



Open-Sky
School

Category
PHILOSOPHY
FOR KIDS



Activity

The Cycle of Matter and Death

MATERIALS

A flower or an image of a flower (if possible, a tulip or lily because their organs are visible)

VIDEO:

Feed Me: Classifying Organisms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHCOzc143Ec>

DURATION

40 MINUTES

Activity Summary

Children's philosophy workshops aim to develop children's ability to think by and for themselves, as well as to introduce them to take a critical look at certain behaviours and social issues.

The aim of this workshop is to learn about the cycle of matter as it exists in nature and to discuss the questions children have about death.

Preparation

Visit the location of your outing and check to see if there are piles of dead leaves, or pieces of rotting wood, so that students can observe decomposers in action.

If you wish, you can show this video explaining germination to help students understand how plants grow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro8Z9qllWjM>



Steps

This workshop consists of a group discussion in which students sit in a circle and share their ideas without being forced to express themselves. Every idea is valid and can lead to new avenues of thought.

Be prepared to ask questions to stimulate discussion, if necessary.

If you notice that the same students often speak at the expense of others, you can limit the number of times each student speaks. For example, you can ask students to find 3 sticks, leaves, rocks or other objects on the ground, and put one object in the center of the circle each time they take a turn to speak, until they do not have any left. At that point, the student can continue to listen to what their peers have to say.

Show the flower to your students.

A. Say:

What do you know about the stages in the life of a flowering plant? There is germination, where the seed begins to form its roots, followed by the growth of its roots, stems and leaves. Then comes flowering, or the production of the flower where pollination and fruiting take place. When the fruit is ripe, the seeds fall to the ground. The flower dies, but the seeds begin the same life cycle again.

B. Invite students to move old piles of dead leaves or decomposing branches on the ground.

Questions

1. **Do you know other natural cycles?**
If students don't, you can suggest a few, such as the seasons, the 24-hour cycles of day and night, the water cycle, the phases of the moon and the tides...

1. **What can you see under the piles of leaves or rotting wood?**
2. **What are all these little animals doing there?**

RETURN TO GROUP

1. Show the video *Feed Me: Classifying Organisms*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHCOzcl43Ec>
2. What happens in nature after an organism dies?
3. Death is the end of an organism's biological activity. In your opinion, does it disappear forever after death? Its entire organism dissolves and what it once was is reborn through the cycle of matter.
4. It's normal to feel sad after the death of a living thing, like a cat or a fish, a grandfather or grandmother, or even a tree. To console you, here's a thought. On the one hand, your loved one's organism lives on elsewhere thanks to the cycle of matter, and on the other hand, its spirit, energy, thoughts, what made you love this being or this person, continues to live on in your heart, in your head, in your memories. What do you think of the idea that death is a transformation?

REINVESTMENT:

- Watch this time-lapse video of a bean growing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w77zPAAtVTuI>
- Watch this time-lapse video of spinach growing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMK-BKUYM0s>
- Even if they are all sown at the same time, different plants do not all grow at the same rate. The same can be said about children, who, even if the same age, do not all learn at the same speed.