

Bereavement Activities

Activity One

"Book of Remembrance".

Activity Two

Younger pupils may find the medium of artist expression more acceptable and need to be given the opportunity to use this method of expressing their thoughts. It is advisable to give the pupils complete freedom of expression but some supervision should be given to wording of any comments that accompany pictures.

Poetry is also an important expression of ones inner thoughts and can help pupils deal with their worries and concerns. Reading poetry in a calm and quiet atmosphere can also help pupils concentrate their thoughts and consider other perspectives on the issue.

Activity Three

A time line can be used in many ways to encourage pupils look at the deceased persons life and achievements. This can be highly decorative for the younger pupil or written thoughts and diagrammatical for the older pupil.

The idea will also work where the students explore their own lives and the losses and changes that they feel have affected them in some way.

Activity Four

Music can be a great stimulant. Some pupils may be talented enough to create their own piece of music or compose their own song. When pupils are trying to write or draw a response to the tragedy music can help to maintain a peaceful atmosphere and encourage reflective thoughts.

Activity Five

Artwork that includes collage work enables pupils to collect images that reflect the person who has died. Creating a collage of the dead persons favourite things needs a little more preparation, the collection of suitable magazines and resources, but it is a very positive activity, encouraging discussion, sharing and hopefully little light hearted thoughts. Movement around the room can add to the relaxed atmosphere, which may be a welcome break to many pupils who have not experienced bereavement before.

Activity Six

Worksheets are possible activities, but again they need to offer a framework from which the pupils can build their own ideas and thoughts.

A question sheet, for older pupils, should include a selection of questions about death to encourage them to formulate their own ideas. This may have to be prepared very shortly after the tragedy so that the questions relate directly to the event. The questions should be used as a stimulant for a general discussion. The younger pupils may need a diagrammatical worksheet to stimulate their ideas. One of the most successful is one where the pupil is encouraged to fill in a sectional object, ie Shield or Coat of Arms, with the good characteristic of the dead person.

This idea can also be adapted to allow pupils to reflect on their own feelings. Ask the pupils to create an outline drawing of their favourite object, large enough to allow them to write words inside. If they have problem drawing the object they could use the image of a bag or an outline of themselves. Inside this object the pupils are to write down their feeling, literally how they are feeling at the time. This activity can be saved and repeated at a later time to hopefully prove that the feelings do change and hopefully improve.

Activity Seven

By way of preparation, it is essential that the pupil has access to a good selection of books, fiction, poetry and non-fiction, which take the issue of death very seriously.