



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO ENDINGS SCIENCE

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Death is an inevitable reality in our lives. We will all die someday. Everyone we love will die someday.
- If we face this knowledge with courage and grace, death can become a teacher. Death's inevitability has the potential to make our lives more meaningful.

Lesson Materials

- One teacher should have this document open to share on their screen.
- One teacher should choose one of the two YouTube videos ahead of time and have it cued up and ready to share on screen with the class.

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

The reality of death has become a definite part of my life; my life has, so to speak, been extended by death, by my looking death in the eye and accepting it, by accepting destruction as a part of life and no longer wasting my energies on fear of death or the refusal to acknowledge its inevitability. It sounds paradoxical: by excluding death from our life, we cannot live a full life, and by admitting death into our life we enlarge and enrich it.

-Etty Hillesum

"Trisha's grandma used to say that the stars were holes in the sky. They were the light of heaven coming from the other side. And she used to say that someday she would be on the other side, where the light comes from. One evening they lay on the grass together and counted the lights from heaven. 'You know,' her grandma said, 'all of us will go there someday. Hang on to the grass, or you'll lift right off the ground, and there you'll be!' They laughed, and both hung on to the grass. But it was not long after that night that her grandma must have let go of the grass, because she went to where the lights were, on the other side. And not long after that, Trisha's grandpa let go of the grass, too."

- Patricia Polacco, from *Thank You, Mr. Falker*

And I will show that there is no imperfection in the present, and
can be none in the future,
And I will show that whatever happens to anybody, it may be turn'd
to beautiful results,
And I will show that nothing can happen more beautiful than death,
And I will thread a thread through my poems that time and events
are compact,
And that all the things of the universe are perfect miracles, each
as profound as any.

- Walt Whitman, *Starting from Paumanok*

CHECK-IN

🕒 5-10 minutes

Allow one of the teachers to lead the group in a name game, an icebreaker, a get-to-know-you questions, or a simple ‘How are things?’ moment. Spend more time if the group seems eager to connect with each other. Light the chalice and say:

“We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth, and the warmth of love.”

COVENANT

🕒 1-3 minutes

Review the discussion of how the group wants to be together. Update the notes, if necessary. Save the covenant for future classes.

- Share this document on your screen, if you can.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE VIDEO STORY ABOUT LOSS AND GRIEF

🕒 7-10 minutes

Ahead of time, choose one of these two videos and cue it up in a browser tab. These are videos of books being read aloud that we have used several times with this lesson in the past. We usually use [Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs](#) with the younger kids and [Finding Grandpa Everywhere](#) with the older kids, but consider previewing them both and choosing the best fit for your class. One interesting aspect of [Finding Grandpa Everywhere](#) is its depiction of subtle adult expressions that can create confusion for kids who have yet to learn them. (The child in the book is told that they have “lost Grandpa” so he looks for him around the house, not understanding that “lost” is a euphemism for death).

Use the last couple of minutes to let the children know what to expect in the next activity. Michelle will close breakout rooms at 11:50 so that we can participate in the next activity in a large group.

- [Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs](#) by Tomie dePaola (video runs 5:05)
- [Finding Grandpa Everywhere](#) by John Hodge, illustrated by Susan Aitken (video runs 7:23)

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE PANEL DISCUSSION ABOUT DEATH AND LOSS

🕒 30-35 minutes

KP will moderate a panel discussion with the children. The panel will be a veterinarian, a hospice doctor, and a pediatrician. KP will open the discussion and ask the children if they have questions for one or more of the panelists. If there is a lull in the questions, KP will choose some from the list of questions that kids submitted last week at the end of Story class.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 3-5 minutes

This week, since we will have all the children together, KP will offer closing words, perhaps a prayer.