on that day.

At various times throughout the year, special memorial services are held in synagogues. These are called *Yizkor* services and take place on Yom Kippur, the last day of Sukkot, Pesach and Shavuot. *Yizkor* may be said for all relatives who have died and we attend these services throughout our lives. They are reminders of our parents and ancestors and encourage us to lead good lives.

Some people who have not lost parents do not attend *Yizkor* services. However, others do attend in order to say *Kaddish* for Holocaust victims who left no survivors behind.

Why do you suppose that some people whose parents are alive do not attend *Yizkor* services?

_____

_____

_____

What are other ways to honor the memory of a loved one besides studying, lighting a light, visiting the grave, giving charity and performing deeds of loving kindness?

_____

_____

_____

Liberal Practices

In Reform congregations, some of the traditions discussed above have been modified. There is often no rending of clothes. The earth is not shoveled on the grave in the presence of the mourners. It is not necessary to wash the hands upon returning from the cemetery. Funerals are not always held the day after the death and watchers are not essential. Cremation is discouraged but is allowed, as are flowers. (Donations to charity are preferred to flowers.) There is no rule that says the casket must be plain wood, but this is recommended. The body is usually dressed in a suit or dress. Sometimes a man is wrapped in a *tallit*. Simple music is allowed at the funeral. For the most part, a bag of earth from the Holy Land is not included in the coffin. In most other respects, customs are the same.

Some mourning practices, such as sitting on low stools and covering mirrors have been abandoned by liberal Jews. After three days of intense mourning, some Reform Jews attend to business. A *minyan* is not required for a Reform service, and both men and women can participate. Mourners may attend congregational or civic functions after the *shiva*. They allow no music or entertainment for 30 days, then they resume their regular social life. Reform Jews say *Kaddish* for 12 months, not 11. Some say it each Shabbat only, instead of on a daily basis. *Yahrzeit* dates are determined according to the secular calendar, instead of the Hebrew calendar.

How do you feel about the changes in the rituals by Reform Jews?

_____

_____

_____

Do the changes make the ritual more or less meaningful?

_____

_____

_____

Which way do you prefer? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Use this page to write a story or poem about someone whose friend or relative or pet died. Use as many of the facts you have just learned about death, burial and mourning customs in the Jewish tradition as you can.

Funeral and Mourning Customs Around the World

"Ah, surely nothing dies but something mourns."
Byron

China

Chinese death beliefs are based on a combination of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shamanism. There is a strong belief in the afterlife and in ancestor worship. Chinese believe that 1) the living owe everything to the dead; 2) the actions of the spirit world affect the world of the living; and 3) the dead are concerned only with their descendents.

After a death occurs, a family elder offers incense in the local temple to attain the goodwill of the local deity. The family asks a magician to set a good time for the funeral. The blue and white lanterns which are hung outside of the home announce that a death has occurred. A member of the family bathes the body of the deceased and wraps it in wadding and dresses it in clothes. The body remains in the room where the death occurred until the coffin is made or brought from storage. (Many elderly Chinese ask their children to purchase coffins while they are still alive and healthy. In this way they know that everything is ready for their death.) Candles are lit and incense is burned as signs of mourning. Visitors bring gifts to the family. During the 60 days after a death men do not shave or cut their hair or beards.

The funeral service is a ritualized procession. The deceased is carried at the head of the procession on a sedan chair made of bamboo poles. Following this come the male mourners. Next come the female mourners. Friends carry paper replicas of everything which the body will need in the world to come and these are burned at the grave. Women and hired mourners wail continuously. Wealthy people are buried in their clan's burial plot. The poor are usually buried on the land on which they worked. The paper gifts are burned and the mourners return home. All traces which suggest that a death has occurred have been removed. Three days after the funeral the mourners return to the cemetery and present food to the dead. At various times during the year, the dead are presented with gifts and are visited.

India

The major religion of India is Hinduism. This religion teaches that life is a continuous cycle – a process of life, death and reincarnation back to life again. The level of one's current social-religious status (caste) depends on the acts (karma) which one performed during his or her previous lifetime.

Life is an ongoing process and death is a natural occurrence, releasing the soul from the body so that it can continue to progress.

When it is clear that a person is near death, the dying person confesses his sins. His head is sprinkled with water from the Ganges, a holy river in India, and smeared with mud from its banks. After death the body is prepared for cremation by washing it with special oils and arranging the limbs in a position of prayer.

Cremation takes place beside a river, preferably the Ganges. The body is immersed in the water and placed on the pyre (a heap of logs to be burned). After a short ceremony, the body is smeared with clarified butter. The chief mourner lights the pyre. For a man it is lit at the head; for a woman at the feet. The mourners march around the pyre but are forbidden to gaze at the flames. The skull must burst or be broken during the burning in order to release the soul. The mourners conclude by taking a purification bath in the river and making offerings to the ancestral spirits of the dead.

Three days after cremation, the mourners gather to collect the bones of the deceased and to cast them into the river in order to assure the passage of the individual into heaven. During the 10 days after the funeral, the family is considered unclean and must follow a variety of rules concerning cooking and what they may eat.

The Plains Indians of the United States

The traditional belief of the Sioux is that a person has four souls, two of which must be served at funeral rites. One soul never leaves the dead body; the other sets out on a four day journey to the land of the spirits. Both of these souls possess a ghost-like nature and must be appeased with sacrifices, gifts, feasts and respectful conduct. Friends join the dying person in his lodge. When the announcement is made that he has died, they begin to wail, tearing their clothes and mutilating themselves. One sign of grief is to hack off one's hair. Chief male mourners paint their faces black and refuse to wash themselves until they give a feast in honor of the dead relative or kill an enemy. Children are not allowed to be near a dead person or to see the body, because the spirit world is too close to the world of the living at this time.

The body of the deceased is prepared for burial by painting the face red to decorate it and to preserve it. The hair is clipped from one side of the head and saved by the family. The body is dressed in its best clothing and sewed into a buffalo hide or deer skin. The first step in the burial process is to place the body on a platform. After a year of air burial, the body is given earth burial. For four days the mourners sit around the platform. Wailing is alternated with the smoking of a ritual pipe for a 24 hour period. The next three days are quiet days during which only essential work is done. After four days the traveling soul is believed to be a safe distance from the living and the name of the dead will never be mentioned again. The mourning does not fully end until an appropriate length of time has passed. This depends on the age of the deceased.

The earth burial is a more important ceremony. The body is buried at the tribe's funeral mound with great ceremony.

	Jewish	India	China	Plains Indians
Preparation of the body				
Number of days of mourning				
Colors signifying death and/or mourning				
Manner of burial				
Use of candles				
Other mourning customs				

Answer the questions on the next page about these various customs.

FUNERAL AND MOURNING CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD

Which of the cultures do you think treats the dead person and the mourners with more care? Explain your answer.

Make up your own rituals for when a person dies. Try to include all the elements of those you have read about – how to prepare and bury the body, when this should take place, mourning customs for immediately following the death to one year later, and so on.

Which of the groups you have studied is your model most like? Why have you favored that model?

Emotions Triggered By Death

Anger and Disbelief

"Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Dylan Thomas

Anger is our way of expressing frustration. When we can't control something, we get angry. Often we get angry for unimportant reasons – a bad grade, when we break up with a girlfriend or boyfriend or our best friend moves away. If we get angry over things like these, it is certainly understandable that we get angry over a death.

Our Jewish tradition understands that anger naturally follows the death of a loved one. *Keriah*, the act of tearing one's clothes, is an action which expresses the anger and shock and disbelief which grips us when someone who is close to us dies. We become angry at God, at the world, the doctor, the rabbi and even at the deceased for leaving us alone.

Your teacher will show you a movie called "The Day Grandpa Died." After you have seen it, answer the following questions:

When the boy came home, why did he get angry?

Why was it so hard for David to accept his grandfather's death?

When was the first time the boy stopped feeling sorry for himself?

What did that show about his acceptance of the death?

Do you think David should have gone to the funeral? Why or why not?

How do you know it was a traditional funeral?

What did the rabbi say about the grandfather living on? How was this shown in the film?

Why do you think the film ends in the same way it began?

How would you rewrite the script for the film or change the ending?

Rate the film:

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ So-so

___ Fair ___ Poor

Why did you rate the film as you did?

Get together with four or five classmates and discuss your answers to the questions and your rating of the film.

Grief

"All things grow with time, except grief."

Folk saying

Pretend you are wearing "sad glasses." As you look through these glasses at the world, everything looks sad to you. What would the following look like to you through your sad glasses?

Write or draw your answers on another piece of paper, or do both.

Life in general _____

School _____

Religious School _____

Your home and family _____

Our government _____

The world situation _____

The future _____

Put an X next to things that don't usually look so sad to you.

What kind of a person would you be if you always wore "sad glasses?"

Bereaved people often wear sad glasses for a very long time. For how long do you think it is appropriate to wear sad glasses after the death of a family member? _____ A friend? _____ A national figure? _____

What is grief?

What is sadness?

Is there a difference between grief and sadness? If so, what is it?

Have you ever really grieved or been sad? Why?

How do you show your grief or sadness?

Is it all right to cry when someone dies? Does it help to cry? Is it all right for boys and men to cry?

What comforted you when you were sad?

Guilt

"When death had claimed them, and in their place
We find instead an empty space;
We think with vain regret of some harsh word
That once we might have said and they have heard."

(anonymous)

All people die. There is nothing you can do to prevent a death, and no thoughtless action of yours that can make a person die. Even if you sometimes made a person unhappy, they forgave you if they loved you.

What is blame? What is guilt?

Did you ever blame yourself for anything even though you weren't sure it was your fault?

Why do you suppose people feel guilty when someone they love dies?

On another piece of paper, draw what you look like when you feel guilty.

When did you feel like your picture?

Life After Death

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Psalm 23

With your class, read Psalm 23.

What does it mean to dwell in the House of the Lord forever?

Are you sure about this answer? Is it possible to be sure about the answer?

Are you curious about it? When did you begin to be curious about it?

Is it a mystery?

What else is a mystery?

Shut your eyes and try to imagine mystery . . . mysterious. What did you see? How do you feel about that? Pick a partner and express your feelings about it. Tell the other person all the things in your life that are a mystery. Did you use darkness as an image?

Which of the following best describes your idea of afterlife? Circle it.

- Shadowy world of silence
- Nothingness
- A joining of my mental energy to the cosmic intelligence
- A kind of endless sleep, rest and peace
- The end of this life, but survival of the soul
- Living on in people's memory
- Living on through my descendents
- Living on through the Jewish people
- Living on through my good deeds or great works
- Don't know

What does your choice say about you at this moment?

What influenced your choice most – your family, your religion, reading or something else?

All of the ideas on the list can be considered as Jewish views of afterlife. The following is a brief look at the various Jewish outlooks on what happens after death.

A Brief Overview of Jewish Ideas of Afterlife

In The Bible

The shadowy world beyond the grave was known by many names in the Bible. The most often used name is *Sheol*. *Sheol* was not described, but it was probably thought to be a world of darkness and silence, a pit beneath the earth separated somehow from the land of the living, perhaps by a large body of water. The kind of existence there was not spelled out.

In the Time of the Second Temple

During this period (420 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.), a belief developed that spiritual life continued after

death. This was closely tied to the idea that the righteous were rewarded by returning to God and *Gan Eden* (the Garden of Eden) while the wicked suffer eternal death in *Gehinom* (Gehenna). The dead were believed to be fully conscious.

In Talmud and Midrash

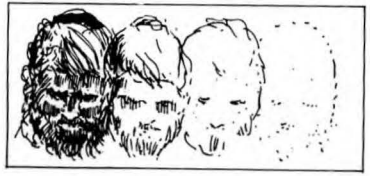
Belief in immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body now develop. A Messiah will come and when he does, all souls will return to their bodies and the dead will rise. The coming of the Messiah means political and physical Utopia and will usher in *olam ha-ba* (the world to come) at the end. The righteous will be close to God and enjoy His light and presence. Maimonides, the famed 12th Century philosopher, insisted that only the righteous would be resurrected at all.

In Kabbalistic Literature

In the later middle ages, *Kabbalists* (mystics) began to believe in *gilgul* (reincarnation). These people thought that each soul was given a job to do on earth. Those souls which did not complete the job were punished and purified in hell or were reincarnated again time after time until the task was finished and they atoned for the sin. Some souls didn't make it into another body, but were punished instead by being left to wander eternally.

Today

Orthodox Jews still believe in resurrection at the time of messianic redemption *and* the immortality of the soul after death. Reform Jews tend not to believe in resurrection, only in a spiritual life after death. They stress living on in the memory of those left behind and in the good deeds we perform while on earth. Conservative Jews have retained resurrection and immortality of the soul in their liturgy. Many believe in these ideas only figuratively, or poetically.



Which of the views helps a person to cope better with death? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Why do you think these different views developed?

_____

_____

_____

Living on In the Memory Of Those Left Behind

"Those who live no more echo still within our thoughts and words, and what they did is part of what we have become."

Gates of Prayer, the New Union Prayer Book

Read the following poem:

At the rising of the sun and at its going down
We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them.
At the beginning of the year, and when it ends
We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live;
For they are now a part of us
As we remember them.
When we are weary and in need of strength
We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart
We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share
We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make
We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based upon theirs,
We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live;
For they are now a part of us,
As we remember them.

Gates of Prayer, The New Union Prayer Book

Authored by Rabbi Sylvan P. Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer. From *New Prayers For the High Holy Days,* published by Media Judaica of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Used with permission.

Write some more verses for the poem. Collaborate with a friend if you wish.

Scrapbooks, pressed flowers and photo albums are ways of living on in memory. Can you think of some others?

_____

_____

_____

Is living on in the memory of others enough afterlife for you? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Joys of Living

"Therefore choose life."

Deuteronomy 30:19

Go back to your thoughts at the beginning of the mini-course. Take them out of the envelope on page two. Are they the same as before? Do you want to remove any of them or add others? Make the changes you want to make. If you wish, share your changes with your classmates.

In our tradition there is a story, or *midrash,* of a very old man who was planting an acorn. A passerby commented that there was hardly any point for the old man to plant the acorn, since he would surely never live to see it become a tree. The old man replied, "My ancestors planted acorns so that I would have trees to enjoy and I will do the same for my descendents."

What do you think is the meaning of this *midrash?*

_____

_____

_____

List the things you are now doing for your descendents:

_____

_____

_____

Are there some other things you might be doing?

_____

_____

_____

If not now, when?

_____

_____

Our rabbis of old said, "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the job; neither are you free to desist from it." List 10 things you want to accomplish before you die:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Fill in the blanks below. Add other statements if you can.

TO BE ALIVE IS _____

TO BE ALIVE IS _____

TO BE ALIVE IS _____

TO BE ALIVE IS _____

TO BE ALIVE IS _____

Some Readings

The following readings all have something in common. Read them and then answer the questions at the end.

A Poem

Go to the woods someday
And weave a wreath of memory there,
Weave a wreath of memory there,
Weave a wreath of memory there.
Then if tears obscure your way
You'll know how wonderful it is
To be alive . . .
Then if tears obscure your way
You'll know how wonderful
It is to be alive, to be alive,
To be alive, to be alive
To be alive!
To be alive!
To be alive!
To be alive!

(Written by a victim of the Holocaust, a child in Terezin camp. From . . . *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* . . . Edited by H. Volavkova. 1964 McGraw-Hill Book Company. Used with permission.)

From A Play

In Thornton Wilder's play "Our Town," a young woman, Emily Webb, dies and is granted the opportunity to leave her grave and return for one day in her life. She chooses her 12th birthday. Not only is she able to live the day over, but she can watch herself, too. This is what she says:

. . . just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment, we're happy. Let's look at one another.

I can't. I can't go on. Oh! Oh. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (She sobs) I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back — up the hill — to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-by, good-by world. Good-by, Grover's Corners . . . Mama and Papa. Good-by to clocks ticking . . . and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths. . . and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? every, every minute?

(Good-by world scene) " . . . just for a moment . . . every, every minute" (p. 100) from OUR TOWN by Thornton Wilder. Copyright ©1938, 1957 by Thornton Wilder. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

From A Diary

And in the evening, when I lie in bed and end my prayers with the words, "I thank you, God, for all that is good and dear and beautiful," I am filled with joy. Then I think about "the good" of going into hiding, of my health, and with my whole being of the "dearness" of Peter, of that which is still embryonic and impressionable and which we neither of us dare to name or touch, of that which will come sometime; love, the future, happiness and of "the beauty" which exists in the world; the world, nature, beauty, and all, all that is exquisite and fine.

I don't think then of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains. This is one of the things that Mummy and I are so entirely different about. Her counsel when one feels melancholy is: 'think of all the misery in the world and be thankful that you are not sharing in it.' My advice is: 'go outside, to the fields, enjoy nature and the sunshine, go out and try to recapture happiness in yourself and in God. Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy.

I don't see how Mummy's idea can be right, because then you would have to behave as if you are going through the misery yourself. Then you are lost. On the contrary, I've found that there is always some beauty left — in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you. Look at these things, then you find yourself again, and God, and then you regain your balance.

And whoever is happy will make others happy too. He who has courage and faith will never perish in misery.

(From *Anne Frank The Diary of A Young Girl*. Copyright 1952. Doubleday & Company, Inc. Reprinted with permission.)

What do these readings have in common?

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Probably you have heard the expression, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." In Judaism, we have similar sayings. Rabbi Eliezer said that we should live every day as if it were our last. Another sage said that we should live each day as if it were a blessing. In the funeral liturgy we say that people should "number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom." Do you agree with these ideas? What suggestions do you have for carrying them out?

For yourself _____

_____

For your group of friends _____

_____

For your parents _____

_____

For your rabbi _____

_____

It has been said that it is the young who are most concerned and worried about death. Perhaps it is because they are bursting with life and are eager to live it to the fullest.

The very old worry less about dying, because they have already lived full lives. They are most afraid of loneliness.

One rabbi suggests that both of these groups can help each other to face death. The young can take away the loneliness of the old. The old can help the young to understand life and reduce the fear of death.

How can we make these suggestions a reality?

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_____

Write your own poem or brief essay affirming and praising life and its small and large joys:

Plan A *SIYYUM*

A *siyyum* is a celebration at the conclusion of studying a tractate of the Talmud. Now that this study of death is nearly over, plan a class *siyyum*. You might want to have a memorial service for martyred Jews. Or put on a play or a celebration of life. Or . . . . . .

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning
וִידּוּי	*vidui*	confession
שְׁמַע	*Sh'ma*	hear
שׁוֹמֵר	*shomer*	watcher
חֶבְרָה קַדִּישָׁא	*Chevra Kaddisha*	Holy Society
מִצְוָה	*mitzvah*	good deed
טָהֳרָה	*taharah*	purification
טַלִּית	*tallit*	prayer shawl
צִיצִית	*tzitzit*	fringes
תרי"ג מִצְוֹת	*taryag Mitzvot*	613 commandments
תַּכְרִיכִין	*tachrichim*	shrouds
חֶסֶד שֶׁל אֱמֶת	*chesed shel emet*	a truthful, sincere act of loving kindness
הספד	*chesped*	eulogy
אֵל מָלֵא רַחֲמִים	*El Malay Rachamim*	God of Compassion . . .
קַדִּישׁ	*Kaddish*	mourner's prayer
קְרִיעָה	*keriah*	tearing or rending
בָּרוּךְ דַּיָּן הָאֱמֶת	*Baruch dayan ha-emet*	Blessed art Thou, the true judge
הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאָר אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלָיִם	*Hamakom y'na chame etchem b'toch sh'ar av-ley tzion ve-rushalyim*	May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem
סְעֻדַּת הַבְרָאָה	*seudat havra'ah*	meal of comfort
שִׁבְעָה	*shiva*	7 day period of mourning
שְׁלֹשִׁים	*shloshim*	30 day period of mourning
קַדִּישׁ דְּרַבָּנָן	*Kaddish d'Rabbanan*	Kaddish of the Rabbis
חֲצִי קַדִּישׁ	*Chatzi Kaddish*	Half Kaddish
יִזְכֹּר	*Yizkor*	Memorial Service
שְׁאוֹל	*sheol*	pit
גַּן עֵדֶן	*gan eden*	Garden of Eden
גֵּיהִנּוֹם	*gehinom*	Gehenna
עוֹלָם הַבָּא	*olam ha-ba*	the world to come
גִּלְגּוּל	*gilgul*	reincarnation
מִדְרָשׁ	*midrash*	story
סִיּוּם	*siyyum*	conclusion

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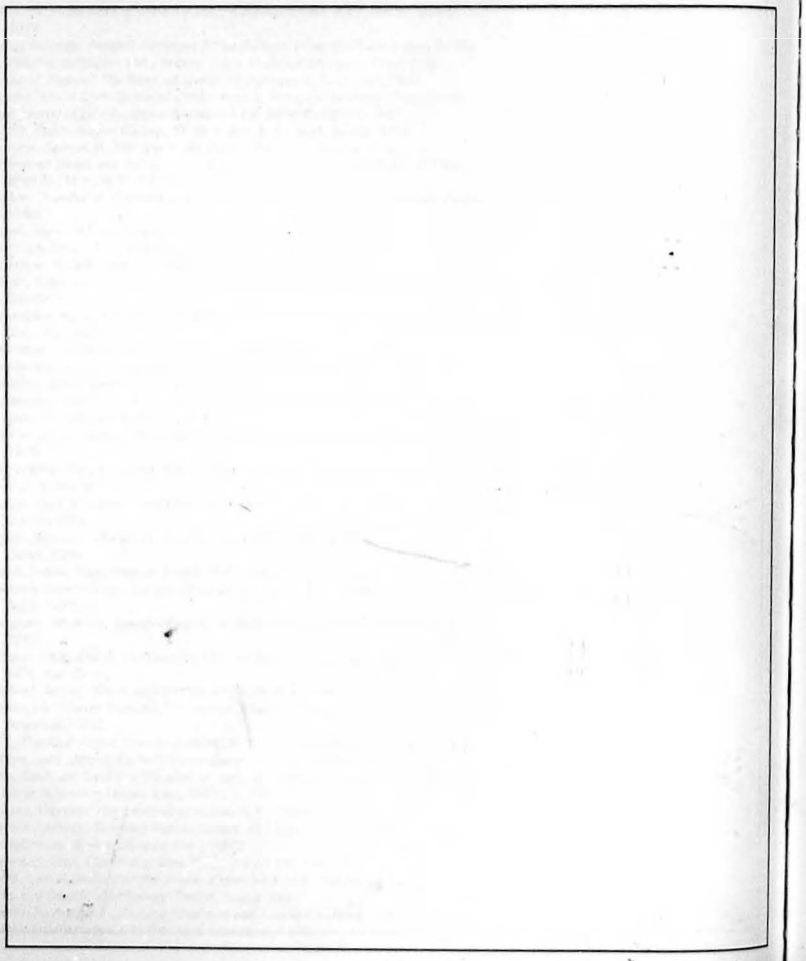
Thoughts

Thoughts



In this fourth and final chapter, I shall outline a course dealing specifically with death and Jewish attitudes and rites relating to the subject. Since this is a course geared to meet the needs of the adolescent, for whom the peer group is of prime importance, the lessons will be tailored to maximize participation by the students and to minimize lecture-type sessions.

In presenting the subject to a 9th grade Religious School class, meeting once a week for approximately an hour, I feel the course should extend from six to eight weeks-- a "mini" course. Although such a program could be incorporated into other major courses such as Jewish Law or within a Confirmation program, it is presented here as a self-sustaining unit.

The teacher presenting the program should, of course, be well-versed on the subject of Jewish attitudes and rituals surrounding death as well as in the psychology of the adolescent. It is most important that the students are not frightened by the subject. Since most students at this age have a great fear of the death of their parents and other loved ones, such subjects should be first broached in a very general manner.

In this light, the teacher should privately ascertain, at the onset of the course, whether there are students within the class who have lost a parent or a loved one. The teacher should be especially sensitive

to these students and their feelings. Although these students may prove to be sources of experience and thus instrumental to class discussions, they must nonetheless be carefully watched. Strong emotions will be at play during these sessions and special attention and sensitivity must be displayed towards the students who have already experienced bereavement.

The first lesson should serve as an introduction to the course by presenting the subject gradually. This may be done via the use of a questionnaire, as done in the secular high school program previously studied, or through the general exploration of students' thoughts on death, without delving too deeply into the personalized experiences of the students. Once the students feel more comfortable with the subject, personalized viewpoints might be elicited. Also, since peer pressure is so great, it is important to instill within the students a sense of trust for one another.

When asking students to comment upon each others' suggestions, etc. during the lessons, questions such as "What did you like about the answer or suggestions?" should be asked as opposed to a question such as "What was wrong with the comment?"

This understanding of the adolescent psyche is critical to the successful realization of this course. Through the creation of a non-threatening, open atmosphere, the teacher not only better meets the psychological needs of the students, but also, more importantly, can create a more conducive forum through which to impart facts, thoughts, and a sense of Jewish responses and reactions to death.

LESSON 1

AIM: To introduce the concept of death to a 9th grade Religious School class.

MOTIVATION: Since our aim here is to introduce the topic in a more general manner, as well as adhering to the Jewish sense of the course, the teacher should begin the course with a brief introduction to the life cycle, such as, "Just as we celebrate joys such as births and marriages, we must also face unhappy situations in life, such as the loss of a loved one. What are some of our thoughts on dying? What happens when somebody dies? What do we know about the Jewish way to deal with this subject?" A brief class discussion guided by the teacher should ensue so that students may be given their first chance as a group to explore and possibly reveal their thoughts on the issue. Although this lesson will not deal with specific rituals and laws regarding death, the teacher should correct any misconceptions, should they be voiced. This motivation continues with the distribution of the passage from Ecclesiastes, "To Everything There Is a Season:"

" To everything there is a season,
And a time for every purpose under heaven.
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill,and a time to heal.
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance."

The opening of this course is vital because it is of utmost importance to impart upon the students the sense of the course. Their participation and input is crucial, not only to the viability of the program, but also to their own need for expression and sharing among the peer group. Throughout the duration of the course, the aims will be to present the

material in a manner that will challenge the students' emotional and thought processes. Our goal is for the students to have a better understanding of life and death, to be knowledged in what must be done at the time of the death of a loved one, and to understand Judaism's teachings on the subject.

DEVELOPMENT: In order to gain a better understanding of the wants, needs and concerns of the students regarding this subject as well as to provoke thought and participation, the main activity of the first lesson will be to prepare, discuss and tabulate a questionnaire on death. Each student should think of one "social" and one "Jewish" question concerning death. These questions will be written on the board either by the teacher or by a student. After reviewing and discussing these questions and adding some others which might also be relevant (15-20 questions), the students will copy the information from the board in a questionnaire form and then proceed to answer the questions as best they can. Class involvement in preparing such a questionnaire is educational in itself. They would administer the questionnaire to themselves and to one another. Topics such as suicide, death in the media and what happens to a person after he dies might be included in questions on the social level. Questions dealing with Jewish attitudes to death might include how Jews are buried, and whether Jews believe in an afterlife. A sample of such a questionnaire is provided below:

QUESTIONS ON THE SOCIAL LEVEL:

1. Describe a society in which no one has to die unless he so wishes.
2. Should suicide be a right?
3. Do people ever have the right to cause the death of others?
4. How does advertising exploit the fear of death?

5. What happens to people after death?

6. If you had to design a perfect funeral, what would it be like?

7. How can society better prepare its members for dealing with death?

8. Agree or disagree with this statement of Freud's: "In the unconscious, everyone of us is convinced of his own immortality."

QUESTIONS ON A JEWISH LEVEL:

1. How do Jews bury their dead?

2. What'a a Jewish funeral like?

3. What is shiva?

4. What is the role of the Rabbi?

5. How do liberal practices differ from traditional ones?

6. How long do we mourn?

7. Why are wills so important?

8. What kind of wills are there?

The class would end with a general discussion as to their thoughts regarding the questions themselves and their reactions while answering them. Questions such as "Why is it important for us to know these facts concerning death?" and "What do you think is the most important thing to know when somebody dies?" should be asked and responses elicited. As a home assignment, the students will administer the same questionnaire to their parents and report on the results at the next session.

The educational reasons for the creation and response to such a questionnaire are manifold. Firstly, the students are participating in the creation of the program. Secondly, through studying the questionnaire, the teacher can better assess the emotional and factual needs of the students. Thirdly, through the group's discussion and tabulation of the questionnaire, a

forum is provided for the expression of ideas and thoughts by the adolescent. Finally, through the homework assignment, students can better understand their family's feelings and reactions to death. A more open line of communication between parents and children regarding this subject may be established.

LESSON 2:

AIM: To teach about the way in which Jews handle death.

MOTIVATION: As a tie-in to the last session, the first portion of the class will be spent in dealing with the previous week's questionnaire as presented to their parents. The students will share their reactions to interviewing their parents as well as parental responses and reactions to such a questionnaire. This will be a "warm-up" session through which students may share personal and family reactions and further reinforce a sense of community within the class.

After this first portion of the lesson, the teacher should ask the students whether they have personally experienced the loss of a loved one or whether they know someone who has? Why type of things were done at the funeral? Where is the cemetery in our community? What happens after the funeral? How do we mourn? What rituals are there to help us better deal with out emotions? The teacher should present to the students a hypothetical situation in which they must plan a funeral. The students responses are to be listed on the board while the teacher clarifies any erroneous facts. This exercise will allow the students who have already confronted death to share their experiences and knowledge, will facilitate input and participation by the students, and will serve as a springboard for the remainder of the lesson.

The motivation to this lesson is critical to the continued "success" of the course. Most important here is for the students to begin to share not only thoughts, but feelings. Dialogue and discussion are essential here. The students should be made to feel free to offer ideas and sugges-

tions. If there is an erroneous fact presented by the student, the teacher must show great care in correcting this fact in a manner that shows sensitivity and caring. It is important that the students be made to feel the worth of their viewpoints and the sensitive handling of these adolescents will serve to promote more open participation by the students.

DEVELOPMENT: The teacher will continue the lesson by asking, "What is missing from these preparations we've listed?" "What are some other things we know regarding death?" The teacher will continue by discussing some of the principles involved concerning mitzvot related to death and to mourning. The first principle surrounds moderation in grief. There are various ways of mourning in Judaism, such as shiva (seven days after the funeral), shloshim (thirty days after the funeral), and the year. The entire mourning period is known as Aveilut. These periods of mourning were established to encourage the pouring out of grief and also to limit the mourning. Why is this done? What are these Jewish rites attempting to accomplish here? The students should be encouraged to respond here.

The second principle is the recognition of the reality of death. There is a prescribed, traditional behavior in Judaism, such as conduct at the bedside of a dying person. The mitzvah of Bikkur Cholim, visiting the sick, is basic to Judaism. Also, it is a mitzvah to offer prayers for the seriously ill. Other rituals include the preparation of the body for burial and funeral and the visiting of the mourners' homes to share in their grief and help them to accept their loss. Questions such as "What are shiva calls and why do we make them?" should promote discussion by the students.

The third principle involves respect for the dead, i.e., the planning of a proper funeral. What is a proper funeral? How and when and Jews buried? What happens to the body before burial?

The final principle attests to equality in death. Through texts, such as found in Job 3:19, "The small and the great are there alike, and the servant is free of his master," we see the sensitivity of the rabbis to the poor.

After these basic principles are presented and explained, the teacher should then begin to introduce Jewish rituals on death, both traditional and liberal. Each subject should first be presented in question form to the class, for example, "What is the Kaddish? When do we say it?" After students' responses, the teacher should clarify these rituals. In this way, the students become more involved since their experiences and knowledge are first solicited. The additional information provided by the teacher serves as a building-block as well as a clarifier to the knowledge they might already have. The following questions should be asked, followed by traditional and liberal interpretations of the subject:

1. How do Jews react and what do they do upon learning of the death of a loved one?

-Both traditional and liberal Jews, when informed of the loss of a loved one, must recite: ברוך אתה ד' אלהינו מלך העולם דין האמת

a prayer which affirms our faith in G-d and acceptance of the inevitability of death.

-The Rabbi must be informed in order to prepare for the funeral.

2.Are there any special procedures Jews do when preparing the body for the funeral?

-Before burial, traditional Jews have the body cleansed by the Chevra Kadisha, the burial society, or the funeral home. There are definite, prescribed rituals in the cleansing known as Tahorah. Jewish men are buried in tachrichim, a white burial shroud, and a tallit. Women wear only tachrichim. Traditional Jews place shards over the eyes of the deceased as well as a bag of dirt under the head.

-In liberal Judaism, the rules of Taharah may or may not be observed. The body is cleansed by the funeral director or Chevra Kadisha with the simple instructions of preparing it for burial. The dead may be buried in ordinary clothing. Tachrichim are not required.

-Embalming the body is forbidden according to traditional Judaism and is also discouraged by liberal Judaism.

-Autopsies are forbidden according to traditional Judaism. Liberal Judaism permits autopsies as long as they are performed with the intent of increasing medical knowledge.

-Traditional Judaism forbids donating bodies to science. Liberal Judaism permits this so long as the body is treated with respect and that the remains are cremated or buried. Reform Judaism also permits donating organs of the body for pikuach nefesh, the saving of lives.

3. When is the appropriate time for Jews to conduct funerals?

-According to traditional Judaism, funerals are not delayed and are held as soon as possible(within twenty-four hours). There is no biblical evidence as to how soon after death burial took place but it is likely that it was ordinarily within a day after death. This was dictated by the climate and by the fact that the Israelites did not embalm the dead. According

to one Kabbalistic source, burial refreshes the soul of the deceased, and only after burial will it be admitted to G-d's presence.

Some delays in burial are, however, justified. "Honor of the dead" demands that the proper preparation of the coffin and shrouds be made, and that relatives and friends pay their last respects. In talmudic times, while burial was not delayed, graves were "watched" for a period of three days to avoid all possibility of pseudo-death. Later, however, it became customary to bury as soon after death as possible.

-Liberal Judasim also buries as soon as possible. The funeral is conducted as soon as it is practical, but without undue haste, usually within two days of death.

-Both traditional and liberal Judaism stress simplicity in funeral services. The coffin, according to traditional Judaism, must remain closed during the entire service and must be made entirely of wood.

-It is the responsibility of the family to bury their dead. If there is no family, it becomes the responsibility of the community.

-Traditional Judaism only allows for underground burial as a method of disposing the body. Liberal Judaism accepts cremation and entombment. However, burial is still most commonly practiced among liberal Jews.

-Before the burial service, the traditional mourner tears the lapel of his coat, according to set rituals. This mourning custom is known as keriyah. In liberal Judaism, the rending of a garment or the wearing of a symbolic black ribbon in place of keriyah is left to the discretion of the family. [102]

To end this preliminary lesson on Jewish rituals on death and burial,

the teacher should elicit comments by the students regarding their reactions to the information they've received to date. What do they feel about our burial practices? Why are Jewish funerals less elaborate than others? Why don't we see a lot of flowers at a Jewish funeral? How do these practices reflect Judaism's deep respect for the body? What other types of funerals are there? Has anyone ever been to a funeral? Was it a Jewish funeral or a non-Jewish funeral? How were they different/ similar?

As a homework assignment, a sheet containing several poems (see following page) concerning death will be distributed to the students. The students are to read and contemplate the different messages of these poems. Included as part of this worksheet will be questions concerning each poem. These will serve to promote a thorough reading and reflection of each poem. Also, it will provide the lead-in to the third lesson of the unit, that which deals with mourning and the emotional hurdles surrounding it.

DEATH , BE NOT PROUD

by John Donne

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go--
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

1. What comparison is made between rest, sleep and Death? What point is the poet trying to prove? How does he prove it? Complete this statement: "If we get pleasure from rest and sleep, then..."

2. The poet both addresses Death directly and personifies it. How do these poetic techniques intensify the dramatic effect of the poem and add to its emotional tone?

3. State in your own words the meaning of the last two lines.

REQUIEM
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Under the wide and starry sky
  Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
  Here he lies where he long'd to be:
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
  And the hunter home from the hill.

1. What is the mood of this poem?

2. How does the poet express this mood?

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH
by Alan Seeger

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple blossoms fill the air--
I have a rendezvous with Death,
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.
It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath-
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

G-d knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear...
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town;
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

1. What feelings are elicited through the reading of this poem?

2. Can you discern to what circumstances this poem refers?

STOP ALL THE CLOCKS
by W.H. Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking, with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;

Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

1. Compare the sentiments expressed in this poem to the previous poem. How are they similar? How do they differ?

2. What are the different reactions to death as expressed in the four poems you have just read? How do you agree? How do you disagree?

LESSON 3

AIM: To explain Jewish mourning practices and prayers.

MOTIVATION: After reading aloud the poems, the teacher should ask: "What were our reactions to the poems? What different emotions did they elicit? Is there one underlying theme surrounding death or do we find several different themes? Can we formulate a tie-in between these poems and the way in which we, as Jews, feel about and deal with death? What does Judaism do to help us to emotionally recover from the loss of a loved one?" The teacher should be very careful when presenting the material on shiva, etc. to the students. The mood of this lesson is essential here. All information should first be presented in question form, as done in the last lesson. In order for the lesson to maintain its give and take format, the teacher must always elicit comments, reactions, thoughts and feelings of the students. In this way, the sense of community among the class can be strengthened, the humanity of the subject matter can be stressed, and the interest level of the students can be maintained. The teacher should lecture as little as possible. Rather, he should briefly present the information and allow the students to reflect upon why these things are done while guiding their answers. This lesson can serve as an excellent forum for sharing of experiences by the students, this reinforcing a sense of trust among the group.

DEVELOPMENT: Now that we've learned about Judaism's respect for the body and about funeral services, what about the family which remains? What things are we allowed and not allowed to do while mourning? What does Judaism do to help us overcome our grief and return to our normal lives? What are our personal experiences, if any? The following subjects should be presented:

1. What are the periods of mourning?

-The Jewish mourner is called an Onen and the mourning period is known as Aveilut. Aveilut is broken down into several sections, each having its own rules and guidelines. During Aninut, the period between death and the funeral, the mourner is free from all social and ritual obligations, except for Shabbat. This is due to his great grief and preoccupation in planning the funeral.

-The seven days of mourning following the funeral are known as shiva. There are many prescribed rites concerning shiva. Among them are the covering of mirrors inthe homes of the mourners, the wearing of slippers, rather than leather shoes, and sitting on hard benches, rather than on chairs. Men do not shave and mourners should not bathe.

-In liberal Judaism, the first three days are the most intense and are considered the minimum time for mourning.

-After returning from the funeral, the mourner sits down to a meal known as "seu-dat havra'ah," (meal of consolation). This meal was provided by friends in accordance with the Talmudic injunction forbidding a mourner to eat his own food on the first day. Eggs are traditionally served at these meals. Why? What does an egg's shape symbolize? What is the importance of this meal provided by friends? What significance does it have?

-A seven-day candle, as a memory to the deceased, known as a shiva candle, is burned by traditional and liberal Jews. This is symbolic of the light brought by the deceased during his life.

2. How can we help our friends in their grief?

-During shiva,the time of extreme grief, the mourner is comforted by the community. This is done to express sympathy, share in the grief, offer respect to the deceased and to help the mourner deal with the reality of

the death. These visits are known as "shiva calls." It is a mitzvah to express sympathy by making a gift of tzedakah in memory of the deceased.

-The mitzvah of nichum aveilim, the comforting of mourners, is carried through by joining them in study and prayer. Kaddish is recited at daily prayer services during shiva. In traditional Judaism, services are held at the home where shiva is taking place and requires a minyan of men. In liberal Judaism, a minyan is not required. The mitzvah of Kaddish is incumbent on men and women equally and may be recited by the deceased's immediate family as well as by relatives and friends.

3. Are there any restrictions after shiva?

-Certain restrictions, such as not marrying or attending festive events continue through the shloshim for traditional Jews. When mourning for parents, these restrictions apply for an entire year.

4. What are the special prayers we must learn when mourning a loved one?

The Kaddish is recited for eleven months by traditional Jews. Liberal Jews recite Kaddish for twelve months. Some mourners, however, recite the Kaddish only on Shabbat rather than twice daily during morning and evening services. (The teacher should explain why traditional Jews recite Kaddish for only eleven months).

Yahrzeit and Yizkor: Yahrzeit is recited on the anniversary of the death by sons, according to traditional Judaism. All members of the family may recite the Yahrzeit, according to liberal Judaism. A Yahrzeit candle is lit on the eve of the anniversary of the death and burns for twenty-four hours. Traditional Jews observe Yahrzeit on the Jewish date of the anniversary; liberal Jews may observe Yahrzeit on either the Jewish or on the secular date. Yizkor is recited on Yom Kippur, on the last days of Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot and is another memorial prayer.

5. Why does Judaism prescribe all these stages of mourning and restrictions? Is this structure important?

During a period when tragedy strikes, the mourner temporarily loses control. In Judaism's humane and sensitive dealing with the subject, the stages of mourning reflect a deep understanding of human psychology and human needs. The mourner is gradually re-introduced in a structured mannerinto society and regains control over his grief, thus re-establishing his life. The mourner is allowed his time for despair, remembers his loved one through restrictions lasting up to a year, as well as by the recitation of the Kaddish. This year-long mourning process provides for the necessary time required for healing and starting anew.

Having previously briefly introduced the Kaddish, the teacher should continue with its re-introduction and explanation. A xeroxed sheet, both in Hebrew and in English, should be given to each student, if prayer books are not available. The students will be guided in analyzing the prayer, explaining its meaning and discussing its implications. The students should be asked questions such as "What are they referring to here" and "Is it a sad prayer?"

To further guide the discussion, the teacher should ask, "Why is this prayer recited after death? What is the meaning and purpose of the prayer? Does it really deal with death?" The class should end by the recitation of the Kaddish. Their reactions after reciting it should be heard. What feelings did they have while reciting this? Was anyone in particular thought of during the recitation? Is it appropriate to recite a prayer which glorifies G-d while mourning? The class should end with a reflective sharing of feelings and experiences by the students.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ,

Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba be-al-ma di-ve-ra chi-re-u-tei,

וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית

ve-yam-lich mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei de-chol beit

יִשְׂרָאֵל, בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-ma-ya.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדַּר

Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach, ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei, ve-yit-ha-dar

וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלָּא מִן כָּל־

ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu, le-ei-la min kol

בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא,

bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta, da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma,

וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל,

Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-ma-ya ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,

וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־

O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu ve-al kol

יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

* *

Let the glory of God be extolled, let His great name be hallowed, in the world whose creation He willed. May His kingdom soon prevail,

in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let His great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Let the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, be glorified, exalted, and honored, though He is beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter, and let us say: Amen.

For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true, and let us say: Amen.

May He who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world, and let us say: Amen.

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort to all who are bereaved. Amen.

LESSON 4

AIM: To introduce the concepts of wills, ethical wills and obituaries. Through the use of activities such as making up a will, the experience will be personalized for the students.

MOTIVATION: Through the use of questions such as follow, the teacher should guide a discussion among the students. It can be introduced with, "Most of us have heard about wills. What are they? Can there be more than one type of will? Why do you think it is important for people to have wills?" The students will be given a chance to reveal their knowledge on wills, including special requests made by the deceased in the will, as well as allocation of material wealth, giving of charity and the like. These responses, once clarified by the teacher, should be listed on the blackboard.

DEVELOPMENT: Once this has been achieved, the teacher should distribute to the class a copy of an ethical will found on p. 178 of Jack Riemer's Jewish Reflections on Death (see following pages). The students should share in the oral reading of the will and the teacher should guide the discussion to follow. Such questions as "Why is this will different from the standard will?; What exactly is an ethical will and why is it made up?; When is a good time to make up an ethical will?; What are some important things to consider in such a will?; What can we sense about this person after having read his ethical will?; What things were important to him?; and What is he really leaving behind?"should be included.

Once the topic of the will has been explained and elucidated, the students will begin to learn about obituaries. Both of these documents, the will and the obituary, are vital during the period following the death of a loved one and it is important for the students to acquire knowledge of these

documents.

In order to depersonalize this section of the class for the students, the teacher will distribute to the class a copy of an obituary of a famous person, perhaps a celebrity or a politician (see following pages). By reading and studying an actual obituary, the students will be given the chance to see what kinds of facts are included and why they are important. This method of introducing obituaries is educationally sound since it provides the necessary facts and information in a non-lecture format. Also, since the obituary deals with someone not personally known to the students, it allows them to view it more objectively. Finally, this exercise serves to provide an "emotional recess" for the students, between the difficult and sobering subject matter which preceeded and the sensitive discussions to come.

After reading the obituary aloud, the teacher should guide a class discussion concerning the purpose of an obituary. "What kinds of facts do we find in an obituary? What purpose does an obituary serve? What do we learn about the people who died? Is there anything we can read between the lines?"

The remainder of this section will be one of activity. The students will be divided into groups of three and will be asked to write an ethical will or an obituary. If the students choose an ethical will as their project, the following data should be included on the board as a guide: thoughts on your life, what you are leaving to your family (charity, material goods, wishes, etc). The students should remember that it is an ethical will.

How can we connect death with the motivation of living better, more fully and more spiritually?

For the group writing an obituary, the guidelines are as follows: it should be written for a newspaper; the obituary should be either about themselves or about someone else. Questions such as what kind of life did they lead and what can we say about them should be considered. What things are important for inclusion in an obituary?

After completing the projects, the groups will share them with the class. After each group's presentation, the following guide questions for discussion should be asked:

1. What is the best thing about their will?
2. What important Jewish beliefs were expressed here?
3. What best describes the person in the obituary?
4. What is one improvement the group could make and why?

The homework assignment is for the students to share their projects with their parents. This promotes parent-child dialogue and it also serves as a vehicle through which the child can learn of his parents' viewpoints regarding these subjects. The students should be prepared to discuss their reactions as well as those of their parents to the project.

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TO MY WIFE AND CHILDREN

Jerusalem, 1963

Dearest . . . . . ,

Weep not and dry your tears. At least in my behalf. The years that God has allotted to me have been good, and I have no *tayneh* to our Maker. Death is the final state of all human beings, and a few years more or less do not matter. I have drunk fully of the cup of life, and a few remaining drops left unsipped need cause no grief or regrets. If there is one thing I do ask, it is that I may be permitted to see all my children happily married; if not, I'll be watching from somewhere anyway. Marriage is the fulfillment of life, and I have been blessed with a jewel of a wife and four wonderful children whose love has sustained me during those times that try a man's soul and has nourished me during times of *simhah*.

To my wife — Your love has been to me beyond measure. Remember what has been and weep not. Time is a wondrous healer even as you and I have forgotten not our son nor our parents. You are too much a woman to live alone, and the children will mature and go their own way. Look for a man you can respect and love and know that I want only that you be happy.

To my children – In material things I have seen to it that you will not want. These are the least important things, although

the lawyer has prepared a megillah to safeguard them. Remember to be Jews, and the rest will follow as day follows night. Our religion is not ritual but a way of life. To live a Jewish life is its own *raison d'être*, its own self-justification. We are neither heaven nor hell. Ritual is only a tool to remind us who we are and of the divine commandments. Jews do not bear false witness – *post nisht*, as our parents used to say. Such things are simply unbecoming for a Jew. Take care of one another, and in honoring your mother, honor yourselves. I know the love she has lavished on you without thought of self.

Marry within your faith. Not to please me but so that you may be happy. Not because Gentiles are inferior —they are not —but because marriage is complex enough without the complicating variables of different viewpoints. You are the bearers of a proud tradition of four thousand years. Do not let the torch drop in your generation.

Turn not away anyone who comes to you for help. We Jews have seen more suffering than any other people. That which you give away, whether of money or of yourselves, is your only permanent possession.

To my son — I mention you first, not because I love you more, but because you will now be the head of the family. The girls may call this sexism but I hope they will forgive me. I am not your sisters and your mother. Their tears are my tears. Money is only a tool and not an end in itself. Your grandfather taught me that a man should earn his money until the age of forty, he should enjoy it between forty and fifty, and after fifty he should give it away. A man who dies rich is a failure as a human being. I say this because I know that your ability will make you a wealthy man materially. But my real desire is that you be rich in heart and soul. Our militant leftist youth have not read their histories. All leftist revolutions have in the end devoured their Jewish initiators. I still remember how my friends at college proclaimed that the victory of the proletariat would end all anti-Semitism in Russia.

Forget not Israel. You can be a builder of the homeland for the remnants of our people. There is no conflict between your obligation as a citizen of our country and your concern for Israel. Your duties to your community and to America need

Cartoons by Frank Mayo
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not suffer because of love of Zion. On the contrary, a good Jew is a better citizen and a better American.

To my daughters — You are warm-blooded. Jewish girls keep themselves clean, not because sex is dirty but because the love you will bring your husbands should not be sullied by experimentation or dalliance. It has always been the Jewish mother who has preserved our people. I shall be content if you follow in the path of your mother.

To all of you — Let your word be your bond. Those mistakes that I regret most keenly are the times when I let human weaknesses forget this. Unfortunately, it is always difficult to learn from the experiences of others, particularly of parents. But if there is one thing I beg you to take to heart, it is this.

Say Kaddish *after* me but not *for* me. Kaddish is the unique Jewish link that binds the generations of Israel. The grave hears not the Kaddish, but the speaker does, and the words will echo in your heart. The only immortality I seek is that my children and my children's children be good Jews, and thereby good people.

God bless you all and keep you.

Lehayyim,
W. L. A.

The New York Times

THE WEATHER.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1967 — 10 CENTS

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Paul Muni, Actor, Dies on Coast; Won Fame in Biographical Roles

Portrayed Darrow, Pasteur, Zola, Juarez and Gangster in Stage and Film Career

United Press International
Paul Muni

By United Press International

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Aug. 25—Paul Muni, the celebrated screen and stage actor who won fame in many biographical roles, died at his home here today. He was 71 years old.

His wife was at his bedside. According to the family nurse, Mr. Muni had heart trouble. In addition to his wife, Mr. Muni leaves two brothers, Joseph and Al, both of Los Angeles.

A funeral service will be held Tuesday afternoon in Hollywood Memorial Park with Rabbi Leonard Bierman officiating. Interment will follow in Beth Olam Cemetery.

As an actor of many talents, Paul Muni evoked acclaim from critics and enthusiasm from audiences.

He was a man of a simple face, intense, interested, probing; and he was a man of a thousand faces—Pasteur, Zola, Scarface, Juarez, the roles he portrayed. He was loved and he was hated by those who respected his talents, for he could make his audiences admire what he was doing but despise him while he was doing it.

For the stage or the screen, Mr. Muni's search for the reality to be reflected in the mirror was all-encompassing. When he

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...cused of a Plot ...ecrets to Soviet

U.S. AGAIN BOMBS NEAR CHINA LINE

...HIEU ANNOUNCES ...RGE OF OFFICERS

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PAUL MUNI, ACTOR, IS DEAD ON COAST

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was working in the movie "The Story of Louis Pasteur," he said. "I read most everything that was in the library, everything I could lay my hands on that had to do with Pasteur, with Lister, with his contemporaries."

It was the same when he prepared for what many consider the acting plum of his career, his interpretation of Clarence Darrow, the great barrister, in the stage production of "Inherit the Wind."

He read what he could find about Darrow, talked to people who knew the lawyer and studied mannerisms he could detect from pictures.

The reason was clear to those who knew him best. To Paul Muni acting was not just a career, but an obsession. Despite enormous success on Broadway and in Hollywood, he threw himself into each role with a sense of dedication that prompted Arthur Miller, the playwright, to say that he was, "pursued by a fear of failure."

Born into the theater, with acting parents, Mr. Muni learned his craft carefully and thoroughly. A Muni whisper could reach the last balcony of any theater. Muni makeup was a work of art. He followed no "method" as he perfected his control of voice and gestures into an acting style that was unique.

The Muni style had drawn into it the warmth of the Yiddish stage, in which he made his debut at the age of 12 playing an old man. The same tenacity of purpose gripped him in the theater and the movies as the years passed.

Critical raves and financial security did not lessen his self-searching. "I haven't had quite the pleasure, quite the boot from success that others get," he once told an acquaintance. "Many things I find difficult to explain to myself. I never wanted to be a star. I am still happier in the audience than on the stage."

Despite his dedication to precision, Mr. Muni was hard put to remember exactly how many roles he had played in the Yiddish theater, where he first attracted attention as Muni Weisenfreund.

The actor, born Sept. 22, 1895 in Lemberg when it was part of Austria, was brought to the United States by his parents in 1902 and made his stage debut in Chicago five years later.

As his fame spread among the tenements off Second Avenue in New York during the next decade, he was recruited by Maurice Schwartz for the Yiddish Art Theater here.

In this repertory, he attracted the attention of Max Siegal, co-author of a play, "We Americans." Mr. Siegal persuaded Sam H. Harris, the producer, to give the actor his first English role. The play opened at the Eltinge Theater on Oct. 12, 1928.

Called to Hollywood

Good reviews led to a part the next year as a gangster in the Broadway production of "Four Walls." Hollywood summoned him after he appeared in this play, and film officials forced him to change his name.

Mr. Muni appeared in two little-remembered films, "The Valiant" and "Seven Faces," during those early days of the talkies. But in 1932, he made Hollywood history with "Scarface," which contrasted every acting talent he possessed.

His portrayal of an arrogant gangster called Tony Camonte in "Scarface" was considered a classic. With an ugly gash across his cheek, the actor snarled and pillaged as a brutal thug who displayed a streak of cowardice when taken by the law.

Mr. Muni also appeared in 1932 as the hunted James Allen in the memorable film "I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang." It was a grim and searing depiction of life in Southern prison camps, and it resulted in a nationwide reaction against inhuman prison conditions.

He broadened his range in the movies to include such diverse and distinguished films as "The Life of Emile Zola," "Juarez," "We Are Not Alone," "A Song to Remember" and "The Story of Louis Pasteur," for which he won an Oscar in 1936. After completing the role of Pasteur in 1935, he announced that he was quitting films to be idle for a while.

But that didn't last long. Two years later Mr. Muni appeared in the epical production of Pearl Buck's novel "The Good Earth," playing a simple Chinese peasant, a role that required nine makeups during the span of years covered by the film. After that he was billed by his studio, Warner Brothers, with Mr. in front of his name, a rare tribute.

Popularity on Wane

By the nineteen-forties, however, Mr. Muni's strength as a movie star was waning perceptibly, and as he failed to draw at the box office, producers found excuses to avoid using him. His own desire for perfection led him to reject offers to do Broadway plays he considered inadequate.

Herman Shumlin, producer-director of "Inherit the Wind,"

(continued)

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nmaged Mr. Muni out of the doldrums. He insisted that the actor read the play. Mr. Muni agreed overnight to do the drama and Mr. Shumlin arranged for him to do his own typical research. The play opened on Broadway in 1955 and the actor was hailed by critics as "superb," "brilliant" and "inspired."

Mr. Muni's wife, the former Bella Finkel, told intimates at the time that this success was "vindication" for the actor after a decade of having been considered finished in the profession.

It was hard to believe that he had lost his talents. Broadway had welcomed his return in October 1950 after several movie successes, and he played a gangster in "This One Man." He also won applause soon after for "Rock Me, Julie," although the play closed after seven performances.

But in November, 1931, Mr. Muni was again hailed by critics and theatergoers when he appeared in Elmer Rice's "Counselor at Law," a heartwarming [illegible] of realistic humanity. The play had 258 performances, with Mr. Muni portraying a self-made Jewish lawyer filled with many human emotions.

In 1939, he scored another triumph on the stage in Maxwell Anderson's "Key Largo," winning the Drama League award for "the depth, the richness, the dignity and integrity" he gave to his role.

Shy in Public

Mr. Muni's consuming preoccupation with his art had reached perhaps its pinnacle back in 1921, on the day he married. As soon as the rabbi had finished the ceremony in downtown New York, the actor shook hands briskly with his bride and rushed off to do a matinee. He met her later that night after the evening show, at a subway kiosk on 14th Street.

He took his bride home to her mother's and left her there. During the next 15 days he dutifully kept in touch with her by telephone. Their honeymoon began on the 16th day when they went on tour together in a show.

Away from the theater, Mr. Muni was exceedingly shy. When he was recognized while dining in restaurants, he would show apparent agony, his mouth twisted, his soft brown eyes pleading to be left alone.

His wife was described as [illegible] the last Bohemian of [illegible]. While living in a hotel suite during the run of a Broadway show, he would take breakfast with his wife in their room about 9 A.M. before doing some reading or going for a walk in seclusion in Central Park. Sometimes they would go to a movie.

By 4:30 P.M., Mr. Muni would be ready for dinner. He would rest or read afterward, but was always at the theater before 7:30 P.M. to get ready for his performance. He would have a snack with his wife after the theater and then turn in.

Life at the Muni home in California was even more austere and retiring.

He and his wife had what amounted to a mania for privacy. They had few visitors at their estate, and Mr. Muni would busy himself in his den, which he called "Shangri-La."

Mr. Muni enjoyed spending his time among books, radios, tape recorders, cameras, television sets and recordings of broadcasts of music and speeches.

He had a fine collection of Toscanini concerts and his library of recorded speeches included ones by Hitler, Mussolini, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Robert Oppenheimer.

If Mr. Muni had a weakness, it was his desire to buy something any time he was in a stationery store. He would purchase erasers, pencils, paper clips, rubber bands, pads and notebooks for no apparent reason or need. "God forbid," his wife once said, "that I should throw anything out."

But for all his quietness, Mr. Muni was inflexible on matters of taste and principle. Thus, he was happy to end a movie contract that would have paid him $800,000 because he was not happy with the choice of film.

Mrs. Muni recalled her husband's reaction after he tore up the movie contract in the nineteen-thirties.

"That night," she said, "he did somersaults in the living room. Believe me. He jumped up and down, yelling, 'No one owns me. I'm a free man!'"

The actor, who was always precisely punctual for appointments, refused to tolerate tardiness in others. Explaining his unyielding attitude toward punctuality, he presented a variation of Shakespeare's lines that he who steals a purse steals trash.

"If a man steals money or property from you," Mr. Muni remarked, "that's one thing. But if he steals time, he steals a piece of your life."

Couldn't Explain Acting

He did not like to analyze his art. "I have been in the business for years," he told an interviewer, "but can't tell what acting is or how it is done. I know I have not tried to learn the 'art' of acting, whatever that may be." But he acknowledged that there was always something of himself in the roles he played.

Mr. Muni was starring in "Inherit the Wind" on Broadway when he was stricken with an eye ailment and taken to a hospital for surgery. Tests had shown that he had a tumor of the eye, and he was forced to quit the play. His performance won for him an Antoinette Perry Award in 1956 as the best dramatic star of the season.

The ailment ended his active career, although he did play a few roles in films afterward, including a moving performance as a doctor in Brooklyn in "The Last Angry Man."

But he had to resort to memories rather than performance. And his wife, who had always been the boss on his movie sets, settled down with him to a quiet life at home. No longer did he look to her at the end of each "take" for approbation or disapproval.

The Munis had no children. They spent their hours at home playing pinochle or painting. Mr. Muni also enjoyed the violin, which he had played for many years.

Luise Rainer and Paul Muni in *The Good Earth*, 1937.

Paul Muni in *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang*, 1932.

LESSON 5:

AIM: To initiate a dialogue between the students and their Rabbi concerning the subject of death. The students, in this way, will develop a better understanding of the important roles of the Rabbi and the community toward caring for the mourner. The students will also come to view their Rabbi as a source of strength and healing when they are personally faced with the death of a loved one. Also, through this interpersonal dialogue, the Rabbi and the students are offered another chance to better acquaint themselves during this difficult period of adolescence and perhaps to develop more of a personal relationship with each other.

MOTIVATION: This session should serve as a natural progression from the previous lesson. Their homework was to share and discuss their projects of writing wills and obituaries with their parents and to report on family responses and viewpoints. Thus, the teacher should begin the class with questions pertaining to that assignment. "How did your parents react when they learned of your project? What emotions did you detect? Did you learn anything about your family's opinions or practices regarding the loss of a loved one? Did you find you could openly discuss this subject with your family? Why? Why not?"

Once the students have had the opportunity to express their findings to the class, the teacher should continue with a statement such as, "There are many people to whom we can turn for help and consolation--our friends, our teachers and our parents. Throughout this course, we've concentrated on sharing our feelings with these people. However, there is another person who should be very important to us when we're in a

difficult situation, such as bereavement. That person is our Rabbi. In what ways can our Rabbi's help be different from that of our friends? Why is his role so vital in these situations? Have you had any personal experiences where the Rabbi has been helpful?"

DEVELOPMENT: After the ensuing discussion regarding the above questions, the teacher should distribute a short worksheet. On this sheet, the students are to complete the following statement with two to three sentences: "If I were a Rabbi, the most important thing I would do to help a bereaved person is _____." After the students have completed the assignment, their paragraphs would be read and the teacher should write their main ideas on the board and review them with the class. Questions such as "Why is this important?"and"What are your feelings about the Rabbi's handling such a situation?" should be asked. This exercise and discussion serve as the lead-in to the Rabbi's participation in the lesson.

During the latter part of the period, the Rabbi should briefly discuss his role during bereavement to the class. Before the Rabbi's appearance in the class, the teacher should have discussed with him the tone and the content of his presentation. It is very important that he not present his information in a dogmatic manner. The sense of trust and sharing created within the classroom should encompass his presentation as well. The Rabbi should speak with openness and candor and keep the facts topical and pertinent in order to assure a meaningful meeting with the students. In this period of introspection and emotional change for the adolescent, it is important that he be made to feel comfortable and open in his discussions with the Rabbi. Rather than lecturing on things with which a Rabbi gets involved during a bereavement, a more

educationally sound and stimulating method would be for the Rabbi to relate some of his personal experiences. Situations where he had been very helpful as well as situations in which he felt relatively helpless should be shared with the students. Above all, the material conveyed should be interpersonal. The presentation should be limited in time as well as in the amount of data conveyed.

Our aim here is to provide a mixture of data and a Jewish sense of mourning. The lesson's purpose is to cement the bond between the Rabbi and the child. The student should understand that the Rabbi is there to help him. In this light, the lesson should end in a question and answer session, between the Rabbi and the students. The Rabbi should field questions concerning information not covered. Most importantly, the Rabbi should convey the sense of death as being part of the life cycle and of its naturalness and inevitability. This attitude is most important because it may serve to alleviate some of their fears and misgivings on the subject and the Rabbi's ending the session on this note can provide a feeling of help and consolation. Throughout the final portion of the class, the teacher would serve as a liaison between the Rabbi and the students by hinting at questions which should be asked or topics to be covered.

In closing the lesson with the sense that life is a cycle, the students will receive the following homework assignment to be submitted at the last session of the course. They are to bring in pictures of themselves at various stages of their lives and well as pictures of jobs they might

choose to do as adults, pictures of sports, films, etc. They are to bring in ten to fifteen pictures. These pictures will be used for a special project during the final lesson through which their attitudes on life will be represented. The students should be careful to bring in pictures that they personally can relate to vis-a-vis their lives, interests and goals.

In preparation for the next lesson, which deals with the emotionally charged issue of adolescent suicide, the students will be asked to invite their parents to attend and share in their learning experience.

LESSON 6

AIM: To introduce and explore the issue of suicide, and, in particular, as it affects adolescents.

MOTIVATION: As a natural progression from the previous lesson, in which the Rabbi's role as a resource person within the community was studied, these next few lessons will delve into the highly sensitive issue of suicide with the assistance of another community resource, the social worker or therapist. It is of vital importance that this issue be handled in a most careful and professional manner. Although the teacher may be capable of handling the issues forthcoming, the more preferable leader of these discussions would be an individual trained specifically in these areas.

At the beginning of the class, after welcoming the parents' participation in the group, the teacher should introduce the topic of suicide through questions such as, "What is suicide?; Why would someone want to take his own life?; What do you do when you're very sad or depressed?" After a brief discussion, a short article will be distributed to the students (see attached) and read aloud. After this short introduction, the social worker, who will lead the remainder of the lesson, will be presented to the class.

DEVELOPMENT: Before the development of the lesson, the teacher will have consulted with the social worker regarding plans for this lesson. To follow are suggestions for the social worker in the implementation of the unit.

The social worker would begin the exploration of suicide using the article about Michael B. as a starting point. "What makes a young person so hopeless

that he would take his own life?; Why is suicide on the rise?" Since the average age of young people using drugs or alcohol or who are sexually active is lower than ever before, does teenage experimentation in these unknown areas lead to such devastating results? What about pressure to achieve in school and choosing the right profession? Why do some teenagers see death as an attractive alternative to these stresses? How can we help someone in crisis? What are our own attitudes towards suicide? What are some warning signs we should be looking for?

Since awareness of warning signs is critical to preventing suicide, the goal of this lesson is for every student to be able to identify individuals who are at risk for suicide. To begin this exercise, the students are asked to remember a time where everything seemed to be going wrong for them and they felt miserable. They should try to reexperience that crisis and to remember the details--how they felt, what they did, and what was going on. While this is going on, the three headings, verbal, behavioral, and situational are written on the board. When the students are asked how they felt, and what they did, their responses should be listed under these headings on the board. This information can be used as the basis for the list of suicide warning signs.

A brief fifteen-minute film, entitled "Teenage Suicide," (MTI Teleprograms, Inc) is then to be shown to the students and parents. Families may profit from the open discussion evoked by this film. Also, it is important for parents to learn the warning signs of suicide. The characters in the film are not actors. Rather, they are the actual people who are experiencing the situations.

The social worker should introduce the film by outlining the three cases
106
depicted. The first young woman has attempted suicide three times. She is depressed and is still at risk for attempting suicide again. In the second case, Bobby has already committed suicide. As the parents discuss what happened, the students should take note of the warning signs that the unfortunate parents did not recognize. The third teenager, Susan, is an example of the seriousness of an emotional crisis. She attempted suicide after not making straight A's that semester and after having an important date fall through. Through support, Susan worked through her crisis and is no longer suicidal.

The following are examples of questions to be asked after the viewing of the film:

1. What did Bobby do and say that indicated that he was intending to kill himself?
2. What are some reasons why the two girls wanted to die?
3. Why are some people likely not to help someone who may potentially be suicidal? How was the first girl's father helpful? How was he not helpful?
4. How common is it for people to think about killing themselves? How does one know when to worry about such thoughts?

Once the film has been shown and discussed, a more complete listing of the verbal, behavioral and situational warning signs of suicide (see
107
attached) should be listed on the board and written down by the students.

As an ending to this session, the remainder of the time will be set

aside for discussion, questions and answers between the social worker, the student group and the parent participants. In order to further reinforce the information imparted through this lesson, the illustrated booklet, "About Suicide...and how you can help prevent it," (see attached) is to be distributed to the group. Through this reading, the students not only will gain in factual knowledge, but will also begin to contemplate their roles in suicide prevention, the subject of the lesson to follow.[108]

Michael B. was 17 years old and lived with his father, mother and younger sister in an upper middle-class suburb in a Northeastern state. Halfway through his senior year in high school, an A-minus student, good athlete, nice-looking enough to be very popular with the girls but well-liked by his male peers, Michael had, as the old cliché goes, "everything to live for."

Mike did seem to have everything going in his favor, with an apparently close-knit family, loving parents, intelligence, popularity, with a choice of colleges and maybe a career in law. He'd never been in trouble, although his parents weren't disciplinarians and gave their two children lots of freedom to make decisions on their own.

One weekday afternoon, while his father was at work, his mother in town engaged in local political club activities and his kid sister shopping, Michael made a decision. He took his father's licensed .38 caliber pistol and killed himself by firing a shot through his temple.

The entire community was of course shocked. His parents were also profoundly puzzled which, aside from the terrible loss, was the worst part of it all. *Why? Why?* If they'd only known that something—anything—had been troubling Mike so deeply that. . . .

But, as with so many teen suicides, there may be little hint of a "something" bothering the boy or girl. Or it goes unobserved by the parents. Adolescents can be "moody," as any parent of one knows. Or they simply hide their true feelings. And Mike, it was realized later, had hidden his feelings about an argument with his girlfriend, Diane. The disagreement had gone unresolved—something about Mike breaking a date with Diane to go to a ballgame with his friends—and Mike had gotten the idea that Diane was so angry that it was "all over."

Since the 1950s, the suicide rate among young people in America has increased by an incredible 300 percent

But was that the real reason, or merely a minor incident that was more than an already troubled mind could take, the "last straw?"

The answer, of course, died with Michael B., who like most teenage suicides, left no note. But, after much soul-searching and analysis, his parents realized that their son had been disturbed for some years, with a father who was a "workaholic," a mother who spent more and more time involved with various community activities, both parents too permissive and offering little guidance for their children. And there were the pressures to get good grades, be a better athlete, take part in more extra-curricular activities in school—all with the goal of acceptance at a good college. These stresses might have seemed normal or even minor to adults, but to an adolescent they can be all but overpowering.

Michael B. is a composite case history of a teenage suicide, not necessarily "typical." But he is close to reality, the tragic reality of one of America's most serious contemporary problems.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Add any of these clues to the blackboard list of warning signs that the students may have omitted.

I. VERBAL

1. Direct statements like "I want to die," "I don't want to live any more."

2. Indirect statements like "I want to go to sleep and never wake up," "They'll be sorry when I'm gone," or "Soon this pain will be over."

II. BEHAVIORAL

1. Depression, sadness
2. Lack of energy
3. Increase of decrease in appetite
4. Increase or decrease in sleeping patterns
5. Impatience or impulsivity
6. Inability to concentrate, bored and listless
7. Angry and destructive or boisterous, shifting to silent withdrawal or tearful loneliness
8. Withdrawal from usual social activities
9. Loss of interest in hobbies, sports, job or school
10. Drop in grades by a good students or new concern about grades by a poor student
11. Giving away possessions
12. Making final arrangements--will, insurance, funeral
13. Increased risk taking- e.g. driving a car recklessly
14. Frequent accidents
15. Previous suicide attempts

III. SITUATIONAL

1. Experience of a loss (through death, divorce, breakup of a relationship or loss of self-esteem)

2. Difficulty communicating with parents

3. Problems with school or employment

4. Drug and alcohol abuse

5. Trouble with the law

...and how YOU can help prevent it

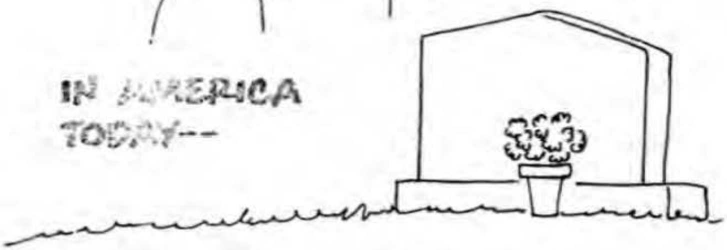
What is SUICIDE ?

It's the DELIBERATE ENDING OF ONE'S OWN LIFE.

The problem of suicide includes--

serious suicidal thoughts or threats.

attempts to commit suicide.



IN AMERICA TODAY--

- 25,000-30,000 deaths are attributed to suicide each year.
- Suicides by young people (age 15-24) have greatly increased during the last decade.

A SCRIPTOGRAPHIC BOOKLET by CHANNING L. BETE CO., INC. South Deerfield, MA U.S.A.

Why should I know about suicide ?

Because ANYONE may be in a position to stop a person who is considering suicide.

- Most suicides and suicide attempts are reactions to intense feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, helplessness, depression, etc.
- People who threaten or attempt suicide are often trying to express these feelings -- to communicate and ask for help.
- With the help which is available to people who experience these feelings, many suicide attempts could be prevented.

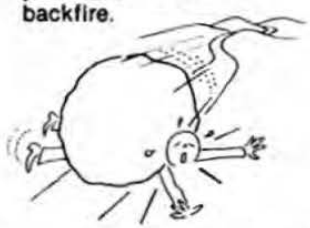
Understand the warning signs and BE PREPARED TO ACT in a crisis.

Because their problems seem overwhelming.

For example, people may commit suicide when

-- no solution or change is in sight.

-- attempts to deal with problems fail or backfire.



Many people cause their own deaths without a special crisis situation or conscious decision to commit suicide.

People who drive recklessly, heavily abuse drugs or alcohol, or ignore serious illnesses often do so because they suffer the same mental anguish as those who consciously commit suicide.

Some STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

that can trigger suicidal feelings

DEPRESSION/ HOPELESSNESS

This is a leading cause of suicide. Depression may be caused by personal loss, heredity or body chemistry. Life seems unbearable; the person may lose interest in all activities and withdraw.

CRISIS/IMPULSE

Major life changes such as loss of an important person, job, etc.; or the heat of anger and frustration can lead people to attempt suicide before they have a chance to think things over.

OLD AGE/ DISEASE

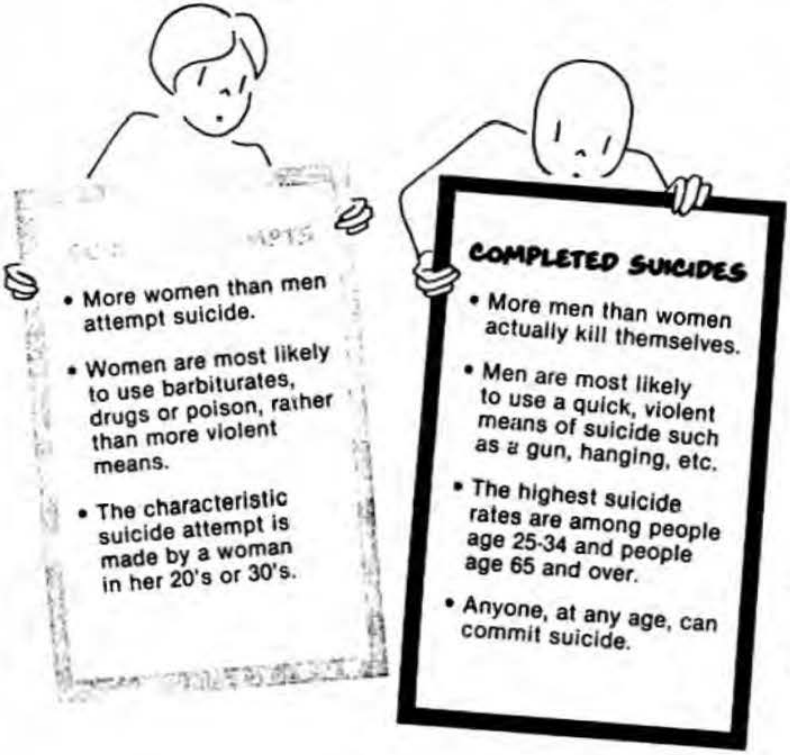
The prospect of increasing pain and suffering, as well as loss of independence, income and dignity, is frightening. Suicide may seem to be the best alternative.

DRUGS/ALCOHOL

Drug or alcohol abuse can weaken a person's self-control and lead to suicide attempts and self-destructive behavior.

Any combination of several of these situations at one time is especially dangerous.

All kinds of people: young and old, rich and poor, male and female, of all races and creeds.



SOME GROUPS have special problems that can cause suicidal feelings.

ELDERLY

Loneliness, a major factor in suicide, is an especially serious burden for the elderly. Illness and financial hardship often contribute to the problem.

YOUNG ADULTS, COLLEGE STUDENTS

Many suffer from apathy or anger at a world they can't improve. They receive little guidance from old standards or family authority.

PROFESSIONALS, BUSINESS PEOPLE

Many outwardly successful people may in fact feel bitter or disappointed, cut off from their families, unbearably pressured but unable to take time off.

NATIVE AMERICANS

The suicide rate on some reservations is five times the national average. This reflects the poverty, disease and despair of life for many Indians today.

MINORITIES

Cultural differences plus poor economic, social and family conditions often lead to severe problems, especially for those feeling trapped in ghettos.

CHILDREN

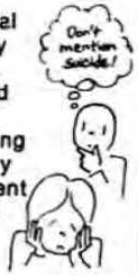
Tragically, even young people age 5-14 are victims of suicide. They commonly have lost a loved one, and can't ask for or get adequate emotional support.

There are many MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SUICIDE.

Some common MYTHS

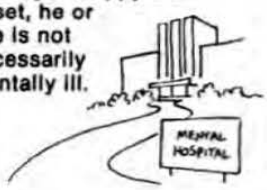
"[illegible] may [illegible]"

FACT: Suicidal people already have the idea. Don't be afraid to talk about suicide. Talking about it frankly can help prevent a person from acting on the idea.



"All suicidal persons are mentally ill."

FACT: Although the suicidal person is extremely unhappy and upset, he or she is not necessarily mentally ill.



"[illegible]"

FACT: The crisis period only lasts for a limited time. The person can get help and improve (but suicidal crises can reoccur).

"It's not a suicide if there's no suicide note."

FACT: Only about one in four of those who actually commit suicide leave notes.

How does a suicide AFFECT THE FAMILY?

In addition to the normal grief and hardship of losing a loved one, the family may experience--

GUILT and shame for not having given the person enough support and love.

SOCIAL SCORN caused by the religious and cultural taboo against suicide. The family may pretend death was accidental to hide the truth.

FINANCIAL WORRIES due to the loss of a breadwinner, difficulties collecting insurance.

APPREHENSION due to fears that suicide runs in family. Other family members, especially young people, may fear they'll become suicide victims, too.

Emotions ranging from anger to depression are also common.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING is often necessary to help the families of suicide victims understand and deal with the serious emotional and practical crises that they experience.

HOW CAN YOU TELL

if someone is thinking about committing suicide?

Most people who commit suicide give clues to their intentions.

Be alert for these **DANGER SIGNALS--**

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS may mean that the person is a high risk to try again.	THREATS are often followed by suicide attempts. Take threats seriously. They include mentioning mysterious "long trips," etc., as well as overt threats.	EXTREME DEPRESSION, sadness, anxiety, decline in interest in work and people once enjoyed.
CHANGES IN PERSONALITY OR BEHAVIOR such as sleeplessness; lost weight, appetite or sexual drive; tendency to withdraw.	PREPARATIONS FOR DEATH such as making a will, putting affairs in order, giving away personal possessions, acquiring means to commit suicide (gun, rope, etc.).	A SUDDEN LIFT IN SPIRITS can mean person is relieved because problems will "soon be ended."

Don't assume the situation will cure itself. Suicide threats or attempts are almost always a way of asking for HELP and SUPPORT!

3 WAYS TO HELP

a person who seems to be thinking about suicide

1 GIVE IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

SHOW that you take the person's feelings seriously and wish to help.	**LISTEN** to him or her -- ask concerned questions.
EXPLAIN that with help and support, he or she can recover and enjoy good times again.	**STAY CLOSE** until help is available or the risk has passed.

SOME "DON'TS"

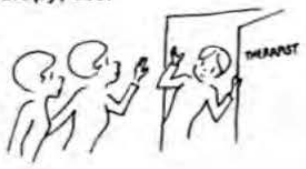
Don't try to shock or challenge.	Don't analyze the person's motives.	Don't argue or try to reason.
"Go ahead and do it."	"You just feel bad because..."	"You can't kill yourself because..."

② ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTION aimed at relieving unhappy or troublesome situations.

For example--

IMPROVE HOME ENVIRONMENT

If home life is a problem, suggest a strategy for improving it -- for example, couple or family therapy, etc.



KEEP BUSY, ACTIVE

Depressed people often become apathetic, inactive, and as a result grow more depressed and withdrawn -- a vicious cycle. A balanced schedule of work and recreation can help.

GET A CHANGE OF PACE

Even a temporary change of scene or activity can make a big difference. It's a chance to gain a new perspective on the situation.

GET SOME EXERCISE

Being good and tired from vigorous physical exercise helps a person relax, sleep better, look better and have a more positive outlook on life.

You can also help the suicidal person by suggesting that he or she--

TALK THINGS OVER

Discuss the problem with those involved instead of holding feelings back.

TRY TO CHANGE THE SITUATION

Choose the course of action which seems most likely to resolve the stressful situation.

TRY A NEW APPROACH

If all else fails, it may be best to avoid or leave an unchanging situation.

LEARN TO RELAX

Hobbies, sports, yoga, meditation, etc., can help the suicidal person learn to live with normal stresses.

❸

from any of these sources--

provides emergency advice, help and referral.

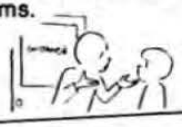
run by a hospital, community organization or independent agency may be available.

can help personally or refer the person to someone else who can.

such as psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, mental health counselors, psychoanalysts or psychotherapists are specially trained to help people with emotional problems.

are often willing to devote a lot of time and involvement. They're good sources for referrals.

are often especially sensitive to young people's problems.



are also excellent sources of aid and advice.

is especially important for anyone who has threatened or attempted suicide.

In most cases,

SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED.

- **KNOW THE FACTS** about suicide and recognize its warning signs.
- **BE A FRIEND** to those in trouble and help them find professional help.
- **VOLUNTEER TO WORK** on a suicide hotline, at a center, or for a similar emergency service that helps those in need.

you can help save lives.

LESSON 7

AIM: This lesson has a direct relationship to the previous lesson in that it also deals with adolescent suicide. However, our goal here is to deal with feelings regarding suicide, rather than thoughts. We will also learn what we can do to prevent such trapedies from occurring.

MOTIVATION: As with the previous lesson, the optimum leader for this session would again be the social worker-therapist. Building upon the students' knowledge of suicide warning signs, the social worker should begin this lesson dealing wtih feelings by asking questions such as : "How can we show support, understanding and acceptance to a suicidal friend or loved one? Would we laugh it off or assume that the threat is a way of his getting attention? Would we ignore the threat? Are there good and bad ways to show this support? What are some appropriate crisis intervention skills we should know?"

DEVELOPMENT: With the goal that students be aware of their own attitudes toward suicide, the social worker should divide the class into small discussion groups of five or six. Each group is to be given a list of open-ended statements (see attached) regarding suicide. Each student is to write a completion of each statement and share it with his group.[109]

After this initial exercise, the class should come together again as one large group and explore ideas regarding suicide. The purpose here is to discuss attitudes, not to teach them. Questions such as the following should prove useful in guiding the discussion:

1. What was this experience like for you?
2. Which was the most difficult sentence to complete? The easiest? Why?
3. What kinds of feelings were stirred up with this exercise?

4. Was it easier to write or talk about your attitudes?

5. What did you learn about your attitudes toward suicide or death from this exercise?

The second part of this lesson will deal with the development of communication skills. When someone is suicidal, he is often experiencing intense emotions. In the midst of this emotional pain, it is difficult for him to make decisions and find solutions to the problems that have led him to this crisis. Helping the person to get in touch with these feelings through empathic responses changes the situation. Empathy conveys caring, understanding and respect. Alternative solutions, instead of suicide, can thus be found to resolve the problem.

The following exercise introduces a means of communicating empathy as well as the importance of feelings in a crisis. Part of being human is to feel. Feelings are neither good nor bad--they simply exist. When someone is in a crisis, he is experiencing an intense emotional response to a situation. Often, he is unable to think the problem through in a logical fashion. Crisis intervention begins by conveying that you understand and care how the person in crisis feels.

The social worker should divide the students into pairs after having distributed the exercise sheet containing adolescent reactions to stress situations (see attached). One student should read the statement while the second student should identify the feelings expressed by responding: "You feel..because.." This conveys understanding of both the emotion and the content of the statement. The social worker should be ready to offer assistance and verification. In

order to be helpful, the listener cannot make judgements or offer suggestions. It is critical that students know that they are not to try to solve the problems of their friend. This is not helpful in a crisis. What is needed most is someone who will listen.

The social worker should caution the listener to avoid giving advice, criticizing, lecturing, sympathizing or analyzing. Examples of such blocks to effective communication are: "If you do that, you'll be sorry; You shouldn't talk like that; you'll feel different tomorrow; just forget about it; and I know what you should do."

Sample responses to these statements (see attached) are to be distributed and discussed. Why do some answers promote understanding? What kinds of reactions are detrimental to promoting understanding? As an adaptation of the above exercise, the students might be encouraged to offer their own stimulus statements. This could have personal meaning for the students in that they could have someone actively listen to their individual problems.

Following the discussion and after reviewing the communication skills just learned, the social worker should continue the lesson by eliciting comments regarding what to do and what not to do to help someone threatening suicide. After writing the students' comments on the board, the social worker should complete the list and distribute copies to the students. The social worker should direct the discussion to include each of the points expressed in the list. This brings to a climax the material covered within these two lessons on suicide.

As a summary to what the students have learned on suicide, the students will be asked to respond to certain situations through role-play (see attached).

The students should each receive copies of the stress situations as well as thought-provoking questions on each situation.

One student should volunteer to act out the person in crisis. Another student should volunteer to be the friend. The students should be encouraged to deal with the situations using the skills and information learned in the previous sections.

Once these practical and factual skills and information have been imparted and discussed with the students, the final thought of the lesson will turn to G-d. What is the importance of G-d throughout this? How can we find hope of consolation within the spiritual and religious arena? For use as reference, a copy of Psalms 139 will be distributed (see attached), read, and analysed. Through reading this psalm, we find belief in G-d in all aspects and in all places. There is nowhere to go to remove oneself from G-d's influence. Also discussed is G-d's wondrous work in creating the human being. What are our thoughts on this? Do we agree with the psalm? Why?

If these past two lessons have achieved their desired results, the reactions prevalent in the class should be heightened sensitivity, responsibility and trust. Key emotions including fear and frustration have been explored. Most crucially, the importance of helping friends through crises and of valuing human life have been heightened.

ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS

1. Susan had been dating David for over a year. At one time, they had talked of getting married after graduation and she had been planning to continue working at a restaurant while taking junior college courses. Recently, David didn't seem the same. He acted tired, bored, and indifferent. Last week, a girlfriend told Susan she had seen David in a car with another girl and last night David told her he thought they better not see so much of each other for a while. Susan confided to you that she didn't want to live anymore if David really wanted to break up. She couldn't bear the thought of being this unhappy the rest of her life.

What do you think Susan was feeling? What would you say to let her know you understood? What are some things you wouldn't want to hear from a friend if you were Susan?

2. John's father killed himself with a shotgun after learning he had terminal cancer. John returned to school after the funeral but didn't want to talk to any of his friends about what had happened. He flunked two classes that semester and dropped out of sports even though he had been an excellent runner and had hoped to earn a letter on the track team that year. One day he told you that suicide seems to be the only answer for him.

Would you tell him not to do it and tell him that it was dumbto talk like that? What could you do? Would you tell another adult?

3. Paul has had some heated arguments with his parents for several months. He does not want to go to college after he graduates from high school and they are putting on the pressure. He flunked most of his classes last

semester and is now talking about disappearing so life would be easier for his folks. Paul doesn't seem to be eating or sleeping very well, skips school frequently, is beginning to hang around with a wild group, and doesn't want to take part in school activities. Last night he brought you his tape collection and said he wanted you to have it because he wouldn't be needing it anymore.

Are there any signs that Paul may commit suicide? Have you ever felt like Paul? What would you say to Paul? To whom would you turn for help?

ATTITUDES ABOUT SUICIDE

OPEN-ENDED STATEMENTS

There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. They are intended only to help you think out your own feelings about suicide. Complete the statement with the first thing that comes to your mind.

1. Suicide is a problem with adolescents because.....
2. I think that suicide is morally....because
3. People who attempt suicide are...
4. The best think to do to help someone who wants to die is...
5. If someone I knew committed suicide, the hardest thing for me to deal with would be...
6. The only time that suicide could be rational is...

   or, I believe that there is no such thing as a rational suicide because...

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO

A resource for discussing ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide.

1. Use concepts of good listening and communicating skills.
2. Believe and trust your suspicions that the person may be self-destructive.
3. Ask if he or she is thinking about suicide.
4. Get involved. Show interest and support.
5. Be direct. Talk openly and freely.
6. Allow him or her to express feelings.
7. Be willing to listen. This affirms feelings.
8. Don't give advice.
9. Be a non-judgemental listener. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong or feelings are good or bad.
10. Don't dare him or her to do it.
11. Don't act shocked.
12. Don't allow yourself to be sworn to secrecy.
13. Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

STIMULUS STATEMENTS

One student reads a paragraph out loud and with feeling. Another student responds to each paragraph with, "You feel____ because..."

1. It's a drag being at home. There's nothing to do. It's just dull, dull, dull. Mother doesn't want me out of her sight. You'd think I was a four year old. She just nags, nags, nags.

2. Then there's my sister; she gets to drive the car or do anything that she wants but just because I'm not quite sixteen, I can't do anything.

3. I tell you this, if they start hitting me again, I'm running right back to the juvenile court and tell it all from the beginning to the end.

4. I don't think other people think of me as an intelligent person either. They just see a fat slob, nothing.

5. My father worries about the weather, but he doesn't worry about the way I feel. He just talks and talks without even noticing I'm bored.

6. When I try to argue with him, he just says, "You'll never change," or "I'm wasting my breath with you. You'll never learn."

7. Now that I'm learning to do some things I never could do before, and he knows it, he doesn't say, "I'm proud of you." He seems to feel the same way he always has.

8. On my birthday, he didn't even write or call or send anything. He

always remembers the others in the family. Why not me?

9. Yeah, like when I was home, he took my sister down and bought her a new outfit for Easter and he didn't even give me the time of day.

10. She never seems to care about how I feel, all I hear is how she feels or something about her charity work. Someone won't do this or someone said that. By that time, I could care less.

11. Sometimes I think it's all a bad dream and I'll wake up and the sun will be shining and they'll be gone. I'm worn out with taking care of everybody else and nobody caring how I feel or what I want.

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES FOR STIMULUS STATEMENTS

1. Promotes Understanding: You feel annoyed because your mother won't leave you alone.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: My mother treats me like a baby, too.

2. Promotes Understanding: You're angry because your sister is allowed to drive the car but you're not.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: It isn't fair. Why don't you get your parents to treat you the same?

3. Promotes Understanding: You're mad because your parents beat you and have a lack of respect for you.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: If I were you I'd hit them back.

4. Promotes Understanding: You are discouraged to think that others don't see you as you really are.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: It really doesn't matter what other people think of you.

5. Promotes Understanding: You are disappointed that your father doesn't pay more attention to your needs.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: Fathers are like that. They always have other things on their minds.

6. Promotes Understanding: You're exasperated because you can't get him to really hear what you have to say.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: It never makes sense to try to argue with him.

7. Promotes Understanding: You're proud of yourself because you're learning new things and you wish he would acknowledge your new skills.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: Why don't you point out to him all the new things you can do?

8. Promotes Understanding: You're really upset that he didn't acknowledge your birthday.

   Doesn't Promote Understanding: I bet you got lots of cards from other people, though.

9. Promotes Understanding: You must have been furious when he ignored you and bought clothes for your sister.

Doesn't Promote Understanding: Look at it this way--he isn't worth worrying over.

10. Promotes Understanding: You're resentful because she doesn't seem to care how you feel.

Doesn't Promote Understanding: It is important to always let her think you care what she feels.

11. Promotes Understanding: You're feeling hopeless because you can't seem to get them to respond to your feelings and needs.

Doesn't Promote Understanding: Don't feel that way. They aren't worth it.

ven the days that were fash-
ioned,
When as yet there was none of
them.

How weighty also are Thy
thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!

If I would count them, they are
more in number than the sand;
Were I to come to the end of
them, I would still be with
Thee.

If Thou but wouldest slay the
wicked, O God—
Depart from me therefore, ye
men of blood;

Who utter Thy name with
wicked thought,
They take it for falsehood, even
Thine enemies—

יָמִים יָצָרוּ
וְלֹא אֶחָד בָּהֶם׃
17 וְלִי מַה־יִּקָּרוּ רֵעֶיךָ אֵל
מָה עָצְמוּ רָאשֵׁיהֶם׃
18 אֶסְפְּרֵם מֵחוֹל יִרְבּוּן
הֲקִיצוֹתִי וְעוֹדִי עִמָּךְ׃
19 אִם־תִּקְטֹל אֱלוֹהַּ רָשָׁע
וְאַנְשֵׁי דָמִים סוּרוּ מֶנִּי׃
20 אֲשֶׁר יֹמְרוּךָ לְמִזְמָה
נָשׂוּא לַשָּׁוְא עָרֶיךָ׃

ולו ק׳ v. 18

embryo. It is now considered that we have here the doctrine of predestination. God has a book in which is recorded against each person, from the embryonic stage, the number of days which would be lived.

when as yet there was none of them. This translation follows the *kethib*; the *keré* has to be rendered: 'and for it there was one among them,' i.e. among the days entered in the book was one for the embryo to come to birth.

17. *weighty.* Beyond the Psalmist's power to comprehend.

is the sum. lit. 'are the sums,' plural of fullness, 'their vast sum.' Each *thought* of God is itself unfathomable by man and in totality immeasurable.

18. *were I to come to the end of them.* A.J. connects with *kets*, 'end'; but A.V. and R.V. *when I am awake*, fits in better with the rest of the sentence. The task of counting would occupy all his waking hours; and after he came out of his sleep, he would still be with God, enumerating His *thoughts* because they were inexhaustible.

19-24 PRAYER AGAINST THE WICKED

This section should be compared with civ. 35, where, after recounting the wonders of God in the universe, the Psalmist prays *let sinners cease out of the earth*, because they are out of harmony with His beautiful world. So in this Psalm the writer feels that God Who has a minute knowledge of each one of His family should not tolerate those who conduct their lives contrary to His will.

19. *slay the wicked.* Whose evil living profanes the name of their Maker.

depart from me. Cf. vi. 9, cxix. 115. He will have no intercourse with them.

men of blood. Cf. v. 7.

20. *utter Thy name.* lit. 'they speak Thee.' They cloak their evil schemes by making use of God's name. The parallel requires such a meaning and induced the Massoretes to give the verb its unusual vocalization, which would normally be *yamrucha*, 'rebel against Thee.'

they take it for falsehood. Or, *in vain*, a Hebrew corresponding to the Third Commandment (Exod. xx. 7).

Thine enemies. The word employed is an Aramaism.

11 And if I say: 'Surely the darkness
shall envelop me,
And the light about me shall be
night';

12 Even the darkness is not too dark
for Thee,
But the night shineth as the day;
The darkness is even as the light.

13 For Thou hast made my reins;
Thou hast knit me together in my
mother's womb.

14 I will give thanks unto Thee, for
I am fearfully and wonderfully
made;
Wonderful are Thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right
well.

15 My frame was not hidden from
Thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the
lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see mine un-
formed substance,
And in Thy book they were all
written—

11 וְאֹמַר אַךְ־חֲשֵׁךְ יְשׁוּפֵנִי
וְלַיְלָה אוֹר בַּעֲדֵנִי׃
12 גַּם־חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא־יַחְשִׁיךְ מִמֶּךָּ
וְלַיְלָה כַּיּוֹם יָאִיר
כַּחֲשֵׁיכָה כָּאוֹרָהּ׃
13 כִּי־אַתָּה קָנִיתָ כִלְיֹתָי
תְּסֻכֵּנִי בְּבֶטֶן אִמִּי׃
14 אוֹדְךָ עַל כִּי נוֹרָאוֹת נִפְלֵיתִי
נִפְלָאִים מַעֲשֶׂיךָ
וְנַפְשִׁי יֹדַעַת מְאֹד׃
15 לֹא־נִכְחַד עָצְמִי מִמֶּךָּ
אֲשֶׁר־עֻשֵׂיתִי בַסֵּתֶר
רֻקַּמְתִּי בְּתַחְתִּיּוֹת אָרֶץ׃
16 גָּלְמִי רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ
וְעַל־סִפְרְךָ כֻּלָּם יִכָּתֵבוּ

11. *surely the darkness shall envelop me.* Better, 'let only the darkness enshroud me . . . about me be dark.' It were facile to try to evade God's all-seeing eye by hiding in the dark.

12. *is not too dark for Thee.* Render, 'does not darken from Thee'; God's glance penetrates the darkness.

13-18 GOD'S WONDROUS WORK IN HUMAN CREATION

13. *for Thou.* The subject *Thou* is emphatic as in verse 2. The force of the conjunction *for* is: God must know me through and through, because He controlled my existence and development even as an embryo.

made. For this meaning of the verb, cf. Gen. xiv. 19; Deut. xxxii. 6.

my reins. The kidneys (see on vii. 10), here representative of all the internal organs.

knit me together. Cf. *and Thou hast knit me together with bones and sinews* (Job x. 11).

14. *fearfully and wonderfully made.* Reflection upon the marvels of the human body, even with his elementary anatomical knowledge, inspired the Psalmist with awe and wonder.

my soul. Equals 'I.'

15. *frame.* Skeleton.

in secret. Within the womb.

curiously wrought. lit. 'embroidered,' alluding to the veins and arteries which run through the body like coloured threads.

in the lowest parts of the earth. Poetical description of the darkness in the womb.

16. *mine unformed substance.* The embryo.

they were all written. The older commentators took the subject to be all the limbs which would develop from the

1 For the Leader. A Psalm of David.
O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou measurest my going about and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether.

1 לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר יְהוָה חֲקַרְתַּנִי וַתֵּדָע׃
2 אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ שִׁבְתִּי וְקוּמִי בַּנְתָּה לְרֵעִי מֵרָחוֹק׃
3 אָרְחִי וְרִבְעִי זֵרִיתָ וְכָל־דְּרָכַי הִסְכַּנְתָּה׃
4 כִּי אֵין מִלָּה בִּלְשׁוֹנִי הֵן יְהוָה יָדַעְתָּ כֻלָּהּ׃

GOD OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPRESENT

THIS is the noblest utterance in the Psalter of pure contemplative theism, animated and not crushed by the thought of God's omniscience and omnipresence' (M.). A similar judgment was passed by Ibn Ezra who remarked, 'This Psalm is the most glorious on the theme of the ways of God and is unequalled in the five Books of the Psalter.' The writer's realization of God is most intimate and personal, the effect of religious experience rather than of rational meditation. The Hebrew has a late Aramaic colouring which favours a post-exilic date; and even a conservative scholar like Delitzsch concluded that it 'is composed after the Davidic model, and is a counterpart to such Psalms as XIX, and to other Davidic didactic Psalms.'

1-6 GOD'S OMNISCIENCE

1. *Thou hast searched me.* Really, my heart (cf. verse 23; Jer. xvii. 10).

and known me. The object *me* is not in the Hebrew, and is probably to be understood as: all that is in my heart, my thoughts and feelings.

2. *Thou knowest.* The subject *Thou* is emphasized in the Hebrew. Thou only, being omniscient, canst have such intimate knowledge of me.

downsitting . . . uprising. All the activities of my life (cf. Deut. vi. 7).

my thought. Only again in verse 17. It is an Aramaic word meaning 'inclination, wish.'

afar off. See on cxxxviii. 6.

3. *measurest.* This sense is obtained by connecting the verb with *zereth*, 'a span.' It is, however, to be connected with the common verb meaning 'winnow, sift,' and should be translated, 'Thou siftest,' i.e. submit to a minute scrutiny.

my going about. lit. 'my path.' This word and its contrast, *lying down*, in combination also signify the daily activities of a person's life.

ways. Dealings with one's fellows. Used of God in cxxxviii. 5.

4. According to the translation, the meaning is that God knows the real intention behind the spoken word when it is used to conceal thought. An alternative rendering is: 'For a word is not (yet) in my tongue, but lo,' etc.; i.e. God is aware of the thought to be expressed before even it is put into words.

5 Thou hast hemmed me in behind and before,
And laid Thy hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
Too high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there;
If I make my bed in the netherworld, behold, Thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there would Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand would hold me.

5 אָחוֹר וָקֶדֶם צַרְתָּנִי וַתָּשֶׁת עָלַי כַּפֶּכָה׃
6 פלאיה דַעַת מִמֶּנִּי נִשְׂגְּבָה לֹא־אוּכַל לָהּ׃
7 אָנָה אֵלֵךְ מֵרוּחֶךָ וְאָנָה מִפָּנֶיךָ אֶבְרָח׃
8 אִם־אֶסַּק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אָתָּה וְאַצִּיעָה שְּׁאוֹל הִנֶּךָּ׃
9 אֶשָּׂא כַנְפֵי־שָׁחַר אֶשְׁכְּנָה בְּאַחֲרִית יָם׃
10 גַּם־שָׁם יָדְךָ תַנְחֵנִי וְתֹאחֲזֵנִי יְמִינֶךָ׃

v. 6. פליאה ק׳

5. *hemmed me in.* It is the verb to describe laying siege to a city. God has, as it were, besieged him so that there is no escape.

laid Thy hand upon me. Grasped me and I cannot get away (cf. verse 10).

6. *such knowledge.* Which God possesses of him as of every individual.

too wonderful. Beyond human comprehension.

7-12 GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

7. *whither shall I go.* i.e. where could I go, if I desired to remove myself from the sphere of Thy influence?

Thy spirit. God as active in the world (cf. *the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 2).

Thy presence. Which fills the universe and manifests His relationship with human beings.

8. For the thought and language, cf. Amos ix. 2; Job. xvii. 13.

ascend. The text has the common Aramaic verb for 'going up.'

make my bed in the nether-world. More lit. 'make Sheol my couch.' The language passes from one extreme of space to the other.

9. *wings of the morning.* 'To the ancients (Semites, Greeks, Romans, etc.) the goddess of the dawn had wings with which she arose out of the Eastern ocean, and, in the course of the day, covered the whole sky. The Psalmist makes a happy use of this imagery, without in the least compromising his monotheism' (W.D.).

the sea. Mediterranean; i.e. go as far west as *the wings of the morning* fly, the utmost limit.

10. *lead me . . . hold me.* Wherever he was, he would find himself within the sphere of God's control.

LESSON 8

AIM: To conclude the course on death and to instill within the students the importance of living each day to the fullest and to appreciate the life we have.

MOTIVATION: Now that we have learned about death, what is life? Why should we value it so dearly? What things in life do we cherish most? Why? What kinds of things did we learn while we shared these experiences with our families? Have some of our values been clarified or changed? Finally, have our feelings regarding life and death, G-d, Judaism, and family been altered since the beginning of this program? Why? Why not?

DEVELOPMENT: The end of the course should be developed so as to leave the students thinking about the cycle of life. Towards that goal, a siyyum should have been planned for this session. Since many aspects of death have been here portrayed through film and poetry, this lesson will begin by dealing with the subject's depiction through contemporary music. Excerpts of songs dealing both with death and with affirmation of life should be played to the students. Examples of songs in the first category include: Simon and Garfunkel's "Old Friends," and "Leaves That Are Green;" Peter, Paul and Mary's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" and Blood, Sweat and Tears', "And When I die." Songs re-affirming life may include the Beatles', "Ob-La-Di;" Judy Collins', "Both Sides Now;" Blood, Sweat and Tears', "G-d Bless the Child;" Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A Changin'," and finally, USA/Africa's, "We Are the World."

The purpose of playing these songs is manifold. It will offer to the students pleasure through their listening; it will serve as a respite from the difficult materials previously studied; it will tie-in many of the

lessons within the unit; and most importantly, it will again demonstrate to the students the prevalence of this subject in all of our art forms, and thus, in all of life. The songs' themes deal with life's continuing despite its problems, old age, childhood, and concern for our fellow man, among others.

The teacher should end this portion of the lesson by asking for student reactions to these songs. What are some of the feelings expressed in the songs dealing with death? Are any of these sentiments similar to those expressed in the poems read? In which different manners is life re-affirmed in the second group of songs? Which song was your favorite? Why?

During the final portion of the class, the students will produce the photographs they have collected and begin to contemplate their lives and what they deem important. Since they have already learned about death, an appropriate way to end such a unit would be to discuss what is life? What is the meaning of life to us? How can we appreciate it and live it in a meaningful way? Since we all know that death is inevitable, what things are important and what things lose importance?

As previously mentioned, the students were to have chosen ten to fifteen pictures of themselves and of activities meaningful to them. Each student should choose the five pictures most significant to him and which most symbolize life as he sees it. As the students have quite a selection from which to choose, the limit of five pictures should provoke

thought and care in their decision. No more than two pictures of the student himself may be used within the five. Once this selection is completed, the student will paste these pictures on colored paper provided by the teacher. A selection of colors such as yellow, red, blue, green, pink, grey and black should be offered to the students. The student chooses a color and proceeds to paste his pictures. Students then inspect each other's projects and through these pictures, discuss the importance of valuing life and its offerings. Through the choice of pictures and the color of the paper, the students may ascertain the different viewpoints expressed of life as well as goals and aspirations for the future.

Our program on death ends with this exercise. Having learned how to deal, both pragmatically and emotionally, with the end of life, the circle is reversed and students contemplate what to value while living. As we have dealt with both facts and feelings while discussing death, the students leave the course in a similar contemplative fashion. Our lives on earth are finite; all of us will die. Let's learn to distinguish what is important in life and what is not. Let's cherish our loved ones and friends. Most importantly, let's work to make our time here satisfying, full and productive.

FOOTNOTES

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