

Resilience Facing Bereavement

Discussion Questions for Pupils of Secondary School Age

Notes:

1. This is geared to an S4 guidance period, based on 27 years taking S4 or S5/6 in two secondary schools.
2. In every case I have checked with staff whether there is anyone in the class who has had a bereavement or tragedy recently.
3. I have deliberately not prepared either a handout or ppt., in that it is personally sensitive. Therefore, the flexibility of doing it without being tied to print allows adaptability.
4. I have always started by explaining that no one should be embarrassed if they are upset, for it is a shallow person who does not feel.
5. Layout of this paper: Red are starter questions.

Who watches detective programmes?

It is important to know what is involved at a death, e.g. a senior pupil brought an upset friend to see me after assembly; "My gran stayed with us and last night she died. When the doctor came he said that there would have to be a second doctor ... I had thought my folk cared for her, and I haven't slept all night."

What can happen to a body after death?

- i. Burial - certificate signed by one doctor
- ii. Cremation - certificates from two doctors
- iii. Donation for medical research

If it is a sudden death, it will be referred to the procurator fiscal, with involvement of the police who will guide on the legal arrangements.

Suppose there is an elderly couple staying near you, and the man dies ... how do you think you could help?

Clear snow from a path, cut grass, put in baking, etc.

Most people have a funeral service of some kind. Why?

- i. A need to dispose of the body!
- ii. A focal point to allow friends and family to show their support. During lockdown the absence of a funeral was one of the main things missed. It is SO important to be a listening ear at the time and later too!
- iii. It helps to look back at the good and helpful memories rather than the last view of someone unwell or the shock of being given the news.

All this applies regardless of your world view! Everyone has a world view: e.g. Humanist, Christian, Islamic which will have an effect on what is said, e.g. Humanists believe that we are a biochemical mix with nothing after death. Christians believe that we are more than a biochemical mix, and because of the evidence of the resurrection death is not the end. Therefore, when the earthly container grows tired, the real person goes on.