

Death—A New Beginning

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for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 4
Lesson Focus
Death is not the end.

Lesson 4
Bible Basis:
1 Corinthians 15:20-23,
35-44

Lesson 4
Memory Verse:
For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. —1 Corinthians 15:22-23

Students will watch a news clip about the recent death of Kobe Bryant and eight others as they ponder what God has to say about life after death.

Materials:

Internet access

NOTE: This lesson deals with death. If anyone in your class has been touched by this subject recently, you will know best how to handle this sensitive issue.

As students join your group today, ask volunteers to share why they are glad they are alive today. If possible, answer this question as a large group. Come up with a reason yourself about why you are glad you are alive today. Share that answer with the large group to start and, if possible, call on other adult staff members or adult volunteers to share their answers as well.

Death is always headlining the news in one form or another. Whether it's a pandemic, a shooting, or a helicopter crash—we can't escape it. Death is inevitable, but being thankful for each day is one way we can keep our focus positive rather than becoming depressed or fearful.

Tell your class that if anyone is grappling with a recent death in the family or struggling with a terminally sick loved one, friend, grandparent, parent, or relative to be sure to meet with you after class so you can pray and talk together. Assure them that they don't have to face this alone.

In January, the world was shocked to hear about the death of Kobe Bryant and his daughter. Kobe was an NBA all-star who spent his time after retiring from basketball mentoring young people and storytelling through books and short films.

Share the following video with your students [3:19]:

Kobe Bryant death: Tributes pour in amid chopper crash investigation
<https://youtu.be/d3P9ILr-wg0>

Although everyone emphasized and expressed grief over Kobe Bryant as the most recognizable victim of the crash, all of the nine victims who died were mourned. Three teenage girls were among those who died: Gianna Bryant, Alyssa Altobelli, and Payton Chester.

➤ **Why does it seem so sad and shocking when someone that young dies?** (Answers will vary but will probably include that they didn't have a chance to really live yet. The grief their family and friends are experiencing is overwhelming since death was so unexpected.)

Kobe and the other people onboard were on their way to a charity event working with underprivileged children when the crash occurred. They weren't death-defying thrill seekers or people who threw caution to the wind.

➤ **What questions do people usually express in situations like this?** (Allow students to voice questions without trying to find answers to them. Some may express why good people have to die while evil people often don't or why the three girls had to die so young.)

➤ **After watching this video, why do you think it is important for all of us to be ready to die?** (Answers might include that we never know when something like this might happen. We may not all live until we are old, etc.)

Today's lesson isn't meant to scare you or to make you upset. Death, however, is inevitable for everyone who lives. Unless Jesus' return to earth precedes our death, all of us in this group will die someday. But death is not the end! In fact, it's just the beginning...

Additional resources:

Mothers, daughters, fathers, coaches: Here are the 9 killed in the Kobe Bryant Helicopter Crash
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-01-27/kobe-bryant-helicopter-crash-victims>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Materials:

- Internet access
- Paper
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

Have a volunteer read aloud today's memory verse (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

Death is not the end...but when a person dies, it is gut-wrenching and filled with sadness for those left behind. Those who die having put their faith in Jesus will find a new beginning in heaven! In Revelation 21:4 we are promised, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Hand out paper, index cards, and writing implements. Have your students find a spot in your classroom where they can think and write quietly. Have them journal how they feel about death. If they have lost someone close or important to them, they may want to focus on emotions brought on by that experience. Assure them that it's ok to be honest and share about the hurt death causes in this life. Whether the person they lost was a famous celebrity, a friend, a relative—it hurts. No death is trivial or without sadness.

As you think about this, write about one thing you loved or miss about the person who has passed away—even if it was someone you identify with but didn't know personally. Remembering this person helps with pain. If you haven't lost anyone, take a moment to realize the gift of life you have with all those you love and care for today.

After your students have had a chance to think and write, call them back together as a group.

Death is not the end. We, as Christians, need not fear the inevitable. We have a hope that unbelievers do not have.

If students have a prayer request, encourage them to write it down on their index card and mention that you will pray for them this week as they continue their journey of life. Collect the cards. Also, if students want to talk about a loved one who has died, encourage them to stay after

class today and be available to talk with them. Refer them to a church member who specializes in special care related to death if their grief or need is more than you are capable of handling.

Close in prayer.

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