

DEATH

For some, the word death scares people. Many people believe in reincarnation (being brought back to life in another form), your spirit goes to a better or bad place. Some people look forward to die because they say it is their destiny (some Islamic religions). When a person physically dies, their spirit definitely goes to a place only determined by our maker. The inevitable is true, we will all die someday. People die of old age, from cancer, accidents, or suicide. Here are a few questions for starters in helping your mentee deal with death.

- When someone dies, where do you think they go?
- Why do you think people die?
- Are we supposed to live forever?
- What can we do to prepare ourselves before we die?

Mentor

Take a few minutes to discuss your experience with death, whether it may be a passing of a friend, sibling, parent, teacher, someone close to you. Share with your mentee the feelings you encountered, your immediate thoughts, and questions you had. Being true in sharing your personal experience will greatly expose your own experience and willingness to share with your mentee. These three areas are suggested “discussion starters”, biblical foundation, cultural values and activities to help the mentee in practical terms.

Biblical Foundation

- Ecclesiastes 12:7, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (TNIV)
- John 3:15, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. (TNIV)

- Romans 5:12, Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. (TNIV)

Cultural Values

For many Alaska native cultures, historically death was a question of where will your spirit go. For example, the Cup'ig culture, they placed the finest clothing on the deceased and gloves onto their hands. The gloves were said to guide them in the 'spirit world.' For many, the spirit world was a place to spend eternity. The knowledge of the good and bad spirit world was already part of the cultures prior to missionary contact.

Potential activities

Attending funerals is a way in which many pay their respects to the deceased. Reading of obituaries is also one way in which the mentee can review. There is no concrete way in having your mentee do an activity in dealing with death, but you can advise your mentee in reviewing the Biblical scriptures and allow the mentee to think through ways in which they would deal with the situation.

- Recognize (the issue of spiritual)
- Confront (how would they cope with death in the family)
- Discuss (how they would discuss the situation with someone)
- Debrief (what aspects helped them deal with the situation)