



Lesson 5: **Thinking about Death** *

Scene 6: "Elephant Graveyard" (repeat)

Scene 7: "Under the Stars"

YouTube Video: "He Lives in You" Song

Note: * signifies sensitive issues; requires 2 trusted adults in class

Objectives:

- (1) To help the students **feel comfortable thinking about and talking about death** in this class. To help them acknowledge that their parents will one day die and that that is a natural part of the "Circle of Life." Even though the vast majority of children in America grow up and leave home before a parent dies, sometimes tragedy strikes. We all need to be **sensitive** to peers we know who have experienced this kind of tragic death, and we needn't be afraid to talk about it.
- (2) To introduce the kids to a **powerful new song** that was written for the stage performance of *The Lion King* to accompany the Scene, "Under the Stars." The song is "They Live in You." The kids will watch a You-Tube video of that segment, and also thereby see how a **South African actor** was recruited to play the Rafiki character.

Materials:

- **chime** or **bell**
- *The Lion King* DVD and DVD player. Before class, **put Disk 1 to into the player and cue it up to Scene 6, then pause it.**
- Extra copies of the **Human Circle of Life** diagram.
- **Stack of new lyrics to the song "They Live in You"** (photocopied from the lyrics printed at the end of this lesson)
- **Grab-bag** with the **discussion question cards** (at the end of this lesson) printed out, cut apart, and stuffed into the grab-bag.
- **The lock box with the journals**, plus extra journals for any newcomers.

- **Lots of pens, colored markers and colored pencils.**
- **You-Tube video** of Lion King on Broadway song: "They Live in You" (**4 minutes**) This can be found at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryhsIEPIUH0>

ACTIVITIES: DVD watching; discussions; silent reflection; journal-writing; stretching



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Classroom preparation:

- Before class, cue up **Disk 1** of the DVD to Scene 6: "Elephant Graveyard." Cover monitor with cloth.
- Put the stack of **"They Live in You" Song Lyrics** on a table.
- Set out extra copies of the **"Human Circle of Life Diagram"** diagram that was handed out last week.
- Put the **Lock Box** of **journals** onto a table; have **extra journals** available for newcomers, along with pens and colorful markers
- Have the **chime** or **bell** accessible.
- Put the **Question Cards** into the **Grab-Bag**.
- Have accessible the **You-Tube (disk or computer online)** of **"They Live in You"** song stage performance at YouTube "The Lion King on Broadway: They Live in You (Jason Raize)"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryhsIEPIUH0>

Lesson flow:

1. Recollections from previous week **(5-10 mins)**
2. **DVD:** Rewatch **Scene 6** from last week plus **Scene 7 (8 mins)**
3. **Grab-bag discussion (15 mins)**
4. Silence, then **guided journal writing** on the themes and personal insights of the day. **(15-20 mins)**
5. **Announcement** to bring in Ritual Objects (possibly to secure a reminder partner) **(3 - 5 mins)**
6. Ritual ending: Play **You-Tube video** version of the **SONG** that the Lion King on Broadway uses for Scene 7: **"They Live in You"**, then pass out the lyrics to it **(5 mins)**



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GUIDE:

*[Recruit someone who has not been very active in class to pass out **the journals to everyone.**]*

Recollections from Previous Week (5-10 mins)

Q: "Okay, who had a great (or even small) **insight** this past week about what we've been talking about, and that they would like to share with the whole group?"

[Let the discussion continue, so long as it is lively and on point.]

Date and Title a New Journal Page

"We're going to start the movie not at the next scene but at the **Elephant Graveyard** scene we ended with last week. The new scene we will be talking about, "**Under the Stars**," flows directly from that graveyard scene."

[Invite the Youth to select a fresh page in their journal to date, and title it "Thinking About Death." . . . The new scene we will be watching today is "Under the Stars" and there will be a new song at the end of class today that was created for this scene in the stage production of The Lion King. It is called "They Live in You." So you might want to write that title down too.]

DVD Viewing: Scenes 6 and 7 (8 mins)

[Scene 6, "Elephant Graveyard" starts at 18: 24 into the movie. "Under the Stars" comes directly after and finishes at 26:06. Press the PAUSE button at the end of the scene, which is when the night falls and just as you see a scary green cliff showing up as the next scene.]

Grab-Bag Discussion: Scene 7 “Under the Stars” (15 mins)

[You can presume everyone knows about the Grab-bag discussion style by now. Your job is to help close off discussion so that there will be sufficient time — about a half hour — for what follows during this session.]

*[After 15 minutes or so, urge the discussion to come to a close, even if there are still unopened questions in the grab-bag. **Call for a volunteer to read any questions that remain.** Say to the class something like,*

*“If you really, really want to say something about any of those unanswered questions, **remember it till next week**, or write those thoughts in your journal, and then you can say what you want to say at the very beginning of class.”*

Journaling (15 – 20 mins)

GUIDE:

“Let’s begin, as always, with **a minute of silence**, and then I’ll periodically offer some questions for you to think about. As usual, ignore the questions that aren’t helpful to you, and just **write or draw** about whatever **thoughts, memories, ideas, feelings, or images** that come to mind — basically, whatever you are moved to write or draw or doodle. **You aren’t going to be tested on anything**, and nobody is going to read what you write. This is just an opportunity for you to try out whether writing in a journal is helpful for you, and perhaps even something you might want to continue as your life unfolds, or maybe just when you feel confused or angry or really sad about something. For many people, journaling is a real **help** and a **comfort**. For some, it is their primary spiritual practice that connects them to the circle of their own life and to the greater Circle of Life around them.”

“So settle into a comfortable position . . . close your eyes . . . and start to breathe slowly and deeply. Just focus on your breathing . . .”

[ring chime and wait in silence for 1 minute, then say, softly:]

“And now, with your eyes still closed, just keep breathing peacefully. . . Begin to listen, too, . . . and with no effort, no effort at all. . . . When my words trigger an idea or a memory in your mind, you can either just think about it and watch any images or memories that flow . . . or you can open your eyes and write into your journal a few words or phrases — or a whole long gushing thought, if you wish . . .

“**The theme for journaling today is Death.** I’ll ask you to let your

mind remember any experiences you've already had with death or with thinking about it. . . But first, it is very important for you to know that for most of us — even most adults — being asked to think about death can make us fearful and anxious. . . . We might feel tears in our eyes when certain memories come up . . . For this class, know that ALL those emotions are okay. In fact, we welcome them here!

"I'd also like to ask all of us to **respect the emotions of others** in this room. . . . That means, don't crack jokes, and please don't laugh, even if something seems funny in your own mind. Because somebody else might be feeling sad or scared, and we don't want to interrupt that.

"**If you ever feel like you want to just leave the room** — go ahead and leave the room. . . But please do it quietly and don't go too far, so that we can find you when it is time for us to all come together for a final **NEW YouTube video**, that shows the same scene, but how real human beings acted it out on Broadway. In this video we will see the human actor playing Mufasa singing a new song to the boy playing the young Simba.

"So, be brave, here we go . . .

- "**First question** to think or write about: . . . When in your childhood did you first understand that **creatures died**? . . . How did that understanding come to you? . . . Was it frightening, or did it seem okay to you then? *[wait a minute or more]*
- "Did you ever **accidentally or intentionally kill** an insect or any other kind of animal and suddenly feel bad about it? . . . Where were you when that happened? Were you alone or with somebody? How did you feel? . . . *[wait a minute or more]*
- "Have you, **personally, experienced the death of someone you love** — and that includes pets, not just people. . . Are you okay with calling up that memory again — or would you rather just forget about it? Either way is fine . . . You can think about something else, if you want right now, like a time when you looked at the stars spanning across the whole night sky, just like Simba got to see them? . . . But if you are willing to actually remember the time when somebody you loved died, see if there is something you'd like to write in your journal about that experience. . . Or something you wish you could have said to them first. . . . *[wait a minute or more]*
- "Here's another question: Did you ever **feel awkward** having to be around someone who just had somebody important in their life die? . . . Did you feel awkward because you didn't know what to say? . . Or did you get brave and spend time with them anyway. . . . *[wait a minute or more]*

- “When did you first realize that **your parent or parents** would also have to die sometime? . . . Did you ever worry a lot that it might happen while you were still a child? . . .
 . . . *[wait a minute or more]*
- “When did you realize that you, too, will die someday — that you too are part of the great Circle of Life? . . . What were the circumstances when that thought or emotion came to you, and how do you feel thinking about that now? *[wait a minute or more]*

“I’ll stop talking now. Go ahead and journal for a few more minutes, or just sit quietly and continue to reflect on these questions.”

*[Watch the students to see how long they want to keep journaling. Close it off gently before more than a few begin to fidget, and absolutely leave enough time (8 minutes) to make the announcement below and to show the new song video. **Ring the chime to end this period.**]*

Announcement: Memory objects for next time (3 – 5 mins)

GUIDE:

“I have a very, very important announcement about what to bring with you to class next week, so listen up . . . Next week we will begin with a **simple ritual** to honor and acknowledge the deaths of **people or pets** important in our lives. We will do this before we begin watching the DVD. So if anyone wants to **bring in any sacred reminders**, including photographs, of the people or pets who died, remember to do that, so you can place it on the altar.

During the ritual next week nobody *has* to say anything if they prefer to just remain silent. **We will all sit in silence together**, while just those who *do* want to acknowledge the dead get a chance to go up to the altar and place an object of memory, or even say a name or something beyond that to honor the dead.

Also, **some of you may not yet have experienced death of a loved one in your lives**. But all of you have or will soon be experiencing a death of another kind: **the death of your “Explorer in the Garden” psychological self**, as you move into your “Thespian at the Oasis” stage of Life. That life passage happens to everybody. So any of you who want to bring in a **cherished reminder of your childhood self** (an object would be better than a photograph for this), please do so. Because you can place that object on the altar too, during the ritual.

Also, because we will be using an **altar** for our ritual, if any of you have **any Lion King memorabilia** that you’d like to bring to decorate altar or the whole room with before we begin the ritual,

please do so.”

So, to sum up: **Two things to remember** to bring with you next week if you wish:

- First, **small objects** to place on the altar to honor the loved ones in your life who have died and also other small objects to honor the aspects of your childhood life that were really important to you then but that you probably will be leaving behind in this life passage.
- Second, **Lion King mementos**, if you have any.

*[Because it is so important for kids not to forget this, you might want to randomly pair up the kids and have them exchange email addresses or phone numbers in order to **remind one another** to bring objects next week.]*

*[It might be wonderful to leave enough time after this announcement to invite the kids **to suggest their own ideas for a ritual**. Then you can make final decisions about what to use for it.]*

New Ending: DVD of new song “He Lives in You” (5 mins)

GUIDE:

“We’ve got **a new song** to end with this time, and we’ll first watch it on a **You-Tube video**. You see, when the Lion King movie was rewritten to be **performed on-stage in New York City**, they needed to write some new songs for it. So this is the song that was written for the scene where Mufasa tells Simba to look to the stars for the ancestors to guide him. The song is sung again by Rafiki and the grown-up Simba later in the play, so this You Tube clip combines that episode too. So first you will see a young boy actor playing the young Simba — then a very young man playing the grown-up Simba shows up singing the same song for a much later part of the drama.

Stretch: First, let’s get up and stretch as usual, and then gather around the DVD screen again and watch this new song.

Play DVD of “They Live in You” (4 minutes) stage performance at
YouTube “The Lion King on Broadway: They Live in You (Jason Raize)”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryhsIEPIUH0>

*[After the song is finished, **pass out the new song lyrics**, and let the kids take that home if they wish. **Play the DVD a second time** for any kids who want to stay on and see it again.]*

*NOTE: If **anyone asks if they can take home their journal**, give an enthusiastic YES! — but ask them to remember to bring it back for next week's session.*

NOTE TO GUIDE: The grown-up Simba in the You-Tube video is Jason Raize, who was the first actor to play that role on Broadway. Sadly, in 2004, at the age of 28, Jason Raize committed suicide. Some of your students may know this and want to discuss it. (Being gorgeous and talented and famous doesn't necessarily bring happiness.)

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Raize



The “Under the Stars” scene brings up a lot of emotion. Some people, including adults, get tears in their eyes every time they watch Mufasa telling Simba,

“So. Whenever you feel alone, just look to the stars. The great kings of the past will be there to guide you — and so will I.”

Question: *If somebody here sometimes (or always) gets teary eyes during this scene, please share with the group why you think that happens to you. But know that deep emotions sometimes cannot be explained or fully understood. They just happen on their own, and it is hard to describe why.*



Question: *Does anyone remember what Mufasa says when Simba protests, “I just wanted to be brave like you!”*

Answer: “I’m only brave when I have to be. Simba, being brave doesn’t mean you go looking for trouble.”



Question: *What is Simba feeling when he looks down at his paw inside the pawprint of his father?*

Follow-up Q: *Does anyone want to share a memory of a time when you felt the same way?*



Question: *Why does Mufasa sit up and change his tone of voice when Simba says, "Dad, we're pals, right? And we'll always be together, right?"*

Next question: *Was there already a scene in The Lion King when Mufasa tried to tell Simba not to expect him to live forever?*

Answer: It is the time when Mufasa is first showing Simba the Kingdom at sunrise and Mufasa says, "A king's time as a ruler rises and falls like the sun. One day, Simba, the sun will set on my time here, and will rise with you."



Mufasa teaches Simba something important and begins his lesson with, "Simba, let me tell you something my father told me . . ."

Question: *Is there a story or wise saying that your parents or grandparents or other adults have told you that you might want to pass down to the generations that follow you?*



This scene is preparing Simba to understand that his father will eventually die, but that Simba can still get guidance from him anyway.

Question: *Does anybody have a vivid memory of when you first realized that death happens in this world — not just to animals in the wild but also to pets and to people you really care about.*

"They Live in You"

Music and lyrics by Mark Mancina, Jay Rifkin, and Lebo M
Performed by Samuel E. Wright on the Stage Production of *The Lion King*.

To watch the YouTube video of the stage performance of this song, google YouTube "The Lion King on Broadway – They Live in You" (Jason Raize)

Ingonyama nengw' enamabala

Night . . . And the spirit of life . . . calling

Mamela

And a voice . . . With the fear of a child . . . asking

Oh . . . Mamela

Wait . . . There's no mountain too great

Hear these words and have faith

Have faith

They live in you They live in me They're watching over Everything we see In every creature In every star In your reflection They live in you They live in you They live in me They're watching over Everything we see In every creature In every star In your reflection They live in you	(Chorus) He lives in you He lives in me He watches over Everything we see Into the water Into the truth In your reflection He lives in you
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