## THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

## Catholic Elementary Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

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Catholic Elementary Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

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In the event of the death of a child, an overwhelming situation may arise within the child's Catholic elementary school community. Catholic school administrators are expected to have within their skill base an ability to coordinate the logistics, the pastoral concerns, as well an ability to navigate the theological components of a faith-based school setting. The administrators of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are expected to lead their communities through the difficult hours, weeks and months following the death of a student. Catholic School elementary principals often do not have the tools or training to fall back on when this type of tragedy strikes.

The purpose of this project is to design, implement, and evaluate a workshop that will provide Catholic Elementary school administrators with 1) a basic understanding of grief and bereavement in regards to the traumatic death of a child attending their school, 2) Roman Catholic theological foundations surrounding death and dying especially in regards to the death of a child, and 3) practical skills to lead a school through the first few days following the traumatic death. Where there are a number of programs available regarding children and crisis response, the element which establishes this project as unique is the integration of the component of Catholic identity.

This dissertation by Kristin A. Wickersty Witte fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Ministry approved by Rev. Romuald Meogrossi, OFM Conv., Ph.D. as Director, and by Dr. Patricia Fosarelli, M.D., D.Min., and Rev. Berard Marthaler, O.F.M. Conv., S.T.D., Ph.D. as Readers.

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# Dedication

This work is dedicated to my father, Dr. Allan G. Wickersty, Ph.D. alumnus of The Catholic University of America and my inspiration.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Following the death of a student in a Catholic school, the school administrators need to accompany their communities on the journey<sup>1</sup> towards healing as Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35 NAB). The death of a child in a school setting can be traumatic for many involved. This project endeavors to train administrators in a Catholic elementary school to respond in a manner that engages both the Roman Catholic tradition on which the school's identity is based and sound crisis intervention practice. Based on the interaction of Jesus with the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 (NAB), a four stage model has been designed to use by Catholic elementary school communities when a student dies. The four stages:

Communication, Communio, Commemoration, and Continuation provide a framework for an integrated faith based response.

After witnessing Christ's suffering, crucifixion, burial, and purported resurrection sightings, the travelers on the road to Emmaus were processing the events experienced in conversation. St. Augustine reflects that "They were so disturbed when they saw him hanging on the cross that they forgot his teaching, did not look for his resurrection, and failed to keep his promises in mind." In Luke 24:15 (NAB), "And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* I-IX, The Anchor Bible 28, New York 1985,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Augustine, Sermon 235.1

but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him." Christ did not leave the disciples to wrestle with their confusion and overwhelming grief alone; instead, he engaged them at a critical and vulnerable time. It is the role of administrators, in times of overwhelming grief and loss to engage the community, to embody Christ on the road to Emmaus for the students, faculty, and families by providing pastoral presence, engaging in intentional outreach and bearing witness to the truth of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Response begins with **communication**. On the road to Emmaus, Christ modeled this in the open dialogue he initiated with the disciples. "He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene" (Luke 24:17-10c NAB)". Although they did not recognize Christ, He validated their experiences and their personal value, in His listening to their story. "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27 NAB). Through this dialogue, in the gospel of Luke, Christ presents his followers with a model of catechesis and evangelization for his disciples.

The pragmata ["matters, things, events"; 1:1] about which Luke writes . . . are for Luke events of salvation-history, and the significance of them depends on the way one interprets the fulfillment mentioned. In the concrete, the "events" refer not only to the deeds of the ministry of Jesus, his passion, death, burial, and resurrection, but also to the sequel to all this, the spread of the "word of the Lord" from Jerusalem to the end of the earth in the activity of the chosen witnesses.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> New American Bible. (Washington, DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX*, The Anchor Bible 28, New York 1985, 292.

Christ ontextualized the disciples' personal story within salvation history guiding them following a loss, to relate their spiritual and religious experience to their current crisis.

The Roman Catholic Church, in the Order of Christian Funerals, teaches that while communication regarding death needs to address the temporal and physical loss, it also must include recognition of the greater spiritual reality. "While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis." In the communication stage of response to the death of a student, Catholic school administrators will collect accurate information surrounding the death and disseminate that information in a way that proclaims not only the information regarding the moment of death, but also the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church in regards to death.

The second stage, *communio*, is named by the disciples in hindsight. After Christ departs from them, "Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"" (Luke 24:17-32 NAB) They became aware of the presence of the divine in the relational experience that had occurred. *Communio*, a critical term in the Second Vatican Council, was used in reference to the people of God, especially in the document *Lumen Gentium*. "The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men"<sup>6</sup>. "The Church is communio; she is God's communing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The. Liturgical Press, 1989), 1,5,7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. 1.

with men in Christ and hence the communing of men with one another – and, in consequence, sacrament, sign, instrument of salvation." The death of a student evokes a foundational need for *communio*. Having been informed of the loss, the community gathers to acknowledge the significance of the moment as well as re-defining who they are, as they reach out to God in prayer for consolation. Utilization of the traditions of the church, prayer together, and remembrance to fellow members of the community provide a reminder, at this critical moment, that God is present and primary in the experience of coming together.

"As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them."

(Luke 24:28-30 NAB) The third stage, **Commemoration,** reflects the importance of ritual following a loss. Pope John Paul II, in *Mane Nobiscum Domine*<sup>8</sup>, says:

It is significant that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, duly prepared by our Lord's words, recognized him at table through the simple gesture of the "breaking of bread". When minds are enlightened and hearts are enkindled, signs begin to "speak". The Eucharist unfolds in a dynamic context of signs containing a rich and luminous message. Through these signs the mystery in some way opens up before the eyes of the believer. 9

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (San Francisco:Ignatius, 1987), 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004) 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid. 14.

"The "breaking of bread"—as the Eucharist was called in earliest times—has always been at the centre of the Church's life. Through it Christ makes present within time the mystery of his death and resurrection." <sup>10</sup>

"Religious rituals help provide structure to the survivors, prescribing steps for observing death and remembering deceased loved ones. They also help give meaning to the death, both by facilitating the eulogy and by putting life into the larger framework of the spirit. Finally they assure survivors that the deceased lives on in heaven." <sup>11</sup> In fact, "any activity that includes the symbolic expression of a combination of emotions, thoughts, and/or spiritual beliefs of the participant and has special meaning for the participant" constitutes ritual. <sup>12</sup>

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:31 - 35 NAB)

Immediately following the breaking of the bread, the disciples who have experienced Christ return to their daily lives and relationships with new perspective, having begun the process of integrating the experience of loss into their lives.

The final stage, **Continuation**, acknowledges that in the experience of the death of a student, the community has been changed. This communal change, and the growth which could occur either spiritual or emotionally that accompanied the loss has become

<sup>11</sup> K. Braun. and A. Zir, "Roles for the church in improving end of life care: Perceptions of Christian clergy and laity." *Death Studies*, 25(8), (2001) 685-704.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> J. Castle., and W.L. Phillips, "Grief rituals: aspects that facilitate adjustment to bereavement." *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 8, 41-71. (2003) 43.

incorporated into the identity of the community. "Mourners face the end of one relationship with the deceased and begin a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude and the hope of resurrection and reunion." "Life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven."

The elements of spiritual crisis intervention found on the road to Emmaus can provide Catholic elementary school administrators a framework and guide with which to respond holistically to the death of a student. Understanding and imbued with the spirit of Christ's intervention with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, administrators will experience heightened preparedness to respond to the death of a student through an active engagement with their Catholic faith and Catholic identity in hope and love.

<sup>13</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The. Liturgical Press, 1989). 213.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Roman Missal. Preface of Christian Death I.

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### THEOLOGY

"Jesus wept" (John 11:35)(NAB).

The Johnnine portrayal of the raising of Lazarus contains the theological foundation of the Roman Catholic beliefs regarding death. As Martha wrestles with the death of her brother,

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world" (John 11:23- 27) (NAB).

Martha attests her faith in the eschatological resurrection of the dead. This confession is followed by Jesus providing affirmation that he does not just offer to the world "the resurrection and the life," but instead that his salvific mission is integrated into his very being. Later in this pericope, Jesus continues to engage the family of Lazarus and grieve with them the death of their brother, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) (NAB). Following this emotional response, Jesus Christ calls to Lazarus, who comes from death to life.

"The Lazarus miracle is to be a sign that Jesus really is the power of life evident in resurrection. He calls to life a person buried in the tomb." Jesus' true nature as both divine and human is manifest in this story. Jesus reflects his fully divine nature and power

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Perkins, Pheme.. "The Gospel According to John." *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990. 969.

over death in the act of calling Lazarus from the dead. The fully human nature of Christ is revealed as he experiences the pain of those around him and weeps. As disciples of Christ following in his footsteps, when facing the death of a loved one, the Catholic community is called to respond to both the divine truths, as well as the human experience. Pastorally, those who minister are called to be a beacon of divine truth regarding salvation, namely, the hope of eternal life, and to accompany those who weep and are in human pain.

The Roman Catholic Church asserts that Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, destroyed death forever. The death of Jesus on the cross, and belief in the subsequent resurrection are the fundamental truths upon which the Christian faith is based. Ireneaus, in *Against Heresies*, stated "If he is not the God of the dead but of the living, yet was called the God of the Fathers who were sleeping, they do undoubtedly live to God and have not passed out of existence, since they are children of the resurrection. But our Lord is himself the resurrection, as he himself declares, "I am the resurrection and the life." <sup>17</sup> The sacrificial death of Jesus freed human beings from the slavery of sin. In the book of Genesis, the origin of human death is a direct consequence of the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. "The Lord God gave man this order: "You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die" (2: 16-17) (NAB).

Jesus' resurrection then formed the perfect covenant opening the salvation and redemption for the entire human race. By Jesus' resurrection he offers abundant life for his followers

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.5.2

and grants eternal life after death. <sup>18</sup>His conquering death provides the hope of eternal life with God for all. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* asserts that "The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the Paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope" <sup>19</sup> and that "The Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus views it as a step towards him and an entrance into everlasting life." <sup>20</sup> With Christ's death and resurrection as the context for Christian death, death becomes redefined not as finality, but a transition to a new and eternal life.

Death affects the physical as well as the spiritual aspects of a human being. Death is defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as "the separation of the soul from the body." <sup>21</sup> When this separation occurs, scripture asserts that in death humans receive eternal judgment. In 2 Corinthians 5:10, we read: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil" (NAB). St. Paul attests in his letter to the Romans (8:10-11) that for those who have made the choice to live as disciples "although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you" (NAB). Death in Christ Jesus, according to the *Catechism*, affords the human soul to "meet God" <sup>22</sup> and to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1988). 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1681.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid. 1020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid. 997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994) 997.

be "away from the body and at home with the Lord" <sup>23</sup> While the physical body may be lifeless, "the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus' Resurrection." <sup>24</sup>

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' document, Reflections on the Body, Cremation, and Catholic Funeral Rites, (1997) teaches that "Viewed with the eye of faith, death is not so much a finality to be feared as the gateway to the fullness of life in the presence of the Holy One."<sup>25</sup> The Roman Catholic Church celebrates a disciples' journey through this gateway with ritual, prayer, and memorial. The rites celebrated by the church surrounding death including those in the Order of Christian Funerals "recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis"<sup>26</sup> Although people are strengthened and consoled through Christ's promise of eternal life,<sup>27</sup> there is still human pain surrounding the loss of a loved one. As St. Paul wrote in his first letter to the Thessalonians (4 13-14), "We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (NAB). Christians, while hopeful, still grieve the absence of the person's physical presence and the emptiness that exists in their lives without the person who lived with them daily. Following the model of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid. 1681.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid. 997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Reflections on the Body, Cremation, and Catholic Funeral Rites*, Committee on the Liturgy, Washington, DC: USCCB, 1997).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The. Liturgical Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid. 52.

Jesus with Martha at the death of Lazarus, the community is called to actively engage and provide consolation for those who grieve.

The General Introduction of *The Order of Christian Funerals* recalls 1 Corinthians 12:26: "If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member." Interconnected intimately in one faith through Christ, "those who are baptized into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are responsible for one another." (NAB) As members of the community mourn the loss of a loved one, the entirety of the community is called upon "to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn" according to their gifts. This intrinsic spiritual interconnection exists not only among the living but also remains with those who have died, as the Roman Catholic Church believes "death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life." 29

The belief that "Just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever, so after death the righteous will live forever with the risen Christ," articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides hope of reconciliation with those who have died, as well as asserts an ongoing union with those who have died in relationship with Jesus Christ. St. Simeon of Thessalonica, in *De ordine sepulturae*, written circa 1420, attested to his belief that unity still exists with those who have died: "we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion. For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 989.

we will find one another again in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ, and now we are united with Christ as we go toward him . . . we shall all be together in Christ." This ongoing connection is not severed when the soul leaves the body in death, for the faithful are joined together in ethereal communion through Christ. Pope Paul VI, in his *Credo of the People of God* (1968) wrote that the deceased continue to be members of the Communion of Saints, intimately connected to the living. "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always [attentive] to our prayers." (30) This Catholic belief in an unbroken link with those who died often provides those who grieve the reassurance of their loved one's presence continuing with them.

L.R. Bailey in *Death in the Literature of the Old Testament*, <sup>33</sup> asserted that there are two kinds of death: 'good' death and 'bad' death. Abraham is an example of what would connote a "good death" in Genesis 25:8 "Then he breathed his last, dying at a ripe old age, grown old after a full life; and he was taken to his kinsmen" (NAB). The book of Job (5:25-26) delineates the righteous experience: "You shall know that your descendants are many, and your offspring as the grass of the earth. You shall approach the grave in full vigor, as a shock of grain comes in at its season" (NAB). In contrast, Genesis 37 illustrates when Jacob believes his beloved child Joseph is dead, he grieves his son's "bad

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> St. Simeon of Thessalonica, *De ordine sepulturæ*. 336:PG 155,684. <sup>32</sup> Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God* (1968)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> L.R, Bailey. "Death as a Theological Problem in the Old Testament" *Pastoral Psychology* 22 (1971) 20-32.

death." "Jacob rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned his son many days. Though his sons and daughters tried to console him, he refused all consolation, saying, 'No, I will go down mourning to my son in the nether world.' Thus did his father lament him" (34-35) (NAB). Bailey asserted that there are three conditions, any of which can characterize a death as a "bad death." The three characteristics are: the premature nature of the death, if the death is violent, and if there is no surviving heir. The death of a child, sometimes violent in nature but always perceived as premature and most often lacking heirs, would be characterized as a "bad death" according to Hebrew Scripture.

If dying with multiple heirs is a "good death," then how did one justify the death of a child in Hebrew Scripture? Within the Hebrew tradition, producing numerous heirs was considered a sign of blessing and God's favor. Within Deuteronomy, the reward for observing God's law was numerous offspring.

As your reward for heeding these decrees and observing them carefully, the LORD, your God, will keep with you the merciful covenant which he promised on oath to your fathers. . .He will love and bless and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb. . .You will be blessed above all peoples; no man or woman among you shall be childless nor shall your livestock be barren (7:12-14) (NAB).

Correspondingly, having a child die was interpreted in Hebrew Scripture as punishment for sinning against or disobeying God. Having committed adultery and murder, King David was told by the prophet Nathan that although his life would be spared, the son conceived in the adulterous relationship would die. In 2 Samuel 12:14, "But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die"

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

(NAB). This belief that the death or suffering of a child was directly related to the parents' or child's sin against God would endure even to the time of Christ.

In the story of the man born blind in the gospel of John, Christ addresses the correlation between parental and personal sin and suffering, as well as providing insight into theodicy. Christ's "disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him" (9:2-3)(NAB), Christ confutes the long held belief that the death and pain of a child is the result of retributive justice by the divine. He attests that neither the blind man nor his parents incurred blame in regards to his blindness, and that it was instead a part of the greater divine plan. Christ's teleological response evokes recognition by those who grieve and those who suffer that answers are God's alone, and that suffering and death remain a mystery to human beings. In later writings, theologian Karl Rahner stated that "The incomprehensibility of suffering is part of the incomprehensibility of God"35 and that suffering "is the form . . . in which the incomprehensibility of God himself appears."36 This incomprehensibility would seem to present an image of a God who is aloof, secretive, and uncaring as people, even children, suffer and die. Christ's passion and death provides a lens through which to view the incomprehensibility of God's divine plan.

Dr. Stephen Vicchio in <u>The Voice From the Whirlwind: The Problem of Evil and</u>

<u>the Modern World</u> provides a complimentary response for the challenge of theodicy to that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Karl Rahner. 'Why Does God Allow Us to Suffer?' In *Theological Investigations, Volume XIX: Faith and Ministry*. Translated by Edward Quinn. (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 194-208
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

of Rahner. While Vicchio agrees that humans cannot fully comprehend the divine plan, he delineates the incarnation of Christ as a critical component to understanding the existence of evil in the world. "At the heart of the Christian message we must find a God who identifies himself so thoroughly with his creatures that he becomes one of them. ...We must trust that at bottom level the prima facie Christian paradox of evil is merely apparent." If the "paradox of evil is merely apparent," then suffering and death, as humans perceive them, also become overshadowed by the truth of God's love incarnate in Christ. In knowledge of that truth, human beings are assured that the divine plan is one of a God who loves and cares for them, even if faced with the perception that evil exists within their daily experience.

In this divine plan, God loves children and has a place for them in eternity.<sup>38</sup> This was explicitly addressed in Mark 10:13-15: "People were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it"(NAB). Christ used the model of a child to explain the importance of receptivity. According to the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, "The chief characteristic of children is receptivity. Without physical power and legal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Stephen J. Vicchio. *The Voice from the Whirlwind: The Problem of Evil and the Modern World* (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1989), 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994) 1261.

status, children know best how to receive." <sup>39</sup> Adults must receive the kingdom and love of God without controlling or fully comprehending. In the same way, they are also called to accept the "incomprehensibility of God" as Rahner proposed, when faced with suffering and death, especially of children.

"In writings of the time, children are presented as either examples of unreasonable behavior or objects to be trained. In this passage . . . They are taken seriously as persons and enjoy a relationship with Jesus and the kingdom." Christ uses the children as more than a model of receptivity as a positive character trait. In Mark 10:16, he affirms a relationship with children "Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them" (NAB). This blessing and ritual of the imposition of hands is reflected in the blessings and rituals utilized by the Roman Catholic Church when a child dies. The *Order of Christian Funerals* asserts that there is a need for adaptation regarding the extraordinary circumstances and exceptional pain by family and friends when a child dies. "Through prayer and words of comfort the minister and others can help the mourners to understand that their child has gone before them into the kingdom of the Lord and that one day they will all be reunited there in joy." Part II of The *Order of Christian Funerals* is devoted to "Funeral Rites for Children" due to the extraordinary need for pastoral response and sensitivity related to such a loss. The *Order of Christian Funerals* states that:

Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. "The Gospel According to Mark." *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 617.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ibid. 618.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The. Liturgical Press, 1989) 239.

In its pastoral ministry to the bereaved the Christian community is challenged in a particular way by the death of an infant or child. The bewilderment and pain that death causes can be overwhelming in this situation, especially for the parents and the brothers and sisters of the deceased child. The community seeks to offer support and consolation to the family during and after the time of the funeral rites. 42

While clear regarding the Rites on how to provide a Roman Catholic funeral for baptized Catholic children (or children whose parents intended on having them baptized), <sup>43</sup> the *Order of Christian Funerals* makes clear the need for flexibility and even provides a number of possible options with regard to how to adapt the Rites to be pastorally sensitive to the bereaved. Two examples of adaptation suggestions provided in the *Order of Christian Funerals* are: the need for developmental appropriateness of prayer, and the need to provide the opportunity for sibling and peer active participation in prayer.

When a child has died, other children including siblings, family members, and classmates are often profoundly affected and in need of spiritual and pastoral direction. The death of the child may be the first experience of human death the other children present have experienced. The prayer and pastoral response provided, therefore, needs to speak not only to the adults present but – perhaps even more importantly – also to the children affected as well. By stating "[t]he minister may wish to offer brief remarks for the children's benefit at suitable points during the celebration," the *Order of Christian Funerals* provides the opportunity for early catechesis regarding death for children using language with which children are familiar. The *Order* goes on to state that "if a large number of children are present. . .elements of the rite may be simplified or shortened and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid. 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ibid. 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Ibid. 242.

other elements or symbols that have special meaning for those taking part may be incorporated into the celebration." This utilization of symbols (the teddy bear, ballet shoes, or soccer jersey of the deceased child) also allows children to engage in the prayer whether or not they have fully developed language skills. All pastoral responses to the death of a child that include prayer need to be developed with intentional age-appropriate opportunities for communicating with the bereaved children who are present. Engagement for children often includes listening as well as participating. Listening to an age-appropriate homily and viewing symbols does not kinesthetically engage the children present at the prayer service. The *Order of Christian Funerals* states that children "with requisite ability should be asked to exercise some of the liturgical roles . . . children may serve as readers, acolytes, or musicians, or assist in the reading of the general intercessions and in the procession with the gifts." <sup>46</sup> Active participation in prayer and ritual after the death of a child provides grieving children the opportunity to contribute towards the healing of the entire community.

The image of Christ in the story of the raising of Lazarus exemplifies the pastoral minister's role in companioning the bereaved. Christ models the critically important balance of having both a theologically sound and compassionate response. The hopeful message of eternal life and salvation attained through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be accompanied with an acknowledgement of the pain and loss experienced by those who grieve. While the "divine plan" answer in regards to theodicy is valid, "I don't know. Only God knows." is not, in itself, a comprehensive pastoral response to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ibid. 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Ibid. 242

question "Why did God let my child die?" and to the sorrow that accompanies the question. Pastoral ministry that utilizes the traditions and ritual prayers of the Roman Catholic Church must accompany the theological truth. These traditions and prayers provide a structure which both acknowledges the divine truth of the "incomprehensibility of God," and recognizes that when faced with pain and loss, we are called to imitate Christ, knowing that at the death of Lazarus, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) (NAB) and "Christ still sorrows with those who sorrow and longs with them for the fulfillment of the Father's plan in a new creation where tears and death will have no place."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The. Liturgical Press, 1989), 239.

#### **CHAPTER TWO**

### BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

On November 28, 1942, in Boston, Massachusetts, 16-year-old busboy Stanley Tomaszewski lit a match, as he replaced a light bulb. In doing so, he accidentally started the famous Cocoanut Grove club fire, which had the second worst mortality rate of any fire in the history of the United States - 492 people<sup>48</sup>. This tragedy left Dr. Erich Lindemann, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, who worked with patients who had acute grief after experiencing sudden loss with a unique research opportunity.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Lindemann was interested in the role social stressors played in emotional reactions. In 1944, with the publication of *Symptomatology and management of acute grief* <sup>50</sup> Lindemann argued that grief had a recognizable course and symptoms, and it was a distinct syndrome. Grief could be affected by either positive or negative factors. His work became the basis for the modern diagnosis and the early prevention methods for what would later be termed "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder." Lindemann laid the foundation for the development of modern crisis theory and for how professionals today provide intervention after disasters occur.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> John Esposito. *Fire in the Grove: The Cocoanut Grove Tragedy And Its Aftermath* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Erich Lindemann. "Symptomatology and management of acute grief." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 101(1944) 141-148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> S. Cobb. and E. Lindemann. "Neuropsychiatric observations after the Coconut Grove fire." *Annals of Surgery* 117 (1943) 814-824.

Gerald Caplan, <sup>51</sup> often regarded as a founding father of crisis theory, wrote *An* Approach to Community Mental Health in 1961, creating a four phase model addressing people's crisis reactions. Caplan asserted that the first stage of crisis reaction is the initial response, tension and anxiety, or "psychological disequilibrium,"<sup>52</sup> wherein people summon up their usual responses in an attempt to return to a state of equilibrium. In the second stage, due to the nature and intensity of the situation and ongoing stimulus, the usual strategies fail to work; the person reacting begins to feel powerless and unable to cope, as the anxiety and tension continue. In the third stage, the reacting person expands his/her thinking regarding the situation, acquires new skills, and possibly even modifies how he defines himself themselves in order to maintain his ego integrity. In this stage, the person can grow in strength, having faced the situation, and move forward, having acquired and integrated new skills and self-knowledge. Caplan asserted that if the situation and person's reaction continue without resolution of equilibrium, stage four, "personality decompensation" can occur. In stage four, if left untreated, Caplan believed the person would continue to exhibit extreme reactions where the reality of the situation and oneself is distorted and behavior becomes increasingly extreme. 53

Based on the language and premises within Caplan's seminal research, many definitions of "crisis" have evolved. In 1965, Rapoport described three interrelated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> G. Caplan. *An approach to community mental health*. (New York: Grune and Stratton. 1961.)

<sup>53</sup> G. Caplan. *Principles of Preventive Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964.), 40-41.

factors that can induce a "state of crisis: (1) a hazardous event which poses some threat; (2) a threat to instinctual need which is symbolically linked to earlier threats that resulted in vulnerability or conflict; (3) an inability to respond with adequate coping mechanisms." <sup>15</sup> Slaiku, in 1990, produced a definition that clearly echoed Caplan's earlier work, describing crisis as "a temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem-solving, and by the potential for a radically positive or negative outcome." <sup>54</sup> As recently as 1999, Everly and Mitchell defined crisis as "acute *response* to an event wherein homeostasis is disrupted, one's usual coping mechanisms have failed, and there is evidence of significant distress or functional impairment." <sup>55</sup>

Crisis Intervention could be described as emotional triage. In the practice of medicine, triage means to separate those who need acute or emergency care from those who do not. In times of war, triage is staged to determine which of the wounded or disoriented persons is in need of critical attention and which are less seriously injured. The goal of triage is to assess, provide assistance, stabilize the wounded, and transport them to a place where they can receive more consistent assistance and the care they may require. Crisis intervention does not engage in a long term therapeutic process any more then triage could replace a patient's relationship with a primary care physician. Crisis

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> K.A. Slaikeu. *Crisis intervention: A handbook for practice and research* (2nd ed.). (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 1990.) 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> George Everly and Jeffrey Mitchell. *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): A new era and standard of care in crisis intervention* (2nd ed.). (Ellicott City, MD: Chevron, 1999.)

intervention, also known as "Psychological First Aid" <sup>56</sup>, is time- limited and time-specific <sup>57</sup> in response to a critical incident. Crisis response and crisis intervention are often the first intervention as the person embarks on the longer and more complicated process of healing grief. <sup>58</sup>

In 1964, Caplan determined that crisis intervention, might diminish the negative psychological impact of a critical incident by reducing the intensity and duration of symptoms following the trauma.<sup>59</sup> Caplan believed that the goal for working with persons in crisis was to help them recover their pre-crisis equilibrium.<sup>60</sup> The Equilibrium Model of crisis intervention, based on that philosophy, mainly focuses on stabilization until the system is no longer disordered and chaotic.<sup>61</sup> Slaby, Leib, and Tancredi, in *Handbook of Psychiatric Emergencies*, held that intervention should be pragmatic and problem-focused, but flexible enough to allow for innovation should the demands of the situation change.<sup>62</sup> According to Mitchell and Everly, crisis intervention exists to achieve "1) a stabilization of symptoms of distress, 2) effect a mitigation of symptoms,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>D.C. Aguilera. *Crisis Intervention: Theory and methodology* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). (St. Louis, MO: Mosby. 1997.); Slaikeu, K. A. *Crisis intervention: A handbook for practice and research* (2nd ed.). (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 1990.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> J. Corcoran., and A. Roberts. "Research on crisis intervention and recommendations for future research." In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), *Crisis intervention handbook: Assessment, treatment and research* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.) 453-486.; R. A. Neimeyer. and A.M. Pfeiffer. "Evaluation of suicide intervention effectiveness" *Death Studies*, 18, (1994) 131–166.; A.R. Roberts and J.J. Grau. "Procedures used in crisis intervention by suicide prevention agencies." *Public Health Reports*, 85, (1970) 691–198.; Rudd, M. D., Joiner, T. E., & Rahab, M. H. "Help negotiation after acute suicidal crisis". *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 63 (1995) 499–503.

The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (n.d.). "Grief and trauma: The confusion – the difference." Retrieved September 10, 2008, from http://www.tlcinst.org

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> G. Caplan. *Principles of Preventive Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964), 40-41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> G. Caplan. An approach to community mental health. (New York: Grune & Stratton. 1961).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> G. Caplan. *An approach to community mental health*. (New York: Grune & Stratton. 1961); Leitner, L.A. "Crisis Counseling may save a life." *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 40 (1974) 19-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> A. Slaby, J. Lieb, and L. Tancredi, L. *Handbook of Psychiatric Emergencies*. (Flushing, NY: Medical Examination Publishing. 1975).

and 3) restore adaptive, independent functioning, if possible, or facilitate access to further support."<sup>63</sup> Many models have been produced as to how to provide crisis intervention. For this project, however, adaptation of the seven stage Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Model, created by Jeffrey Mitchell and George Everly, was selected due to its clarity, comprehensive nature, and developmental adaptability for both adults and students.

The seven debriefing stages utilized by Everly and Mitchell <sup>67</sup>begin with a brief "Introduction" where team members are introduced and the process is explained. Stage two, "Fact" each participant describes the nature of their experience and relationship to the critical incident this engages them from a cognitive perspective. Stage three "Thought Reaction" begins to transition from a cognitive to an emotional perspective. In stage three, participants are asked questions like "What was the worst aspect from your perspective?" Stage four, the "Emotional Reaction" stage engages participants asking them to reflect on the feelings elicited from the experience. Stage five, "Reframing"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> George Everly, and Jeffrey Mitchell. *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): A new era and standard of care in crisis intervention* (2nd ed.). (Ellicott City, MD: Chevron, 1999.); George Everly, R.B. Flannery, and Jeffrey Mitchell. "Critical incident stress management (CISM): A review of the literature." *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 5, (2000) 23-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> B.G. Collins, and T.M. Collins, T. M. *Crisis and trauma: Developmental-ecological intervention.* (Boston, MA: Lahaska Press, 2005); Greenstone, J. L., & Leviton, S. C. *Elements of crisis intervention: Crises and how to respond to them* (2nd ed.). (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2002.); Jones, W. A. "The A-B-C method of crisis management." *Mental Hygiene*, 52 (1968) 87–89.; Roberts, A. R., & Grau, J. J. "Procedures used in crisis intervention by suicide prevention agencies." *Public Health Reports*, 85 (1970) 691–198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Jeffrey Mitchell. "When disaster strikes. . . The critical incident stress debriefing process." *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, 8, (1983), (1), 36-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Mitchell and George Everly. *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: An Operations Manual for the Prevention of Traumatic Stress Among Services and Disaster Workers.* (Ellicott City, MD: Chevron Publishing Corporation, 1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Mitchell and George Everly. *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: An Operations Manual for the Prevention of Traumatic Stress Among Services and Disaster Workers*. (Ellicott City, MD :Chevron Publishing Corporation, 1996).

participants begin to explore what they may be able to glean from having had this experience, it begins to move participants from the emotional processing of the experience to cognitive processing. Stage six, "Teaching" participants are provided with information regarding normal reactions to stressful situations and are often cautioned to avoid unhealthy behavioral choices. Lastly, the seventh debriefing stage, "Re-Entry" summarizes the experience and prepares the participants with any additional information. This process provides participants an opportunity to share both story and feeling. Participants not only cognitively relate their experiences but also express the underlying emotions relating to their experience in a safe and structured environment.

According to Erik Erikson, the experience of suffering and pain is fundamentally social. <sup>68</sup> Therefore, a response must be timely, pragmatic, systemic, and true to the social constructs of the entirety of the community impacted. In 1965, Rapoport noted "A little help, rationally directed and purposefully focused at a strategic time is more effective than more extensive help given at a period of less emotional accessibility." <sup>69</sup> In the situation of a student death in a Catholic elementary school, long term grief and bereavement may affect the both the adult and student populations of the school.

Bereavement requires three elements: "1) a relationship with some person or thing that is valued; 2) the loss – ending, termination, separation – of that relationship; and 3) a survivor deprived by the loss." <sup>70</sup> A school-wide response and crisis intervention <sup>71</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International University Press, 1976).
<sup>69</sup> L. Rapaport. "The state of crisis. Some theoretical considerations." In H. Parad (Ed.) *Crisis* 

*Intervention: Selected Readings* (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965) 22-31.

<sup>70</sup> C.A. Corr., Nabe, C. M., & Corr, D. M. *Death and dying: Life and living* (3rd ed.). (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 2000.) 212.

includes a clear understanding of the developmental differences among those who make up the elementary school community: adults (faculty, staff, administrators, parents), as well as students in various stages of cognitive, emotional, and faith development.

Both adult grief and children's grief are "the reaction to loss." The manifestation of that grief is different between adults and children their age, experience, and maturity. Adults have a continual awareness and experience of grief, whereas children grieve in small intermittent bursts. By the time a person enters adulthood, he or she has often experienced other losses and therefore has a context for the recent loss, while children may be experiencing loss for the first time. While adults have developed the ability to express their feelings and needs verbally, young children may need adults to assist them by providing alternate ways of expressing feelings and needs as they are still forming their language skills. Due to a developed memory, adults can draw from stories and experiences with the deceased, where children may need prompts and assistance to recall the person who has died. Adults are also able to care for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> J. Allan and E. Anderson, "Children and crisis: A classroom guidance approach." *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 21, (1986) 143-149.; J. Bertoia, and J. Allan. "School management of the bereaved child." *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 23, (1988) 30-38.; Pelej, J. "Help your school survive a suicide" *Executive Educator*. (April, 1987) 26-31.; J.R. Sorensen. "Responding to student or teacher death: Preplanning crisis intervention." *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 67, (1989) 426-427; Stevenson, R. "How to handle death in the schools. Tips for Principals." (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1986.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> C.A. Corr, C.M. Nabe, and D. M. Corr. *Death and dying: Life and living* (3rd ed.). (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ira Oscar Glick, Robert S. Weiss, and C. Murray Parks, *The First Year of Bereavement*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974). CM Parkes, *Bereavement: studies of grief in adult life*. 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1998); Therese A. Rando, *Grief, Dying and Death: Clinical Interventions for Caregivers*. (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1984.); Catherine M. Sanders. *Grief, The Mourning After: Dealing With Adult Bereavement*. (New York: Wiley, 1989.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Sylvia Anthony, *The Discovery of Death in Childhood and After*. (New York: Basic Books, 1972).; Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Children and Death*. (New York: Collier Books, 1983); Elizabeth Reed, *Helping Children with the Mystery of Death*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

themselves, whereas children are reliant on their caregivers to provide for them and model for them grief and bereavement in the face of death. Lastly, adults may decide not to share their feelings because they have preconceived notions about how people "should" respond, whereas children may talk openly and emote around death without the limitations of personal determination or social mores.<sup>75</sup>

At a Catholic elementary school, a first grade student "Timmy" was killed on the way to school, when his car hydroplaned into a tree. Later in the afternoon, "Eric," a fellow student walked over to Timmy's desktop and placed multiple erasers on it. When questioned regarding this behavior, Eric explained that Timmy was often punished for throwing erasers in the classroom and sent to the principal's office. "If I put erasers on his desk, he will see them when he comes back from being dead . . .he will smile . . .like when he comes back from the principal's office." The statement, "when he comes back from being dead," highlights the need for educators to understand the developmental differences in the three distinct age groups that are housed in elementary school. This statement, developmentally appropriate for a first grader, would be a concern if it was shared by a seventh grader. Through the lenses of the work of Jean Piaget<sup>76</sup> (cognitive development), Erik Erikson<sup>77</sup> (social development), and James Fowler<sup>78</sup> (developmental stages

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> A. Solnit and G. Morris, *Modern Perspectives in Child Development* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc. 1963) 217-228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Origin of Intelligence in the Child.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1952.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*. (New York: International Universities Press, 1959.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco, CA Harper and Row 1981.)

present among the students within Catholic elementary schools and the grief responses that can be anticipated for each age group.

As every child is unique, each child's response to death is unique as well. Insight can be gleaned by examining the developmental stages and age based normative responses around grief. These stages and responses provide understanding in a generalized manner that does not describe every child in a classroom. The child who has already experienced the death of one or more family members, for example, will have a different context for loss then their peers of the same age. That child may developmentally respond in a manner that is more often seen in students who are older and require individual conversation that includes a discussion of their previous losses. An alternate situation is when a student has below average intelligence and may require additional support to process the loss. While classmates may process through storytelling, that one student may be more inclined to draw a picture. In as much as a teacher can provide one on one time with students, it should be a recognized goal that each child within a grieving classroom would receive individualized care.

## Grades Kindergarten -2 (Ages 5-7)

Kindergarten entry age is approximately five years old. This places the kindergarten through second grade students in Piaget's Pre- Operational (Ages 3-7)

stage of cognitive development, <sup>79</sup>although some older children in this age group might have already advanced to the next level of development. Children's thinking is often magical and egocentric (thinking about the world entirely from their own personal perspective). Children in this stage develop both imagination and language<sup>80</sup>. Between kindergarten and second grade, Erik Erikson would place the student's social development at the Initiative versus Guilt stage,,<sup>81</sup>. although usually by age five, children have fully arrived into Erikson's third stage. Erikson stated that "according to the wisdom of the ground plan the child is at no time more ready to learn quickly and avidly, to become bigger in the sense of sharing obligation and performance than during this period of his/her development." James Fowler's faith stages mirror those of Piaget. Fowler would place these children's faith development in his Stage One: Intuitive- Projective (although, here too, older children in this age range might have advanced to the next stage).

The next stage of faith emerges in early childhood with the acquisition of language. Here imagination, stimulated by stories, gestures, and symbols and not yet controlled by logical thinking, combines with perception and feelings to create long-lasting faith images . . .Representations of God take conscious form in this period and draw, for good or ill, on children's experiences of their parents or other adults to whom they are emotional attached in the first years of life . . . .when conversion experiences occur at later stages in ones' life, the images formed in this stage have to be reworked in some important ways. <sup>83</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> John L. Phillips, Jr., *Piaget's Theory: A Primer*. (San Francisco, Ca: W. H. Freeman and Co. 1981.) 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Inhelder, B. & Piaget, J., *The early growth of logic in the child, classification and seriation.* (E. A. Lunzer & D. Papert, Trans.). (New York: Harper & Row. 1964.)

<sup>81</sup> Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International Universities, 1959.) 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Mooney C. Garhard, *Theories of Childhood: An Introduction to Dewey, Montesorri, Eriksson, Piaget, and Vygotsky* (St. Paul: Redleaf, 2000.) 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> James Fowler, Weaving the New Creation (New York: Harper Collins, 1991.) 103

Fowler describes children in this phase as imitative and that they are greatly influenced by reactions, emotions and statements of primary adults.<sup>84</sup>

With regard to death, most kindergarten through second grade students believe that physical death is reversible and not final. <sup>85</sup> The children may also experience 'magical thinking', in which they believe that their thoughts caused the action. <sup>86</sup> Often, the youngest elementary school students (pre-School and Kindergarteners) may temporarily regress with symptoms such as bladder and bowel control, use baby talk, thumb sucking, want to sleep with a sibling or parent, and experience a change in eating and sleeping habits. <sup>87</sup> John Bowlby, in his book *Attachment and Loss*, reported that following a loss, many children experienced acute night terrors, and have a desire to sleep with a parent or sibling. <sup>88</sup> Children will often become worried that when other people leave, they are not going to come back. Children at this age are also much more impressionable <sup>89</sup> and are greatly influenced by the emotions that others are expressing, especially sadness <sup>90</sup> In the forward to the book *Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death and Grief,* Tobin Gonzales Barrozo writes that

There are habits of mind and sentiments that are the products of growing up in a particular culture. Different cultures and the great world religions they embody

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco, CA Harper and Row. 1981.)

<sup>85</sup> Earl A. Grollman, (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1967.) 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> H. Fitzgerald, *The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide*. (New York: Fireside, 1992.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> G.M Burnell and A.L. Burnell, *Clinical Management of Bereavement: A Handbook for Healthcare Professionals*. (New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc., 1989.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> John Bowlby, *Loss: Sadness & Depression* [Vol. 3 of Attachment and Loss]. (New York: Basic Book. 1981.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Earl A. Grollman, (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press 1967.)147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> C.N. Slate and D.A. Scott, "A discussion of coping methods and counseling techniques for children and adults dealing with grief and bereavement." Paper based on a program presented at the American Counseling Association Annual Conference and Exposition, Charlotte, NC. (2009, March).

are lenses through which reality is viewed. A lens with an amber tint reveals a world different from a world seen through a lens of different hue. To think that all human beings experience reality the same way is ethnocentric. Dying and grief are intensely personal, yet these experiences and feelings cannot be separated from who we are and from the cultures that nourish and surround us.<sup>91</sup>

The cultural mores of a particular family or ethnic community may play a factor in the responses the students have to death. For some children, they have observed and participated in public wailing crying after the death of a family member. To those children, wailing would be the normal behavior after a loss. For other children, they may have learned that stoic unemotional behavior is the appropriate response following a death by watching their family grieve. Talking to children about their previous experiences of loss and familiarity with cultural differences can better prepare a teacher or administrator to serve in times of loss.

When ministering to children of this age after a death, it is especially important to be honest and provide as much detail as can be comprehended by the child. <sup>92</sup> Due to the "magical thinking," <sup>93</sup> some children will often believe that their thoughts or behavior may have caused the death. It is important to clearly refute these notions so as to avoid guilt. <sup>94</sup> The use of creative expression in a therapeutic environment can help a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> D. P. Irish, K.F. Lundquist, and V.J. Nelson, (eds) *Ethnic variations in dying, death and grief, diversity in universality* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1993), xviii

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Alan Wolfet, *Helping children cope with grief* (Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development, 1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Linda Goldman, *Life and Loss: A guide to grieving children* (Washington DC: Accelerated Development, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Patricia L. Penbrock and Robert F. Voss, *Children's Grief: How to Help the Child Whose Parent Has Died* (Redmond, WA: Media Publishing Co., 1988).

child to express emotion and process their grief. 95 This is especially important as the many children in this stage are not yet fully able to articulate their emotions verbally, and often manifest them physically.

### Grades 3 - 5 (*Ages* 8 - 10)

Students are in Erikson's fourth stage of social development, Industry versus Inferiority between the third and fifth grades. According to Erikson, socially, in this stage a child's task is to learn basic skills of life and how to function. Erikson put it this way:

One might say that personality at the first stage crystallizes around the conviction "I am what I am given," and that of the second, "I am what I will." The third can be characterized by "I am what I can imagine I will be." We must now approach the fourth: "I am what I learn." The child now wants to be shown how to get busy with something and how to be busy with others<sup>96</sup>

Piaget would agree with the emphasis on what is "learned," believing that in these grades, students would be experiencing the Concrete Operations stage of Cognitive Development. 97 98 "Operations are initialized sets of actions that allow the child to do mentally what was done physically before."99 According to Piaget, children can explicitly state their method and logical rules for how they solve problems at this

<sup>95</sup> H. Glazer, "Expressions of children's grief: A qualitative study." *International Journal of Play* Therapy, 7, (1998) 51-65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Erik Eriksson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International Universities, 1959), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Jean Piaget, *The essential Piaget*. Gruber, H. E., & Vonèche, J.J. (Eds.). (New York: Basic Books,

<sup>1977).

98</sup> John L. Phillips, Jr. *Piaget's Theory: A Primer*. (San Francisco, Ca: W. H. Freeman and Co, 1981), 99. John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, (7th ed.). (McGraw-Hill College, Boston, 1997) 203.

stage<sup>100</sup> and engage in classification,<sup>101</sup>,an ability to hierarchically structure objects. <sup>102</sup> Concrete operational thinkers will explicitly state their use of logical rules in problem solving. <sup>103</sup>Concrete operational children also gain the ability to structure objects hierarchically, known as classification. <sup>104</sup>.

With regard to faith, James Fowler would classify students between third and fifth grade as generally having Stage 2 - Mythic-Literal Faith. Fowler proposes that in developing the ability to think logically, children are able to sort the real from the imaginary. He also believes that children no longer see the world from their own perspective, but are beginning to be able to see situations from others' perspectives as well. Critically, students at this age are able to capture "life and meanings in the narrative and stories." Students at this stage are aware of the stories and beliefs of their community. These beliefs and narratives help students to contextualize their experiences. 106

Students at this age view death as final, but not universal. They often believe it will happen to adults, but not to them. <sup>107</sup> This could lead to students being concerned (after someone dies) with the health of the adults in their lives (especially caregivers)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> M. Harris and G. Butterworth. *Developmental Psychology: A Student's Handbook*, (Hove: The Psychology Press, 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> C. Tomlinson-Keasey. "The structure of concrete operational thought." *Child Development*, 50, (1978) 1153-63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Jean Piaget. *The essential Piaget*. Gruber, H. E., & Vonèche, J.J. (Eds.). (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

<sup>1977).

103</sup> M. Harris. and G. Butterworth. *Developmental Psychology: A Student's Handbook* (Hove: The Psychology Press., 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Jean Piaget. *The child's conception of number*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1965).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> James Fowler. Weaving the New Creation (New York: Harper Collins 1991) 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> James Fowler. Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (San Francisco, CA:Harper and Row, 1981.)

Earl A. Grollman. (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) 101.

and who would care for them if their caregivers died. They often have what can be described as a "morbid" fascination with death. Children may "play dead" or "act out a funeral," following the death of someone they know. Fascinated by narrative, as well as mythical heroes and heroines at this age, students may view death as a villain, a spirit, angel or ghost. <sup>108</sup>Boys and girls often manifest their grief differently at this stage; boys often express their grief through aggressive behavior and girls through clingy and attached behavior. <sup>109</sup>But, it should be mentioned that not all children behave in stereotypic fashion: some boys are weepy, while some girls are quite stoic or even frankly aggressive. Being attentive to the behavior that the students exhibit is critical if they are unable to articulate feelings verbally. Often, some students will complain of physical illness (like a headache or stomachache) rather than engage in a discussion regarding feelings. <sup>110</sup> <sup>111</sup>

When engaging with third through fifth graders following a death, adults find that students will utilize their newly found gift of narrative to share stories and relate their experiences regarding death as well as their relationship to the person that died. Often stories and questions, are repeated multiple times. Overbeck and Overbeck

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Maria Nagy. "The Child's Theories Concerning Death," *Journal of Genetics and Psychology*, 73, (1948) 3, 4, 26, 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Therese Rando. *Grieving: How to go on living when someone you love dies.* (Lexington, MA:Lexington Books, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> H. Wass and C.A. Corr. *Childhood and Death*. (Washington, DC: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1984).

Alan Wolfelt. *Helping Children Cope with Grief*. (Muncie: Accelerated Development, 1983). 

111 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Earl A. Grollman. (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967)163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Linda Goldman, "Best Practice Grief Work with Students in the Schools" Franklin, C. Mary Beth Harris & Paula Allen-Meares (Eds.). *The School Services Sourcebook: A Guide for School-Based Professionals*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 570.

describe how "[c]hildren at this age must be encouraged over and over again to talk about the loss and express their deep inner feelings in order to allow mourning to result in a positive outcome." Respecting that story and providing venue for the students to share their questions provides them with a sense of unity around the loss. Adults should be prepared to honestly answer questions regarding the biological realities of death. 115 If provided the proper environment, students of this age will ask questions often deemed by modern American society as "inappropriate" or "insensitive" after a loss. Questions such as "Do you fart after you die?" "Did he hear his heart stop beating?" and "Where does he go to the bathroom in a coffin?" are natural at this age. Adults who may be offended or uncomfortable by the line of questions may wish to have additional adult support for when the questions arise. It is important to calmly answer the questions that students ask, rather the presupposing what information peaks their curiosity. By asking questions and listening to adults talk about "funerals," "wakes," and "death," students are learning what to expect and are better prepared to engage in the experience. Children at this age also can begin to participate in memorial planning with adult support and structure.

### **Grades 6-8 (Ages 10 – 13)**

A sixth grade teacher in his late sixties had died of heart attack a night before.

Upon entering the classroom the next morning, the following was revealed to me: "Miss

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> B. Overbeck and J. Overbeck. *Helping children cope with loss*. (Dallas: TLC Group, 1992) 52.

Linda Goldman, "Best Practice Grief Work with Students in the Schools" Franklin, C. Mary Beth Harris & Paula Allen-Meares (Eds.). *The School Services Sourcebook: A Guide for School-Based Professionals.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 568.

Kristin?" "Yes?" "We should confess to you, we killed our teacher." When I prompted them, the students revealed that, as a component of his discipline, the teacher had often made the statement "Do you see this vein in my forehead? When you misbehave, it gets big. You kids are going to be the death of me." The students believed that their teacher's death was a direct result of their lack of obedience in the classroom. They had, based on the information they had been provided, created a logical narrative.

Exemplifying Piaget's Concrete Operational and Fowler's Mythic-Literal Stage, this conclusion as to their own culpability could have severely complicated the grief process and led to unnecessary guilt for the students involved. Responding to the students in a way that addressed their developmental stage, I explained to them the biological occurrence of a heart attack, using terms like "artery" and "blockage." Once new information was integrated into the narrative, they came to a different logical conclusion: their teacher's death, while sad, was not their responsibility.

Many of the descriptions of the developmental stages present in the third to fifth grade student apply to the sixth through eighth grade student as well. Jean Piaget asserted that some of the students of middle school age will begin to segue into the stage of Formal Operations. Formal Operations, according to Piaget, is not a stage every child or adult reaches. It involves the ability to use hypothetical thinking based on the abstract. Piaget believed that a child makes a transition to a new stage when his or her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> John L. Phillips, Jr. *Piaget's Theory: A Primer*. (San Francisco, Ca: W. H. Freeman and Co, 1981), 147.

current mental structures no longer explain events in their world.<sup>117</sup> The death of a peer could be, for some students, an event that defies explanation and requires transition to a new way of thinking.

The majority of students between sixth and eighth grade would be described by Fowler as still in the Mythical- Literal Stage. These students are aware of the stories and beliefs of the community to which they belong to and are able to utilize their grasp of these stories to provide a framework for "hanging" new experiences. Some students, however, may show indications of their faith entering into Fowler's Stage Three:

Synthetic-Conventional.<sup>118</sup>

The next stage characteristically begins to take form in early adolescence. The emergence of formal operational thinking [the ability to think abstractly] opens the way for reliance upon abstract ideas and concepts for making sense of one's world. The person can now reflect upon past experience and search them for meaning and pattern. At the same time, concerns about one's personal future-one's identity, one's work, career, or vocation--and one's personal relationships become important. 119

The early adolescent, beginning to create an independent "self" from the family, will often use faith as a vehicle to distinguish himself in both identity and values. This new "self" will desire autonomy in determining its relationship with God and its relationship with others. <sup>120</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Elizabeth A. Jordan and Marion J. Porath. *Educational psychology: A problem-based approach*. (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> James Fowler. Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981).

James Fowler. Weaving the New Creation (New York: Harper Collins, 1991)107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> A. Wigfield, Susan L. Lutz, and A. Laurel Wagner, "Early Adolescents' Development Across the Middle School Years: Implications for School Counselors," *Professional School Counseling*, 9 (2005) 114.

With regard to death, students ten years of age and older seem to grasp the concept that they will die and may dwell on the idea of their own death. <sup>121</sup> By the time the child is twelve years old, death is viewed as final and universal. <sup>122</sup> Students will ask increasingly esoteric questions regarding death, as they attempt to "make sense" of the loss in the context of their previous experiences. Seeing a greater context, older students may ask the practical questions regarding the consequences of the death. Due to their increased freedom, students of this age may also be inclined to make dangerous and destructive decisions following a loss. Assisting students to find creative outlets many include suggesting writing a letter to the deceased or writing in a journal. <sup>123</sup> Letting the young person be a part of the planning for the service also seems to be helpful in the closure process for this age group. <sup>124</sup> It is strongly recommended that students become involved in the planning and implementation of commemoration ideas.

Clearly, developmental differences need to impact the approach taken by educators. When working with children of elementary school-age, however, three consistent recommendations apply regardless of the age of the child. Primarily, all children require reassurance and intentional support following a death.<sup>125</sup> Secondly,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> American Society of Clinical Oncology. (n.d.b). *Helping a child or teenager who is grieving*. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from

 $<sup>\</sup>label{lem:http://www.asco.org/patient/Coping/Grief+and+Bereavement/Helping+Grieving+Children+and+Teenager \\ {\tt c}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> H.B. Pottmeyer and D.A. Scott. "Effects of bereavement and grief on adolescent development." *Grief Digest*, 5, (4), (2008) 24-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Grollman. E *Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 208-209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> C.N. Slate and D.A. Scott. "Relevant concepts and techniques for school counselors working with children and adolescents dealing with grief and bereavement." *New York State School Counseling Journal*, 6, (2009) 44-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Earl A. Grollman. (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 101.

children require adult honesty regarding death. This includes avoiding euphemisms like ("we lost him", "resting in the Lord" and "passed away"). By using clear language with children (e.g. cancer, dead, died), confusion and misinterpretation can be avoided. Lastly, consistency, routine, and rituals provide comfort for children. Returning to the routine "milk money goes into the bin" and "hanging my coat up in my cubby" creates a sense of balance.

The death of a student within a close community can create ripples that affect more then just the other children who shared a classroom with the student daily. Immediate crisis intervention strategies can promote and support healthy grieving for the entire community. By utilizing the time-limited and time-sensitive role of crisis intervention in the grief process, the community can quickly begin to heal and grieve. Intervention with an affected community requires intentional work with both the adults and the children. With increased knowledge of the developmental stages of students, the facilitator can speak to concerns, fears, and the manner of grief expression of the students in the way that will be most effective.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Grollman, E. A. (Ed.). Explaining death to children. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1967), 100.

#### CHAPTER THREE

# INTEGRATING CRISIS INTERVENTION AND THEOLOGY THE "FOUR C MODEL"

Based on the Scripture passage of Christ's interaction with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the "Four C Model" of crisis response was created to intentionally integrate Roman Catholic theology and ritual with crisis intervention techniques appropriate to the developmental stages of children. Historically, there have been proponents that crisis intervention should be devoid of both religion and spirituality. The integration of psychology and theology (or spirituality) is often referred to as pastoral care. Pastoral care, which can be defined as "helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meaning and concern" is incorporated into the role and responsibility of every Catholic school administrator. Within the context of daily pastoral care giving, administrators need a tool that they have been prepared to utilize should a critical incident occur. This tool needs to address the practical needs of the students to process the incident and to begin grieving in a healthy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> W. Clebsch and C.R. Jaeckle. *Pastoral care in historical perspective* (New York: Harper. 1967), 4.

manner psychologically, without forgetting the identity of the school is, in fact, Catholic and faith-based.

In *The Order of Christian Funerals*, the Roman Catholic Church asserts that after a death, the community "should also take into consideration the spiritual and psychological needs of the family and friends of the deceased to express grief and their sense of loss, to accept the reality of death, and to comfort one another." Use of the phrase "spiritual *and* psychological" (emphasis mine) may create the impression that the disciplines of theology and psychology have always functioned as allies. Historically, however, there have been both proponents and opponents to the integration and collaborative use of these two fields.

William James, who is often regarded as a forefather of the blending of religion and psychology, in *Variety of Religious Experience* published in 1902, defined religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men [sic] in their solitude... in relation to whatever they may consider divine." James delineated a difference between institutional religion and personal religion. Personal religion, in which the believer has mystical experience, can occur outside of a society's culture. Institutional religion, a religious group or organization, is interrelated with the culture of society. James, who was far more interested in what he termed "personal religion," asserted that whether or not religion should be a part of a person's life is contingent on whether or not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1989). 3.

William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1982) 31.

the practices and religious actions create a positive effect for the person participating in them.

In 1843 philosopher and communist revolutionary Karl Marx wrote of religion as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness." <sup>130</sup> For Marx, religion not only failed to serve humankind, but it was also an impediment to the human race achieving its full potential. Marx was not the first to espouse the belief that religion's role in the lives of people was not only unnecessary, but it could also be described as unhealthy. Founder of the psychoanalytic school of psychiatry, Sigmund Freud, who published Totem and Taboo in 1918, specifically addressed the relationship between psychoanalysis and religion. Freud believed that "[a]t the conclusion, then, of this exceedingly condensed inquiry, I should like to insist that its outcome shows that the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex." <sup>131</sup> In other words, religion was, foundationally, a phase of life that needed to be "resolved." Freud believed that "[t]otemic religion arose from the filial sense of guilt, in an attempt to allay that feeling and to appease the father by deferred obedience to him. All later religions are seen to be attempts at solving the same problem."<sup>132</sup> This belief that religion created impediment to healing and lacked usefulness in human growth and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Karl Marx. Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. (Trans Andy Blunden) Collected Works, v. 3. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 42.

131 Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York: Random, 1918), 156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Ibid. 145.

development would be challenged; however, Freud's legacy regarding his view on religion continues to color modern psychology and psychiatry.

One strong opponent to the separation of religion and psychology, especially when subjects were going through crisis, was Anton Boisen. Boisen, a pioneer in clinical pastoral education and the study of psychology of religion proposed that "[i]n time of crisis, however, when their fate is hanging in the balance, [men and women] ... are likely to think and feel intensely. Under such conditions new ideas come flashing into the mind, often so vividly that they seem to come from an outside source. Crisis periods have therefore creative possibilities. They are also periods of danger." <sup>133</sup> Boisen believed that, at these crisis times, religion and interaction with the divine were possible in new ways. "As one stands face to face with the ultimate realities of life and death, religion and theology tend to come alive. Meaning tends to outstrip symbol and we have to seek for new words to express the new ideas which come surging in. Among these ideas we frequently find the sense of contact with that ultimate reality to which we give the name of 'God'." Boisen's beliefs regarding the efficacy of religion during psychological crisis have been recently revisited and studied by behavioral scientists with results affirming, in a large degree, his premise.

In "The meaning of loss and adjustment to bereavement," authors Wortman, Silver, and Kessler noted that "the impact of life events may be determined by whether they can be incorporated into an individual's philosophical perspective or view of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Anton Boisen, *Religion in Crisis and Custom* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 68-69. 
<sup>134</sup> Anton Boisen, *Religion in Crisis and Custom* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 3.

world."<sup>135</sup> For many people, religion is a primary factor in how they engage in the world around them. Often religious beliefs, rituals, traditions, and mores shape people's behavior and viewpoints. Religion has also been studied as a vehicle to assist in increasing personal mastery and personal growth. <sup>136</sup>

Religion has been shown to aid people to make meaning out of difficult situations in their lives. When people are in need of mechanisms for coping, they will use religion, prayer and religious beliefs, 138 139 140 141 according to research. It has also been shown that some forms of religiousness can be a protective factor in times of stress and that positive religious coping methods are related to increased psychological adjustment and growth in the midst of stressful situations. Pargament, Koenig, and Perez, in the article "The many methods of religious coping" found that at times of trauma, death, and bereavement, religion can play an significant part in the healing process. When faced with these difficult situations, religion can aid individuals to 1)

<sup>135</sup> C.B. Wortman, R.C. Silver, and R.C. Kessler. "The meaning of loss and adjustment to bereavement." In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe, R. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 363-364.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> C.L. Park and L.H. Cohen. "Religious and nonreligious coping with the death of a friend". *Cognitive Therapy & Research*, 17, (1993) 561-577.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> C.L. Park and S. Folkman. "Meaning in the context of stress and coping." *General Review of Psychology*, 1,(1997) 115-144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> K.I Pargament and C.L. Park. "In times of stress: The religion-coping connection." In B. Spilka & D. N. McIntosh (Eds.), *The psychology of religion: Theoretical approaches* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1997.) 43-52

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Raymond F. Paloutzian and Cynthia L. Park (eds.) *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, (New York: Guilford. 2005) 331-347.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> B. Spilka, R.W. Hood, B. Hunsberger, and R.L. Gorsuch. *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach* (3rd ed.) (New York: Guilford Press. 2003.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Cynthia Park and L.H. Cohen. "Religious and nonreligious coping with the death of a friend." *Cognitive Therapy & Research*, 17, (1993) 561-577.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> G.G. Ano and E.B. Vasconcelles. "Religious coping and psychological adjustment to stress: A meta-analysis." *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61, (2005) 461-481.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Cynthia Park and L.H. Cohen. "Religious and nonreligious coping with the death of a friend." *Cognitive Therapy & Research*, 17, (1993) 561-577.

make sense of the stressful event, 2) gain a sense of control and comfort, 3) find social and spiritual intimacy and support, and 4) achieve life transformation. <sup>144</sup> Research has also shown that upon the death of a child, spouse, or close friend, religion can provide a primary coping mechanism for those most affected. <sup>145</sup>

While the integration of religion and psychology may still have opponents, and in some circles be seen as controversial, scientists are increasingly finding that flexibility in methodology to include religion 146 147 could be of benefit to both the field of psychology and those seeking healing and understanding. Integration of psychology and religion 148 could provide psychologists with additional tools and resources to serve their clients in crisis situations, utilizing a vernacular imagery and a context that is both comforting and familiar to those to whom they are ministering. It is the benefit of this integration between the psychologically based field of crisis intervention and religion that drew forth the creation of a four-stage model for Catholic crisis intervention.

Providing the crisis intervention component is only the beginning of a far longer grieving process for the entire school community. With proper reflection and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> K.I Pargament. and H.G. Koenig, and L.M. Perez. "The many methods of religious coping: Development and validation of the RCOPE". *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 56, (2000) 519-543.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup>D.N. McIntosh, R.C. Silver, and C.B. Wortman. "Religion's role in adjustment to a negative life event: Coping with the loss of a child." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, (1993) 812-821.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> S.L. Jones "A Constructive Relationship for Religion with the Science and Profession of Psychology: Perhaps the Boldest Model Yet," *American Psychologist*, (1994) rpt. in Shafranske, E., ed. *Religion and the clinical practice of psychology*. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 1996) 291.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> S.Y. Tan. "Integration and beyond: Principled, professional, and personal." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 20, (2001) 18-28

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> L. Sperry and E.P. Shafranske. "Approaches to spiritually oriented psychotherapy: A comparative analysis." In L. Sperry & E. P. Shafranske (Eds.), *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2005).

development, the time-sensitive, short-term crisis response component can actually segue not only to the tools available for grieving persons in the secular world, but also to the spiritual tools available to assist with healing. The "Four C Model" of crisis intervention (Communication, Communio, Communio, Communio, Continuation) was gleaned from 1) previously existing secular models of longer term bereavement ministry with children, 2) insertion of the crisis intervention debriefing process, and 3) exploration of relevant Roman Catholic ritual, symbol, and prayer.

There are numerous four-stage models providing guidance for ministry to grieving children. Three prominent writers' whose work was instrumental in the formation of this project were: Ebeling, Fox, and Goldman. Carol and Davis Ebeling, in When Grief Comes to School, described four phases of grief: "Shock and Disbelief"; "Searching and Yearning"; "Disorganization and Despair"; and "Rebuilding and Healing." Crisis response and intervention are tools often utilized in either the "Shock or Disbelief" or the "Searching and Yearning" phases of this model. In 1988, Sandra Fox's Good Grief: Helping Groups of Children When A Friend Dies developed a model which focused primarily on children and summarized the four tasks of a child's grief to include 1) Understand the universality and permanence of death; 2) Grieve including expressing the feelings associated with loss; 3) Commemorate remembering the person and celebrating life; and 4) Move On investing emotion in other relationships. Linda Goldman, in the book Life and Loss: A Guide to Helping Grieving Children, outlined

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> C. Ebeling. and D. Ebeling. *When grief comes to school*. (Bloomington, IN: Blooming Educational Enterprises, 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Sandra Fox. *Good Grief: Helping Groups of Children When A Friend Dies* (Boston, MA: New England Association For the Education of Young Children, 1988).

very similar tasks: "Understanding, Grieving, Commemorating, and Going On" <sup>151</sup> Fox and Goldman both highlighted the importance of "Commemorate/ Commemoration" for children, as it provides creative opportunities for remembrance. This concept of intentional opportunity for expression was extrapolated, as the third stage in the present "Four C Model." Fox and Goldman also similarly noted the importance of intentionally assisting students to re-enter into the world with which they are familiar, prepared to actively function in the community. Fox's and Goldman's respective fourth stages of the healing process ("Move On/ Going On") also related to the work done in the classroom following the death of a student. Within a classroom following a debriefing process, students eventually must return to their coursework and the normal routine of the classroom setting. So, while differing in definition and practice, their focus on the importance of re-entry was included within stage four of the present "Four C Model," entitled "Continuation."

Within each stage of the "Four C Model," three components will be explored: 1) psychological and crisis intervention methodology; 2) Roman Catholic ritual and prayer; and 3) a delineation of the tasks around responding to a child's death. The four stages, (Communication, *Communio*, Commemoration and Continuation) provide emotional, practical, and spiritual guidance in nurturing the affected school community.

**Stage One: Communication** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Linda Goldman. *Life and Loss: A Guide To Help Grieving Children*, 2nd Ed. (Taylor and Francis, 2001).

Communicating the experience of loss, describing the person who has died, and sharing glimpses of the relationship that was shared with the person often occur in the format of storytelling. The importance of sharing story, especially the sacred story of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, is an essential component of evangelization. <sup>152</sup> In The Everlasting Man, G. K. Chesterton, when discussing the importance of story, expressed that "the sanity of the world was restored and the soul of man [sic] offered salvation by something which did indeed satisfy the two warring tendencies of the past; which had never been satisfied in full and most certainly never satisfied together. It met the mythological search for romance by being a story and the philosophical search for truth by being a true story." 153 When sharing story together as a faith community, the experience is blessed and sacred. Christ is present in the gathering and sharing as expressed in the Gospel of Matthew (18:20): "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."(NAB)

From a practical standpoint, communication needs to occur between the family of the student who died and an administrative representative. Communication also needs to occur among the administrative team; the faculty and staff must be prepared, and parents should be informed so they can tell their child in the manner they most feel comfortable. In this way, the entirety of the community is aware of the facts regarding a student's death before students enter the classroom the next morning. This communication ideally occurs in a relational context rather then through an electronic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. *National Directory for Catechesis*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, 2005) no. 15.

153 G.K. Chesterton. *The Everlasting Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986) 380.

medium. Physical presence and compassionate listening cannot be provided utilizing electronic medium (such as cell phones, text messages, or intercom systems) as they can in person. In 2000, families who had experienced a loss were surveyed regarding the most important aspects when imparting bad news. They came up with four critical components: 1) the ability to answer questions, 2) privacy 3) clarity of message and 4) a caring attitude. 154, While the message may be clear using electronic medium to inform children of a loss over an intercom does not provide them with the ability for open dialogue, privacy or the experience or communicate of a caring attitude. The familiar physical presence of the teacher or administrator making the announcement affords the possibility of reassuring physical touch and a corporeal reminder that there are adults who are concerned for them especially in difficult times. Students should ideally discuss the death of a fellow student at home with parents, facilitating the conversation. In school the next day, it is still recommended that students be provided an opportunity to process within an intimate, familiar environment (such as their homeroom), where an adult person whom they trust can engage them in the dialogue. Both whole school gatherings for the announcement of a death (which can invoke group hysteria and highly dramatic exhibitions by susceptible students) and the impersonal experience of hearing about a death from the intercom can be detrimental to providing a reassuring and pastoral environment for children affected.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> G.J. Jurkovich, B. Pierce B, L. Pananen, and F.P. Rivara. "Giving bad news: the family perspective." *J Trauma* 48 (2000) 865-70; 870-873.

Following a crisis, within the classroom, this experience of storytelling and discussion is best facilitated utilizing a crisis debriefing model. Both the model created by the National Organization of Victim's Assistance <sup>155</sup> and the Critical Incident Stress Management <sup>156</sup> model are able to be adapted for use with school children by teachers and administrators. While it is recommended that all faculty and staff receive more intensive training using these tools, when adapted and presented in proper order, the debriefing process can evoke fact, story, and questions from the students and adults participating in the process.

## **Stage Two: Communio**

In the book of Acts "The community of believers was of one heart and mind" (4:32a) (NAB). Since the Second Vatican Council, *communio* has been erroneously equated with the term "congregation of people." The concept of *communio* has also been falsely divorced from God, hierarchical leadership, and the sacraments, implying that interpersonal human relationship alone creates an experience of *communio*. To illuminate the truth regarding *communio*, Bishop Oskar Saier of Freiburg im Breisgau noted that *communio* among the faithful flows from the communio between God and human beings... Noted theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar believed that a relationship

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> National Organization for Victim Assistance. *Community crisis response team training manual* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (Washington, DC. NOVA, 1997).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> J.T. Mitchell. and G.S. Everly, Jr. *Advanced critical incidents stress debriefing*. (Ellicott City, MD: International Critical Incidents Stress Foundation, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> For further information regarding the concerns of postconciliar interpretations see: J. Ratzinger *Church, Ecumenism and Politics* (New York: Ignatius Press, 1988). and J. Ratzinger, *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen* (Freiburg, 1991) 27–30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Oskar Saier, 'Communio' in der Lehre des Zweiten. Vatikanischen Konzils (Munich: Max Huebner, 1973.)

with God is imperative and essential for the existence of *communio*. <sup>159</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) also clarified the critical role of the divine in any experience of *communio* "The Church is a *communio* – a people united in faith, sharing the grace of God in Christ and the Spirit, and celebrating this unity most visibly through the eucharist." <sup>160</sup> In 1 John 1:3, *communio* exists in "what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete." (NAB) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* delineates the relationship between *communio* and the sacraments:

The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them to Jesus Christ, and above all Baptism, the gate by which we enter into the Church. The communion of saints must be understood as the communion of the sacraments. . . . The name 'communion' can be applied to all of them, for they unite us to God. . . . But this name is better suited to the Eucharist than to any other, because it is primarily the Eucharist that brings this communion about. <sup>161</sup>

To examine the "Communio" stage of the "Four C Model" requires primarily an exploration of the role of prayer in the lives of Christians. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." "Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man [sic] in Christ." Jesus modeled the critical importance of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Communio—A Programme," in International Catholic Review (the forerunner to Communio: International Catholic Review) 1 (January-February, 1972). also Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Communio* 33 (Spring 2006). Communio: International Catholic Review.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Granfield, P. The Limits of the Papacy (New York: Crossroad/Herder & Herder, 1990), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 950.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2559.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2564.

taking time for prayer during his active ministry by withdrawing to deserted places to pray. 164 In Luke 6:12, just preceding the naming the apostles, Jesus "departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God." (NAB). Before any phone calls are made or letters are written, communio, stems first from the administrator placing priority on prayer, requesting guidance and strength from God during a difficult time. In preparation for his agony on the cross, Christ demonstrated most clearly the importance of prayer during times of trial and crisis. In Matthew 26:36-39, "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray". . . and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer" (NAB). Following the death of a student, it is vital that Catholic administrators follow the model of Jesus by engaging in prayer. Henri Nouwen, Catholic priest and spiritual writer, in his book *Road to Daybreak*, wrote that prayer "invites us to live in ever closer communion with the one who loves us more than any human being ever can." <sup>165</sup> Nouwen also wrote that prayer is central in times of crisis and distress. "When we are thrown up and down by the little waves on the surface of our existence, we become easy victims of our manipulative world, but, when we continue to hear the deep gentle voice that blesses us, we can walk through life with a stable sense of well-being and true belonging." <sup>166</sup> Desiring to "hear the deep gentle voice" during times of crisis and trial, it is important that Catholic elementary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:35 NAB

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Henri Nouwen. The Road to Daybreak: A spiritual journey. (New York: Doubleday. 1988), 120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Henri Nouwen. *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual living in a secular world.* (Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton. 1992), 60.

administrators engage in *Communio* by bringing together the human and the divine in both personal and communal prayer.

## **Stage Three: Commemorate**

"Commemoration" has both theological and psychological roots that make this stage an important vehicle for processing difficult situations as a community. In 1922, Bronislaw Malinowski observed Trobriand islanders chanting together when a storm developed. By doing so, the islanders experienced both community support and an alleviation of their anxiety. By "doing something", the islanders had some of their stress alleviated. Malinowski determined that humans use rituals to alleviate disabling emotions, such as fear and anxiety. <sup>167</sup> In an attempt to lessen the feeling of powerlessness that crisis situations often evoke, humans participate in ritual that provides venue for controlling one's own behavior, as well as "impacting" the crisis. <sup>168</sup> In rites of passage, young people become connected to the goals and invested in the values held by their community. <sup>170</sup> 171 Psychologically, ritual is a vehicle that prepares people for socialization. <sup>172</sup> Rituals mobilize emotional support for community to provide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> B. Malinowski. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd. 1922), 392f.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> C.D. Clark. *In sickness and in play: Children coping with chronic illness*. (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> E. Dissanayake. *Homo aestheticus: Where art comes from and why.* (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1995).

Erik Erikson. "Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man." Philos. Trans. of the Roy. Soc. London. Series B, *Biological Sciences*, 251 (1966) 337-349.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> V. Turner. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Aldine Transaction, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Eugene G. D'Aquili, Charles D. Laughlin and John McManus *The Spectrum of Ritual*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

social organization. <sup>173</sup> <sup>174</sup> Dr. Radcliff –Brown, in his book *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* stated that there is a core psychological importance to ritual and expression as a community. He wrote that ". . .ceremonial customs are the means by which the society acts upon its individual members and keeps alive in their minds a certain system of sentiments. Without the ceremonial those sentiments would not exist, and without them the social organization in its actual form could not exist." <sup>175</sup> This ritual is not pertinent only to primitive cultures, but ritual and expression are also still critical to human interaction. This is especially true with regard to the importance of religious ritual. Religion has been linked to major life events such as birth, death, and marriage throughout history, and these experiences have even been given religious significance. <sup>176</sup>

Christ built on the symbolic within the ritual experience of the Jewish Sabbath in the institution of the Eucharistic liturgy at the Last Supper. The resurrected Christ then further deepened the ritual of the "breaking of the bread" for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Rituals, such as the "breaking of the bread", give structure <sup>177</sup> and an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> E. Durkheim. *The elementary forms of the religious life: A study in religious sociology.* (New York: Macmillan, 1915).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. *Structure and function in primitive society*. (London: Cohen and West, 1952).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ibid. 324.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> B. Spilka, R.W. Hood, R.L. Gorsuch. *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach*. (Englewood Cliffs,NJ: Prentice – Hall. 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> R.A. Neimeyer. "Searching for the meaning of meaning: Grief therapy and the process of reconstruction" *Death Studies*, 24, (2000) 541–558.

opportunity for the bereaved to take action, rather than to behave passively, in the process of their grief. 178 179

At crisis moments, creative and expressive outlets that actively ritualize are critical. Children may or may not be developmentally capable of articulating their emotions verbally. Providing opportunities for communal formal commemoration (ex. Masses, Scholarship Funds, Eucharist Adoration) as well as informal commemoration (ex. poetry 182, music, bringing in a picture, and art projects 183 such as designing a memory book or card 184) provide an individual with a variety of methods to engage in ritualizing and commemorating a person who has died.

### **Stage Four: Continue**

The story of the Transfiguration in the gospel of Luke provides insight with regard to the importance of "Continuation." Jesus, Peter, John and James ascended a mountain and while there, Jesus was gloriously transfigured and then began conversing with Elijah and Moses. The apostles, who had fallen asleep, awoke amazed at what they saw. "As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> J. Castle and W.L. Phillips. "Grief rituals: aspects that facilitate adjustment to bereavement." *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 8, (2003) 41-71. as well as Rando, T.A. "Creating therapeutic rituals in the psychotherapy of the bereaved". *Psychotherapy*, 22, 1985. 236-240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Sandra S. Fox. *Good Grief: Helping Groups of Children When a Friend Dies*. (Boston, MA: New England Association for the Education of Young Children, 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Patricia L. Papenbrock and Robert F. Voss. *Children's Grief: How to Help the Child Whose Parent Has Died.* (Redmond, WA: Media Publishing Co., 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Delineation between "Formal Commemoration" and "Informal Commemoration" found Linda Goldman. *Life and Loss: A Guide to Help Grieving Children*. (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> R.L. Sartore "Poetry and childhood trauma." *Journal of Poetry Therapy* 3(4): (1990)229-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> A. Klingman, E. Koenigsfeld, and D. Markman "Art activity with children following disaster: A preventive oriented crisis intervention modality." *Arts in Psychotherapy* 14 (1987) 153-166.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Joseph A. Farrelly. "Expressive therapies in a crisis intervention service." *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 18 (1991) 131-137.

we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Luke 9:33) (NAB). This desire to stay where community and divine presence is felt is a natural human one. Although Peter wanted to stay and build tents on the site, his idea is corrected in the line "But he did not know what he was saying" (Luke 9:33) (NAB). The desire to separate from the world and stay "safe" also occurs following the death of a loved one. However, as Jesus' disciples learned, the call is not to vacate the world, but instead to re-enter into the world, fortified with the insight and revelation that we have experienced during our time apart. The apostles re-emerged from the mountain, facing the reality that their experience had changed them but returning to the ministry, people, and expectations of daily life to which they had grown accustomed; "On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him" (Luke 9:37) (NAB).

While grief therapy may define its goal as "helping the survivor complete any unfinished business with the deceased and say a final good-bye," the final stage of the "Four C Model" of crisis response intervention, "continuation" (which generally occurs in the first few days of following a loss) does not strive to bring about a "final goodbye." Instead, "continuation" implies a return to pre-crisis equilibrium and an ability to function. In the classroom, following debriefing, prayer, and commemoration, students may begin to play or become distracted from discussion about death or the student who died. Students begin to exhibit signs of a desire to return to relative "normalcy." While still grieving, students may developmentally require teachers and administrators to begin to return to classroom regular routine. It is recommended that after the death of a loved

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> J.W. Worden, *Grief Counseling and grief therapy*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (New York:Springer, 1991). 38

one, "It is usually better for students to go to school, because there is a comforting sense of routine. Often at times such as this, students feel as if life is out of control." <sup>186</sup> Routine is seen as a stabilizing and calming agent when children have experienced a loss or crisis. "Although adjustments will need to be made to student activities, such as postponing exams or substituting instructional activities with supportive classroom discussions about the crisis event, it is best to continue routine school activities as much as possible... whenever possible, it is best to avoid school closings and early dismissals, particularly during the crisis. Students find comfort in the schoolday routine and in the company of their peers and trusted adults. "187

J.W. Wolfenstein believed that children have a low capacity for going through long periods of time in acute pain. In short, children have a "short sadness span." <sup>188</sup> In order to regain expended energy from grief and processing, children will often begin to play. "Children often use play as an escape from their pain and as a way of gaining mastery over their complex and confused feelings about the death." <sup>189</sup> By returning to usual class routines, the school symbolically returns to normalcy. This is not unlike the Transfiguration story. Although changed and granted new insight because of their experience with death, life does, in fact, continue to move forward for students and school personnel alike.

<sup>186</sup> Julia Wilcox Rathkey. What Children Need When They Grieve (New York: Three Rivers Press,

<sup>2004).

187</sup> D. Schonfeld, S. Newgass. "School crisis response initiative." OVC Bulletin (September 2003) US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, NCJ 5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> M. Wolfenstein. "How is mourning possible?" *Psychoanalytic study of the child*, 24 (1966) 432-460. Nancy Boyd Webb. *Helping Bereaved Children*. (New York/London: Guildford Press, 1993) 14.

In summary, psychology, including the field of crisis intervention, has not always seen the benefit of collaboration and integration with religion and vice versa. In this project, the elementary school administrators are all employed at schools imbued with Roman Catholic identity. Due to the nature of being both "a place of learning" and "a place of faith formation," it is important to utilize both the resources available from the field of crisis intervention as well as the resources available through the Roman Catholic faith tradition. This simple four-stage model, created to integrate the resources and best practices from both faith and science, provides a greater well from which to draw after a student dies.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

#### WORKSHOP PRACTICUUM

Theology is directed toward living out hope and love, in which there is a moment of knowledge which is not possible without them. This is not contradicted by the fact that the praxis served by theology also includes an intention of disinterested knowledge that seeks "sapere res prout sunt" ["to know things just as they are"]. But such knowledge can only be attained in the actual deed of hope and love. Orthodoxy and orthopraxis mutually condition each other in a primordial nameless unity which is only known, if at all, through praxis. And this is because all [religious] knowledge is valid only in saving action, when it has fulfilled itself in love and thus remains as theory. 190

Three workshops were provided in the Archdiocese of Baltimore in November of 2010, to aid Catholic elementary administrators in the praxis of faith-based crisis intervention after the death of a student.

Pope John Paul II, in *Ecclesia in America*, notes "In the overall work of the new evangelization, the educational sector occupies a place of honor." He stressed that

a special effort should be made to strengthen the Catholic identity of schools, whose specific character is based on an educational vision having its origin in the person of Christ and its roots in the teachings of the Gospel. Catholic schools must seek not only to impart a quality education from the technical and professional standpoint, but also and above all provide for the integral formation of the human person." <sup>192</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Rahner, Karl. Sacramentum Mundi: An encyclopedia of Theology. iv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> John Paul II. *Ecclesia in America, The Church in America*. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media 1999) 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> John Paul II. *Ecclesia in America, The Church in America*. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media,1999) 274.

If Catholic schools are truly embodying their mission, Catholic identity needs to be pervasive in every aspect of how the school functions. "It is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its "structure" as a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry." <sup>193</sup> Students are sent to Catholic schools for "the special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils." <sup>194</sup> Unlike public schools, Catholic schools desire to create an environment "in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony." 195 "Catholic educators benefit from a clear mission that includes two co-existing goals" according to Catholic schools and the common good by authors Bryk, Lee and Holland. 196 Goal one is consistent with the goals of public schools: forming successful citizens through physical, academic, and psychosocial opportunity. The second goal of Catholic education is that it transmits the faith. 197 198 When a student dies in a Catholic elementary school, the pastoral response provided by the administrator of the school must have a Roman Catholic identity as omnipresent as Christ is in the school's mission and vision.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education , *Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Catechesi tradendae, (16 October 1979) 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> A.S. Bryk, V. Lee, and P.B. Holland. *Catholic schools and the common good*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1993).

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> Thomas Long and Merylnn Schuttloffel "Rationale for Special Education" *Catholic Schools Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (June 2006) 445-446.

When a student dies, Catholic schools often have chosen to emphasize either the goal of psychosocial support by engaging the practices of behavioral science or the goal of transmitting the faith. The unbalanced response or "intervention without faith" would include students participating in debriefing and commemoration ideas, but failing to pray and include faith experiences into the classroom. The other extreme, "faith without intervention", could manifest itself after a student dies with the entire school being brought immediately to the church where a Mass or prayer service occurs. In itself, taking the community to church is not a destructive decision. However, upon return from church, students need to process, but often teachers will immediately resume as if it was an average day. The mission of Catholic education and fulfillment of both of its goals should be reflected in an integrated crisis response. Most often, the decisions as to how to respond and whether or not to provide an integrated response to the community lies in the hands of the school administrators.

Black and English hypothesized that "the primary responsibility of the school administrator is to insure (sic) that every situation in that building becomes a learning situation to the greatest extent possible." Principals have a unique and preeminent position within the school community. Researchers suggest that principals do influence and shape culture within schools in ways that no other individual or external organization are capable of doing. <sup>200</sup> <sup>201</sup> According to T.D. Snyder, in the article "When

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> J.A. Black and F.W. English. *What they don't tell you in schools of education about school administration*. (Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing. 1986). 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> L. Beck and J. Murphy. *Understanding the principalship: Metaphorical themes 1920's – 1990s*. (New York:Teachers College Press. 1993).

tragedy strikes," successful coping following a school tragedy is in direct correlation with the strength of the principal's leadership. The style of administrative leadership must include both a take charge decisive manner and a willingness to delegate and work effectively with a team. School administrators have a unique role with regard to leadership during crisis situations.

Administrators are called to represent discipleship as well as a competence to lead. Black and English hypothesized that "the primary responsibility of the school administrator is to insure that every situation in that building becomes a learning situation to the greatest extent possible." Catholic school administrators possess influence not only in regards to culture and leadership style, but also with regards to the religious identity of the school. 205

Teachers and administrators, whether in universities or schools, have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> T.E. Deal and K.D. Peterson. *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> T.D. Snyder "When tragedy strikes" *Executive Educator* 15 (7) (1993) 30-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> R. Lichtenstein, D. Schonfeld, and M. Kline. "School Crisis Response: Expecting the unexpected." *Educational Leadership*, 52 (3), (1994, November) 79-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> J.A. Black, and F.W. English. *What they don't tell you in schools of education about school administration*. (Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing. 1986). 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> B. Lingard, D. Hayes, M. Mills, P. Christie. *Leading learning: Making hope practical in schools*. (Berkshire, England: Open University Press. 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Meeting with Catholic Educator Address Conference Hall of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.* (April 17 2008).

One strategy for administrators to enhance their ability to integrate faith into their school leadership is through "contemplative practice." In this way, daily decisions and interactions are reflected upon in the light of prayer, faith, and one's own personal relationship with Christ. By embracing this practice in the more mundane experiences, when crisis occurs, the administrator will be prepared to be an integrated and reflective leader.

In preparing a workshop for these contemplative administrators, it is critical to remember they are adult learners seeking understanding more then the imparting of information. Wiggins and McTighe define the act of understanding as being able to "teach it, use it, prove it, connect it, explain it, defend it, [and] read between the lines."

<sup>208</sup> All formation for adult learners should strive to bring about the act of understanding. Pedagogical presentations will not serve them within a workshop setting. Malcolm Knowles coined the term andragogy to describe the art and science of helping adults learn. <sup>209</sup> To teach adults, the instructor must move away from a model of "controlling teacher" to a more "collaborative facilitator" style of teaching, in which learners are challenged towards critical reflection and independence. <sup>210</sup> While the facilitator of the workshop is influential, it is not as the one imparting knowledge to adults but instead as the guide providing structure and opportunities for greater mastery of skills and problem

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> M.J. Schuttloffel. *Character and the contemplative principal.* (Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association. 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> G. Wiggins, and J. McTighe *Understanding by design*. (Arlington, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1998). 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> M.S. Knowles. *The adult education movement in the United States*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. 1980).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> D. Mackeracher. *Making sense of adult learning*. (Toronto: Culture Concepts. 1996).

solving ability.<sup>211</sup> Unlike children, adult learners have crafted their own expectations and reasons for engaging in the formation being provided. By determining what the participants desire to glean from the experience, the facilitator will be able to better prepare and adjust the content and focus of any workshop.

Of specific use in creating this project, was the work of researcher Marsha Speck, who focused her studies on providing professional development opportunities for adult educators. In her article entitled "Best Practices in Professional Development for Sustained Educational Change," Speck outlined nine important points when constructing formation opportunities for adult educators. They are:

- "Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them. Application in the 'real world' is important and relevant to the adult learner's personal and professional needs.
- Adults want to be the origin of their own learning and will resist learning activities they believe are an attack on their competence. Thus, professional development needs to give participants some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning.
- Adult learners need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities are related and relevant.
- Adult learners need direct, concrete experiences in which they apply the learning in real work.
- Adult learning has ego involved. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgment during learning.
- Adults need to receive feedback on how they are doing and the results of their
  efforts. Opportunities must be built into professional development activities that
  allow the learner to practice the learning and receive structured, helpful
  feedback.
- Adults need to participate in small-group activities during the learning to move them beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
   Small-group activities provide an opportunity to share, reflect, and generalize their learning experiences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> A.B. Knox. *Helping adults learn*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1986).

- Adult learners come to learning with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competencies. This diversity must be accommodated in the professional development planning.
- Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adult learners transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained." <sup>212</sup>

It is in light of these guiding principles of adult education, as well as the specific "educator" population, the one-day workshop "Training Catholic Elementary Administrators to Respond to the Death of a Child" was crafted for Catholic elementary administrators.

The preparation for presentation of the workshop began with acquiring permission to present from Episcopal leadership and the Superintendant of Catholic Schools. A letter was written, requesting permission from Auxiliary Bishop, Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly (APPENDIX 1), and Executive Director of Catholic Education Ministries and the Superintendant of Catholic Schools, Dr. Ronald J. Valenti. (APPENDIX 2) After receiving affirmative responses from both officials, on February 7, 2008 and January 25, 2008 respectively, (APPENDIX 3 and 4), the calendar for the Catholic Schools Office for the Archdiocese of Baltimore was consulted and three dates were set.

To provide administrators with multiple options that would ease travel and foster attendance, three geographically diverse locations were selected. Location one, St. Clement Mary Hofbauer School, is located just outside the Baltimore city line and was intentionally selected so that urban administrators would find it convenient. St. Clement Mary Hofbauer has a student population of approximately 400. Location two, School of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Marsha Speck. "Best Practice in Professional Development for Sustained Educational Change." *ERS Spectrum* (Spring 1996) 36-37.

the Incarnation, is located southeast of the city of Baltimore, in an affluent suburban county. Founded in 2000, the School of the Incarnation is a newly built regional school, serving over 780 students from six parish communities. Location three, Resurrection/St. Paul School, is located to the west of Baltimore more city and has 510 students enrolled. A suburban school serving two parishes, the location of Resurrection St. Paul School is adjacent to a major interstate that provided administrators from schools in the rural western area of the Archdiocese convenient access without navigating Baltimore city. The principals of the three schools were contacted via e-mail (APPENDIX 5), and they agreed to host the workshops at their locations. Following the confirmations of these locations, a registration flier was created and sent to principals and vice-principals from the office of the Superintendant.

The one-day workshop format was selected for the convenience of the administrators. According to Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, there are four key characteristics of a workshop. Workshops involve 1) short-term intensive learning, 2) small group interaction, 3) active involvement, and 4) application of new learning. Catholic school administrators often have multiple duties beyond their administrative ones including, but not limited to, teaching classes, substituting, and directing the carpool line. By creating a single short term formation event, their communities would only be inconvenienced for one day. The times of 9:30AM to 2:00 PM were selected so that the participants had the flexibility to be at school for the arrival of students and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> J.E. Brooks-Harris and S.R. Stock-Ward. *Workshop: Designing and facilitating experiential learning.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. 1999).

faculty. From 7:30 AM until 9:00 AM, administrators could troubleshoot morning issues and concerns, and then leave to attend the workshop. Due to the regional location of the workshops, some principals had to travel over an hour. The decision to move from inviting only Principals and Assistant Principals to including "Nurses, Guidance Counselors" and "anyone the principal determined" was suggested by Dr. Barbara Edmondson, the Interim Superintendant of School of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The workshop day began with a preparation of the room. In each of the three settings, chairs and tables needed to be moved so as to facilitate conversation while, at the same time, providing an adequate view of the PowerPoint presentation. A laptop, screen, and PowerPoint projector were to be provided by the host site, but, the quality of resources varied depending on the financial resources of the school. A variety of books and resources regarding children, death, and bereavement were placed on a side table so that during lunch and breaks, participants could browse and determine if they wanted to purchase the resources for their school. A light continental breakfast was served at each location and was provided by the host site. In the center of the room, a prayer space was created using a statue of Christ holding a small child; also in the space were a candle, a Bible, and a cross. Each participant received a small blank journal in which to take notes, a pen, and a folder with copies of the handouts for the day (APPENDIX 7). The handouts followed the outline of the day and included prayers and notes regarding the presentation. There were intentional areas in the handout where the administrators could take notes and write their school – specific answers. Following the workshop, sections of the handouts, as well as the PowerPoint presentation (APPENDIX 8), were made available electronically to all of the participants of the workshop.

Upon arrival, participants were greeted, offered refreshments, and asked to fill out a Workshop Self-Assessment (APPENDIX 9). The primary purpose of the Self-Assessment was to assess the experience of the participants around death and children. Of special significance was question two that asked if the administrator had a child of his/her own die. Had individuals signified that they had experienced the death of their own child, the presenter would have intentionally gauged her responses to the materials presented through regular eye contact and subtle conversations during breaks and at lunch. Content might have been adjusted had a participant been a grieving parent. The two subject areas that might have been less clinical were "communicating with the family" and "returning the student's possessions to the family." However, none of the participants in the three workshops indicated they had experienced the death of their own child, so the content was unaffected.

The Workshop Self –Assessment, a tool created for this project, presented a picture of the experience of the participants in the room. The first question asked "Have you ever attended the Catholic funeral of a child?" Of the twenty-nine participants, the vast majority, twenty-three, said that they had the experience of attending the Catholic funeral of a child. Question two, "Have you ever experienced the loss of your own child?" was unilaterally answered "No." Question three, "Have you ever experienced the death of a child you were close to?" had fifteen people answer "No," but fourteen participants stated that they had experienced the death of a child they defined themselves

as "close to." Within the second and largest workshop, the group had seven participants who had experienced the death of a child to whom they were close, and seven participants who had not had that experience. In question four, "Have you ever experienced the death of a child in a school setting?" seventeen participants, 58.6%, responded "Yes." By glancing through the participants' answers to the first four questions in the survey, a simple snapshot of the participants' personal experiences with the death of a child was available before the start of the presentation.

Beyond the personal experiences of the participants, questions five, six, and seven addressed the experience of the participants within the roles of "administrator" and "crisis coordinator." When responding to question five, "In your role as administrator, have you ever had a student in your school die?" 75.8% or twenty-two participants had not had the experience of having a student die while they were an administrator at the school. One participant, a school nurse, did not fill out the question, as she did not define herself as an "administrator." Question six asked "Have you ever been the crisis coordinator for a school wide crisis?" with the follow up question of "If yes, how comfortable were you in that role?" Nineteen of the participants stated that they had never been a crisis coordinator. Of the ten participants who indicated that they had served as a crisis coordinator in a school-wide crisis, one defined her comfort level with undertaking that role as "Quite Uncomfortable", three stated they were "Mildly Comfortable," and six participants stated that they were "Mostly Comfortable" in that role. Four of the six participants who stated they were "Mostly Comfortable" were administrators within the urban setting. None of the participants indicated that they

were "Very Comfortable" as the crisis coordinator in a school-wide crisis. Question seven "Have you ever been the crisis coordinator in a situation where a child has died?" attempted to ascertain if the participants had first-hand experience with the information that would be presented in the workshop. Of the twenty-nine participants, twenty-seven of them, 93.1%, had never served as the crisis coordinator in a situation where a child had died. Of the two participants who had been the crisis coordinator in a situation where a child had died, one indicated that she was "Quite Uncomfortable," while the other indicated that she was "Mostly Comfortable". The vast majority of those attending the workshop had little or no experience regarding the content of the workshop.

Participants were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves and state "why they felt called to attend the workshop." As stated earlier, adult learners would have a reason for their attendance. By soliciting their objectives, a facilitator can more easily engage and adapt the content to fit the needs of the participants. Participants shared their names, told a little bit about their experience, their years of service, and often their previous positions. Rarely, if ever, did they mention their personal lives or reveal anything about themselves other then their professional credentials. The majority of the participants named wanting to "be prepared" as their primary goal of the day. The presenter began by thanking the participants for enrolling in the workshop. The presenter briefly outlined the goals and agenda for the day and prompted the group to turn to the prayer service page within the handouts for the day.

Modeling the integration of faith and behavioral science, the prayer service was a critical component of the workshop day. By praying together, the workshop participants

were able to experience an intentional creation of *communio*, as is called for in the "Four C Model." The prayer service (SEE APPENDIX 7) included a proclamation of the Emmaus story from Scripture and time for sharing in pairs or groups of three a past experience they had regarding loss. Sharing the story of the road to Emmaus not only reexposed the participants to the details of the story but also provided an opportunity to hear the story again, this time listening to it from the perspective of Christ's actions modeling our role in regards to crisis intervention. The story, which tells of Christ journeying with the disciples after a traumatic loss, also creates a context for them to share a personal experience in which they experienced grief and were companioned. According to Wiggins and McTighe "Stories help us make sense of our lives and the lives around us, whether in history, literature, or art. The deepest, most transcendent meanings are found, of course, in the stories, parables, and myths that anchor all religions. A story is not a diversion; the best stories make our lives more understandable and focused."<sup>214</sup> Prompted by the story of the road to Emmaus, participants were presented for the first time with the concepts and language of the "Four C Model." "In this scripture passage, Christ models ministry to those in crisis and grieving. He does so in four distinct ways: 1) Listening (Communicate), 2) Providing spiritual grounding (Communio), 3) Through ritual and action by breaking bread (Commemorate), 4) And through his departure so they could continue their journey (Continue)."215

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> G. Wiggins and J. McTighe. *Understanding by design*. (Arlington, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1998). 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Taken from Handouts for the Workshop

Anton Boisen made the argument that "Without true understanding it is impossible to render effective service, and only as one comes in the attitude of service will the doors open into the sanctuaries of life." Immediately following this brief introduction, participants were asked to reflect regarding their understanding of death, grief, and loss and to share with others. "Think of a time you have experienced a loss. With one or two people at your table, please share an experience where, one of these four steps was helpful to you. Please explain why you found it helpful in that situation. ."

This prayer opportunity provided the participants an early opportunity to share glimpses into their own experiences of loss, as well as to begin to see the relevance of the information being presented to their own lives.

The rest of the day was broken into three distinct educational blocks: 1)

Educational Block One (also referred to as the MACRO Section), 2) Developmental theory (a brief overview of the difference between child and adult grief and the developmental differences between elementary-aged students in regards to grief as is delineated in Chapter Two of this project), and Education Block Two (also referred to as the MICRO Section) created to train participants to serve within an affected classroom as the facilitator of the "Four C Model" with students.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Anton Boisen. *Problems in Religion and Life: A Manual for Pastors, with Outlines for the Cooperative Study of Personal Experience in Social Situations*. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946). 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> Taken from Handouts for the workshop

### **Educational Block One**

Educational Block One was created as an overview of the role of the administrator who, utilizing the "Four C Model" would oversee and lead the entire school in times of crisis. Educational Block One (also referred to as the MACRO Section) describes a faith-based crisis intervention strategy from a decision maker's and administrator's perspective. Methodologically, the MACRO section utilizes experiential learning. According to D.A. Kolb, in the book entitled Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development, adults learn by having concrete examples presented before them. These concrete examples then progress into an understanding of the abstract concepts. <sup>218</sup> The entirety of the MACRO section is presented in the form of an "Interactive Crisis Timeline," by which administrators engage and deconstruct both tasks and decisions that would need to be made by an administrator following the death of a student. Using the timeline, participants can debate, ask questions, and suggest methods as to how to address the situations and concerns that arise during a crisis situation. The timeline tool empowers administrators by providing a virtual experience of how to use the "Four C Model," without the stress, judgment, or urgency that would exist during a real crisis. This model allows for the participants to discuss artificial projected "results" of their decisions. It also allows administrators time to examine their decision-making process and receive feedback from fellow administrators, which might inform opinions that they might not have had when confronted with a situation in "real

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> D.A. Kolb. *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: 1984).

life." Principals were presented with questions regarding the vulnerable people within their schools, persons whom they would select as members of the school response team, and the outside resources that they have within their community that they can call upon in a crisis. They were challenged to make decisions regarding the official statement that would be made, whether or not to send a class away for a field trip, and what, if anything, would be adjusted, should the student have died as a result of a long term illness. Lastly, administrators wrestled with the question of how the "Four C Model" and recommendations that flowed from it would require adjustment(s) if the student who dies is of a Christian denomination but not Catholic, or if the student and family are not Christian.

In addition to navigating decisions that need to be made throughout the day after a student dies, administrators also have tasks to accomplish. While these can often be delegated to others, knowledge of the tasks at hand is critical. An example of a task that needs to be done is the preparation of the written communication about the death of the student. To facilitate healthy communication throughout the school the morning after the death of the student, three documents need to be prepared, possibly adjusted, and distributed. Primarily, the administrator can edit a letter to be sent home to the parents that provides the facts surrounding the death and includes resources for ministering to a grieving child. Secondly, administrators can adjust a handout for use by classroom teachers that includes a developmentally appropriate statement about the student's death and debriefing process with that age group. Lastly, classroom teachers are well served if a prayer service is provided which they can adjust according to the grade they teach.

Template drafts of letters, announcements, and a prayer service were provided in both electronic form and hard copy.

### **Developmental Differences in Grieving: Adult and Children**

The MACRO section not only includes relaying information and assisting students primarily, but also parents, faculty, staff, and fellow administrative team members. The multi-generational nature of whole-school response segued into the facilitator providing a brief presentation regarding the differences between adult grief and children's grief. This brief discussion about children's grief then transitioned into the developmental differences surrounding grief that are often seen among elementary aged children, subdivided into three sections (Kindergarten–Grade 2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6-8). Administrators were invited to provide personal experiences and interactions with students of the various ages, elucidating the theory that students respond differently to death, based on their stages developmentally. In this way, the administrators' personal experience with students was again utilized to illustrate the content of the workshop.

A lunch break illustrated the discrepancy in the wealthier verses the non-wealthy parishes. The two suburban parishes provided both breakfast and a fully catered lunch for all participants from their own budget, while the less wealthy parishes brown-bagged it. During lunch, conversation and casual questions-and-answers occurred at all three workshops. The questions ranged from clarification regarding recommendations and specific concerns that they thought of regarding their school. When re-gathered, some

of these questions were brought back to the large group, along with any additional concerns or questions regarding the content of the morning. The workshop continued with Educational Block Two.

### **Educational Block Two**

Educational Block Two was created to provide administrators training in the practical skills and tools to utilize within the classroom setting immediately following the death of a student. The skills presented in Educational Block Two prepare an administrator to form faculty and staff who might need training in how to provide support and potentially serve as the actual interventionists in the classroom. Again utilizing the "Four C Model" as the structure of the intervention, the methodology used reflects experiential learning. That administrators had earlier shared stories regarding their students and reflected on the developmental differences among elementary aged students created an excellent backdrop for Educational Block Two focusing on pastoral response in the classroom setting.

Having a teacher or administrator who is prepared and trained to debrief children cannot be overemphasized on the day following the death of a student. Hogan suggested that teachers can ease a bereaved child's return to school by offering immediate sympathy to the child. The same need for a pro-active, but nurturing, environment exists among students when they have had a classmate die, as they are all grieving to different degrees. On the day after a death, the morning rituals (hanging up a coat,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> N. Hogan. "Helping children cope with grief." FOCUS ON PRE-K & K, 15(1), (2002) 3-6.

putting away a lunchbox) should remain consistent for normalcy. Following any school-wide announcements, the interventionist in the classroom would make a quick clear announcement about the death of the student. This is the same announcement drafted and presented by the administrator, as is outlined in the MACRO section. After the announcement, classroom teachers and administrators can begin to direct an adjusted debriefing process with the students in the classroom. For the sake of this project, the Critical Incident Stress Management process was summarized and developmentally adjusted to offer the following questions to children

- 1) When did you find out that \_\_\_\_ died?
- 2) What were your first thoughts/ feelings?
- 3) What are your thoughts/ feelings now?
- 4) Do any of you have a story or something special that you would like to remember about ?
- 5) Do you have any questions for me?"

By providing students with questions for which answers are elicited,, both emotional reactions and current functionality can be observed. Questions one through five assess the information students have received and their awareness of the details. These questions also assess symptoms of stress and can provide an early warning regarding students who are having a more marked response than others. Questions six and seven on the Classroom Announcement handout begin to prepare students for the Commemoration section of the "Four C Model." These questions provide opportunities for students to begin to creatively articulate their feelings and memories of the student who died. Both "Do you think we can draw some pictures/ write some prayers for and his family?" and "What are some things we might put on a card or include

in a prayer? (write on board common sayings, etc.)" would seem to indicate a temporary "skipping" of the *Communio* stage of the "Four C Model." The chalkboard will potentially be covered with appropriately worded condolence statements and words connected to shared memories of the student who died, once the debriefing section is completed.

The class then transitions to prayer, *Communio*. At the end of the prayer time, students will have been focused for quite a while. Having already solicited information regarding the deceased child and having displayed it on the board allow for increased flexibility by the interventionist, so that after prayer, students are not required to refocus their attention. The Commemoration stage of the classroom intervention is often creative in nature, and the classroom often is increasingly boisterous and lively. Students are drawing, coloring, writing, and completing memorial art projects. It is important for both the classroom teacher and interventionist to travel to each child to affirm his or her "Commemoration" projects and be available to all students during this time. The postprayer project time is often where students begin to experience "normalcy," as they talk to one another and share art supplies. The feeling of freedom and normalcy is often a great relief for the teacher, as well as the students in the classroom. Building on this feeling of normalcy, once the majority of projects are completed, students should be instructed to return to their seats, and clean up as they usually do in the classroom when finishing an art project. At this time, the "Continuation" stage begins, and students are directed to open their textbooks and teachers return to the regularly scheduled events of

the day. The interventionist, if it is not the homeroom teacher, should depart the classroom at this time.

During Education Block Two, administrators were presented with the classroom intervention process in an adapted role-play format. Requesting they utilize their imagination, the administrators were asked to "join" the facilitator in engaging the class of a student who died. The administrators not only asked questions as "co-interventionists" in the classroom, but also acted as "students" of various ages, asking questions and participating in the process. In this way, the administrators were able to engage in an alternate "praxis" model, in which the process unfolded before them, without actually having students affected.

Sometimes, principals and administrators become consumed by the call to lead their community during crisis times and need to be reminded about self-care. One such experience occurred in a school where the principal was an exceptionally strong leader with an attitude of service. Sitting in his office after the death of a student, I asked him "So the children have all had a chance to talk?" He replied, "Yes." I followed with, "And the faculty are doing alright?" "They are holding it together," he answered. "And everyone prayed?" "Yes, it was beautiful and they have all gone back to 'teaching'." "Excellent," I affirmed. He asked, "Okay, well, what else should I be doing?" I replied, "I think, as it's almost noon, taking off your coat might be a good start." Prolonged jobrelated stress, which causes one to function ineffectively in one's job, is the root causes

of burnout.<sup>220</sup> Burnout has additionally come to describe a combination of emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, and perceived lack of personal accomplishment.<sup>221</sup> Administrators who are not provided formation or support, but who are nonetheless expected to balance an ever-increasing job description, are in danger of burnout. When a crisis such as the death of a student occurs, it requires use of all reserves of strength and energy that a leader might have accrued through healthy behavior in both personal and professional venues. A brief presentation on self-care was given to administrators as a component of the workshop to inspire them to build their "reserves." Attempting to lead during a crisis when there is already a deficit in emotional energy, engagement, and commitment adds to the complexity of the crisis. Principals, as they model leadership and discipleship, must also model healthy self-care for all those around them.

While all three of the workshops were interactive, and many questions were asked and answered during lunch, there was time set aside for any additional clarification the administrators required at the end of the day,. This process was often brief, as administrators were palpably anxious to return to their schools for dismissal. A brief prayer was read by the administrators to close the day with a spiritual blessing and commissioning. After the hosts of the workshops were thanked, participants filled out the Evaluation (APPENDIX 10) that was in their folder. This evaluation was collected before they departed, and the workshop was concluded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> B.L. Brock. And M.L. Grady. *Rekindling the flame: Principals combating teacher burnout.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc. 2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> C. Maslach, S. Jackson, M. Leiter, M. Maslach *Burnout Inventory Manual*. 3 ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc; 1996).

Returning to the opening quote by Karl Rahner, "all [religious] knowledge is valid only in saving action, when it has fulfilled itself in love."<sup>222</sup> In as much as faith. theology, and religion must be lived in praxis, the reciprocal also applies. Furthermore, all facets of life must be entwined with faith. Catholic school administrators must intentionally infuse Catholic identity into every aspect of a Catholic school. This stems primarily from the mission of Catholic schools, but it is embodied in the leadership and discipleship of the administrators who work in the Catholic school setting. Catholic school administrators of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, all adult learners who work within the education field, were invited to participate in a one-day workshop offered at three geographically varied locations. The past experiences of the participants were surveyed, and a prayer survive opened the workshop day. The administrators were then informed about the use of the "Four C Model". This information was presented utilizing a methodology that engages the adult learner, experiential learning techniques such as storytelling, an interactive timeline, and an adapted role play technique. The goal of integrating theology into crisis intervention methods in Catholic schools through the "Four C Model" was served in the decisions made, regarding content, methodology, and presentation style.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Karl Rahner. Sacramentum Mundi: An encyclopedia of Theology. IV

### CHAPTER FIVE

### **EVALUATION**

The workshop on the "Four C Model" had a very strong affective and faith-based component, as well as a clear cognitive and instructional focus. Therefore, an instrument that could offer a holistic assessment was chosen. The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8) was developed in 1979 by Larsen, Attkisson, Hargreaves, and Nguyen<sup>223</sup> as a standardized measure of client satisfaction that could be used in a wide variety of settings. The CSQ-8 is a widely used instrument with published data on reliability and validity<sup>225</sup> <sup>226</sup> <sup>227</sup> The CSQ-8, adapted for this project, took approximately five minutes to complete and was filled out by the administrators who attended each of three workshops entitled "Training Elementary Administrators to Respond to the Death of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> D.L. Larsen, C.C. Attkisson, W.A. Hargreaves, and T.D. Nguyen. "Assessment of client/patient satisfaction: Development of a general scale." *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *2*, (1979). 197-207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> C.C. Attkinson, and R. Zwick. "The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire: Psychometric properties and correlations with service utilization and psychotherapy outcome." *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *5*, (1982). 233-237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> C.C.Attkisson and T.K. Greenfield. "The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 and the Service Satisfaction Questionnaire-30" In: Maruish, M. (ed.). *Psychological testing: treatment planning and outcome assessment*. (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: San Francisco, 1994) 402-420.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> T.K. Greenfield and C.C. Attkisson,. "Steps toward a multifactorial satisfaction scale for primary care and mental health services." *Evaluation and Programme Planning* (1989) 12:271-278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> T.D. Nguyen, C.C. Attkisson, and B.L. Stegner. "Assessment of patient satisfaction: Development and refinement of a Service Evaluation Questionnaire" *Evaluation and Programme Planning*, 6: (1983) 299-314.

Student." The CSQ-8 instrument has been documented to have high internal consistency, with alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .93 <sup>228</sup>

The CSQ-8 measures satisfaction with a "specific episode of care for a particular problem, rather than a continuum of care for a variety of problems over a considerable period of time." The CSQ is a self-report measure designed to assess consumer satisfaction with mental health services and includes the following dimensions of consumer satisfaction: (a) physical surroundings, (b) kind/type of treatment, (c) treatment staff, (d) quality of service, (e) amount, length, or quantity of service, (f) outcome of service, (g) general satisfaction, and (h) procedures" Each of the eight questions that make up the CSQ-8 has four responses to choose from, ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." These questions are crafted to produce ordinal data. Each answer is assigned a score between 0 and 4. The higher the score, the more satisfaction the participant in the workshop had with the workshop experience. All eight scores are summed up and averaged for an overall measure of satisfaction. When the questionnaires were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, it was found that all twenty-nine of the participants completed the forms properly.

Question one "How would you rate the quality of the in-service you have received?" overall received a 3.93 average out of 4 for the three workshops. Question two "Did you get the kind of in-service you wanted?" steadily improved from 3.66

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> L. Gaston and S. Sabourin. "Client satisfaction and social desirability in psychotherapy." *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 15, (1992). 227-231.

D. Wilkin, L. Hallam, M.A. Doggett. *Measures of need and outcome for primary health care.* (Rev. ed.) (Oxford medical publications) (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). 251.
 L. Gaston and S. Sabourin. "Client satisfaction and social desirability in psychotherapy."
 Evaluation and Program Planning, 15, (1992). 227-231.

average in workshop one, to 3.93 average in workshop two, and lastly a perfect evaluation of 4 for workshop three. Again, there was steady improvement with regard to satisfaction in question three "To what extent has our in-service met your overall needs?" which increased from 3.44 average (86%) in workshop one, to 3.93 (98.25%) in workshop two, and 4 (100%) in workshop three, indicating a significant increase towards "Almost all of my needs have been met."

One of the reasons I would attribute the increase in average scores between workshops one and three was the feedback received within the evaluation. Also, there was recognition that far too much content within the workshop was being "told" to the androgogical learners in the room. A substantial decrease of lecture style presentation and an increase in time for discussion and dialogue significantly affected the satisfaction of the administrators in attendance.

Question four "If a colleague or friend were in need of similar content, would you recommend our in-service to him or her?" received an overall 3.97 for the three workshops, indicating that the vast majority of administrators would "Yes, definitely" recommend the workshop to a colleague. Question five, "How satisfied are you with the amount of content you received?" received the overall lowest average with a score of 3.6 for the three workshops, indicating the average participants were between "Mostly Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied". Interestingly, in the next question, number six, "Has the content you received prepared you to deal more effectively with the death of a student?" the workshop received a perfect score of four "Yes, it helped a great deal" from all twenty-nine participants. This indicated that while the participants desired additional

information, the workshop presented did, by the participants' own assessments, increase their ability to effectively manage the death of a child.

"In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the in-service you have received?" asked in question seven, received a response average of 3.97. Again, workshop one received the lowest score with 3.89 average while workshops two and three received perfect responses of four from all participants indicating participants were overall "Very satisfied".

Question eight, "If you were to seek an in-service again, would you come back to one provided by the same presenter?" assesses the participants response to the presenter's style. Workshop one 97.25 % or 3.89 out of four would come back to a workshop provided by the speaker. In workshop two, the responses were thirteen fours "Yes, definitely", one three "Yes, I think so.", and one score of one "Definitely not."

The participant who answered "Definitely not" did verbally clarify for the presenter that the reason they answered "Definitely not" was because they wanted to express that "I had done an excellent job" and they "would not need to come to a workshop again" indicating that the respondent did not understand the nature of the question. I did, however, leave that answer as a part of the data collected, as it was human question interpretation error.

Overall, the statistical mean of workshop one is 3.81, workshop two is 3.86, and workshop three is 4. The mode, or most repeated response to the CSQ-8 questions was 4. Adding the total number of responses to the eight CSQ-8 questions and then dividing by the number of items answered, one can calculate the "Overall Measure of

Satisfaction". Of the twenty-nine responses, the total score was 900 with 232 answers to the eight questions. Therefore, the overall measure of satisfaction with the workshops presented is 3.87931 out of a possible 4 or 96.9% satisfaction.

Two statements were added to the end of the CSQ-8, which allowed for a more open-ended response. "The thing I liked best about this in-service was. . ." and "If I could change one thing about this in-service, it would be..." to provide participants with a venue for constructive criticism. Twenty five of the twenty nine participants chose to respond to the first open ended question "The thing I liked best about this in-service was ..." added to the end of the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8). From the twenty-five respondents, forty-one phrases were elicited. These forty-one responses could be subdivided into five categories: Information and/or Content, Resources, Instructor, Practicality, and Size of Group. Sixty percent of those who responded, fifteen out of the twenty-five respondents, named either "Information" or "Content" as the "thing I liked best". Eleven of the respondents named "Resources". In workshops two and three, seven respondents named the "Instructor" as the "thing I liked best". Five respondents, twenty percent of those who chose to respond, named the "Practicality" of the workshop as their personal choice. Lastly, three respondents from the first workshop named the "Size of Group" and intimacy of the group. These three respondents and their comments regarding the intimacy and size of the group may be more of an indicator of unforeseen complications regarding the first workshop and the need for adjustment than an intentional limitation of the numbers at each site.

Eighteen of the twenty-nine participants, sixty-two percent, opted to answer the second open ended question "If I could change one thing about this in-service, it would be. . ." at the conclusion of the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8). From the responses provided by the eighteen, twenty-one phrases were able to be sub-divided into seven categories: Nothing/Affirmation, Methodology, Site Concerns, Content, Resources, Attendance, and a single desire for the workshop to be extended to two days instead of a one day format. Of the twenty-one responses, seven of them (thirty-three percent) were comments of "Affirmation" or the indication that the participant would change "Nothing". Four comments, all from participants who attended the first two workshops, indicated a desire for more of an androgogical structure and that the workshop "Methodology" would include less lecturing and more participant participation. Three comments focused on "Site Concerns" and consisted of two comments regarding the cool temperature of the room at two different sites, and one regarding the parish secretarial staff's lack of friendliness. One comment from the first workshop addressed "Content" and requested there be increased opportunity to focus on the administrators' individual school's concerns and situations. Two responses from the first workshop requested "Resources" be made available electronically and a list of resources be sent to the participants following the workshop. Three comments addressed a concern regarding "Attendance". Two comments focused on waving the limit regarding the number of participants, and one comment requested the workshop include faculty members instead of limiting attendance to only administrators.

From this constructive feedback, a number of changes were made to the workshop between the first and second presentation. Primarily, "Methodology" changes were made. The large quantity of repetitious details regarding agendas for meetings were taken out of the workshop and removed from the PowerPoint. Instead, a quick outline regarding that same content was inserted. The time delegated for interactive experiential learning including the interactive timeline, and adapted role-play was extended. There was also additional time added for sharing and discussion of individual sites' concerns. The "Resources" requested by the participants of the first workshop were sent to all three sets of workshop participants. In addition to the handouts in electronic form, the PowerPoint presentation, as well as a list of recommended books and resources, was sent to all participants. Due to the nature of the project and the need for a small homogenous group of administrators, the "Attendance" concerns were unable to be addressed.

### An Unforeseen Complication

On March 3, 2010 the Archdiocese of Baltimore announced that thirteen Catholic schools would close due to financial problems.<sup>231</sup> Of the thirteen schools that were closed, ten of them are located in the city of Baltimore or very close to the city line. Many administrators, faculty, and students were displaced following the decisions. Reactions to the school closures ranged from extraordinary sadness to rage. The presenter and architect of the November workshops failed to anticipate how the closures

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Arthur Hirsch "Archdiocese to close 13 schools in city, county: Consolidation plan an effort to 'regroup' in face of Catholic system's financial problems" *Baltimore Sun* March 3, 2010.

in March would impact this study's administrators workshop being provided on "death of a student" in November. While the second and third workshops, held in the suburban wealthier schools seemed relatively unaffected, the first workshop's opening prayer revealed unexpected results.

Loss and grief are not always around death. Research shows that job loss or change can cause adults to experience grief. <sup>232</sup> Job loss can result in adults feeling a loss of identity and self-worth. 233 234 To address the suffering of those who are experiencing loss around their job or workplace, support personnel practice active listening, as feelings of helplessness or powerlessness are articulated. <sup>235</sup>

The workshop that was held near the city was hosted at a school where the majority of the students were from three closed Catholic elementary schools. Six months prior, the principal hosting the urban workshop had experienced the closure of the school she administrated. The workshop being presented in November was the first opportunity for school administrators to gather together without a formal presence by the Archdiocese of Baltimore representatives. As a component of the opening prayer, the question was asked,

Think of a time you have experienced a loss. With one or two people at your table, please share an experience where, one of these four techniques was helpful to you. Please explain why you found it helpful in that situation. . .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> J. Archer and V. Rhodes. "The grief process and job loss: A cross-sectional study." *British Journal* of Psychology, 84, (1993). 395-410.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> N.E. Amundson and W.A. Borgen. "The dynamics of unemployment: Job loss and job search." *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 60, (1992). 562-564.

<sup>234</sup> T.A. Beehr. *Psychological stress in the workplace*. (New York: Routledge 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> S. Allcorn. *Anger in the workplace*. (Westport, CT: Quorum Books 1994).

Following the posing of the question, administrators turned to a partner and began sharing. Moments later, multiple participants voices became elevated and some began to cry. The "loss" they had defined was not a human death but the multiple losses they associated with the school closures. Recognizing that the content of the workshop should not supersede care of the participants, I asked for the entire community's attention and facilitated a brief meeting to allow for processing. Participants began sharing about the pain, anger, and powerlessness they experienced when the schools were closed. Following a structured, open discussion, I returned to the prayer service and asked for the administrators to articulate their concerns and thoughts in spontaneous prayer. Once that had concluded, I quickly assessed that I would need to consolidate the content for the morning and returned to the workshop presentation with some adaptation for time. Throughout the rest of the presentation, especially when discussing "Self-Care" and coping mechanisms, I intentionally highlighted that it is important for the participants to utilize these skills regarding their own coping around the loss of their schools. It was only in hindsight, weeks after the workshop, that I recognized that I had instinctively addressed the administrators' unprocessed school closure loss, utilizing an adapted version of the "Four C Model".

### **CONCLUSION**

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus journeyed with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. In doing so, he provided a model of ministry to those who were experiencing crisis and loss. Jesus prompted the disciples to share their stories along with a discussion of the religious context around the death they had experienced, engaged them in comforting prayer and active ritual, and then departed their presence. His actions on the road to Emmaus form the foundation for the "Four C Model" of crisis intervention which integrates spiritual and behavioral intervention principles and practices.

The "Four C Model" reflects the importance of foundational Catholic identity and the role of prayer in an experience of crisis. The four stages, Communication, *Communio*, Commemoration, and Continuation blend best practices of crisis intervention with traditions, symbolism, and prayer from the Roman Catholic tradition.

In addition to the scores for the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8, the openended questions and comments, additional feedback regarding the utility of the
workshop was received. Approximately two months after the workshops were presented,
I received a phone call from one of the administrators who had attended. A young
teacher in her school had died. She mentioned that she had adapted the letter,
announcement, and prayer service to use with the death of a teacher instead of the death
of a student. She also mentioned she had spoken to her staff about developmental
responses to death in children, using the workshop handout, and had debriefed the

students in the classroom where the teacher had served. When she wrote a brief e-mail about the experience, she noted:

I was shocked that I needed to use the material so soon after learning these fine practices. I felt prepared to help my staff, families and students get through the sudden and unexpected death of a young teacher. I did learn one thing: The best way to heal is to be together. I offered several free will opportunities for my staff and the children to gather to talk about, listen, pray with or just be with each other. It was a great healer. <sup>236</sup>

In this project, the emphasis on including and relying on prayer and the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church sets it apart from other models of response. The Catholic elementary administrators' response to the death of a student must be, by its very nature, both pastoral and rooted in the Catholic tradition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Phyllis Karko, electronic letter to author, March 2, 2011



### ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

DEPARTMENT OF CAPPOLIC EDUCATION MENISTRIES DIVISION OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

February 7, 2008

Bishop W. Francis Malooly Vicar General Archdiocese of Baltimore

Dear Bishop Malooly,

As we discussed this fall, I am currently completing the proposal for my final Project in Ministry towards a Doctorate in Ministry at Catholic University of America. In this letter, I am officially requesting the opportunity to provide my Project in Ministry to the principals and vice principals of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

My Project in Ministry is entitled "Catholic Elementary School Administrators" Response to the Death of a Student". The format is a one day workshop provided to principals and vice principals of the Archdiocese of Baltimore which will be offered at three different regional locations at three different times. My desire is that the three workshops be held March, April and May of the 2008 academic year.

As I have served as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore for almost six years. During that time, I have coordinated crisis intervention for the parishes, elementary schools and secondary school of the Archdiocese. A component of my job description to offer training in pastoral care to all those working with children and youth, I have selected to intentionally target the training of elementary school principals for the focus of my project.

Thank you for your consideration, support, and continued generosity. In Christ,

Kristin Witte

Coordinator of Pastoral Care



### ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

# DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC LETCATION MINISTRIES DIVISION OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

January 21, 2008

Dr. Ronald J. Valenti Executive Director Department of Catholic Education Ministries Archdiocese of Baltimore

Dear Dr. Valenti,

As we discussed this fall, I am currently completing the proposal for my final Project in Ministry towards a Doctorate in Ministry at Catholic University of America. In this letter, I am officially requesting the opportunity to provide my Project in Ministry to the principals and vice principals of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

My Project in Ministry is entitled "Catholic Elementary School Administrators" Response to the Death of a Student". The format is a one day workshop provided to principals and vice principals of the Archdiocese of Baltimore which will be offered at three different regional locations at three different times.

As I have served as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore for almost six years. During that time, I have coordinated crisis intervention for the parishes, elementary schools and secondary school of the Archdiocese. A component of my job description to offer training in pastoral care to all those working with children and youth, I have selected to intentionally target the training of elementary school principals for the focus of my project.

I intend to invite the principals to attend the workshop days personally when I present on the topic of Bullying to the Elementary School Principal Association on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008. My desire is that the three workshops be held in the last week of March and early April of the 2008 academic year.

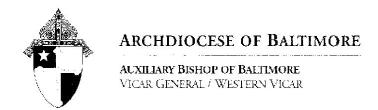
I've attached my project proposal and proposal Bibliography for your records.

Thank you for your consideration, support, and continued generosity.

In Christ,

Kristin Witte

Coordinator of Pastoral Care



February 8, 2008

Kristin Witte Coordinator of Pastoral Care Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry 320 Cathedral Street Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Kristin,

I was pleased to receive the official request for you to implement your Project in Ministry here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. I am aware that this Project in Ministry is the capstone component towards your pursuit of a Doctorate in Ministry at the Catholic University of America.

From what you have explained, the project, entitled "Catholic Elementary Administrator" Response to the Death of a Student," is composed of three trainings for Catholic Elementary School Administrators to be provided during March, April and May of 2008.

As you have competently served as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care for the Archdiocese of Baltimore for approximately six years, I have no reservation in regards to supporting this initiative. It will be a great opportunity for our school administrators.

I hereby grant you access and permission to provide these trainings within the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly Vicar General / Western Vicar



### ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION MINISTRIES OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 25, 2008

Ms. Kristin Witte Coordinator of Pastoral Care Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry 320 Cathedral Street Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Kristin,

May the Peace of Christ be with you!

As we discussed in my office on January 22nd, I am pleased to accept your offer of providing training for the elementary school principals and vice principals on "Catholic Elementary School Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student" here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

I am aware that this training is your final Project in Ministry towards the Doctorate in Ministry at Catholic University of America. I am pleased to see that the project you have chosen is also an extension of the position you hold here as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care for the Department of Catholic Education Ministries.

I ask that you discuss the dates for these workshops with Leslie Andrathy, Associate Superintendant of Catholic Schools, so that we can be assured that the dates do not conflict (or could be integrated) with already scheduled in-services. I also recommend you send a copy of your project proposal to the entire Division of Catholic Schools staff so that they are informed should they receive questions about the project.

If there is any additional support I can grant you in seeing this exciting initiative through successfully, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ronald J. Valenti Executive Director

Catholic Education Ministries

RJV/gu

Appendix 5

From: Kristin Witte

Sent: Saturday, October 02, 2010 10:00 PM

To: kmurphy@resstpaul.org; PWalters@stclemmh.org

Subject: Formally requesting you might consider helping me by hosting my

dissertation project

Dear Pam and Karen,

I am grateful for the support you have both shown me, especially in the past few months.

Dr. Edmondson and I met last week and at that time I received her permission to move forward. She also was kind enough to offer the School of the Incarnation as a site for one of the workshops.

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to assist me in completing my Doctoral Dissertation by hosting a day long workshop at your school during the first two weeks of November

The attached proposal clearly delineates my goal and objectives for the program. I am looking to set the dates quickly for these workshops so they can be advertised through the Superintendant's office during the month of October and so that the workshops can occur during the first two weeks of November.

The maximum number of participants which I will be accepting for each day long workshop is 15.

I will need the following to provide the workshop:

advocacy to area Principals to send one two or three Administrative staff members to the workshop you would be hosting

a room that seats 20 comfortably a powerpoint projector and screen,

morning hospitality for the 15 participants (I will be asking

them to bring a brown bag lunch)

and optional snacks for the afternoon

As the workshop is free, offering you complimentary spots is not an option. However, with the very limited spots that Il have, in gratitude for your hosting, I can offer you the opportunity to reserve spots early for up to four Administrators from your school (ex. Principal, V.Principal, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Middle School Dept

As you can imagine, providing these three days of training at this time is critical for completion of the Doctorate in Ministry in Pastoral Counseling. I both personally and professionally appreciate you considering helping me with

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. Thank you, again.

Kristin

Chair, etc)

# Catholic Elementary School Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

- a free one day workshop -

When a student dies, overwhelm may arise within the community. Catholic School administrators are expected to coordinate logistics, minister regarding pastoral concerns, and provide spiritual leadership for the school community.

This workshop is designed to provide both practical skills regarding basic school crisis response and ways to integrate Roman Catholic theology and ritual in

responding to the death of a student.

<u>Cost:</u> The workshop is <u>free</u> to participants; Morning Hospitality will be provided, however, <u>each participant is asked to bring their lunch</u>
<u>Invited Participants:</u> Elementary School Principals, Assistant
<u>Principals, and members of school administrative teams</u> (as designated by the school Principal)

**Time:** The workshops will be held from **9:00 until 2:45** 

Three regional workshops will be provided:

November 10 at St. Clement Rosedale School/Parish November 16 at Resurrection/St. Paul School November 18 at Incarnation School

Due to a limit regarding numbers (15 per workshop), a maximum of four (4) members of any one school will be able to register.

**Presenter: Kristin Witte** is the Assistant Director of Campus Ministry at Loyola University Maryland. Prior to this, she spent eight years serving the Archdiocese of Baltimore as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Social Justice in the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. She has completed three Masters degrees and is a doctoral candidate pursuing a Doctorate in Ministry with an emphasis in Pastoral Counseling at The Catholic University of America.

### **Workshop Timeline**

- 8:30 Arrival and Hospitality
- 9:00 Opening Prayer and Four C's of Crisis Response
- 9:45 Guidelines for a School Wide Response
- 12:00 Brown Bag Lunch
- 12:30 Crisis Responding in the Effected Classroom
- 2:30 Evaluation/ Departure

### **Directions to the Three In-Service Sites**

### St. Clement Mary Hofbauer Parish for November 10 Workshop 1212 Chesaco Avenue, Rosedale, MD 21237

Using the Fort McHenry Tunnel (I-95): Take Exit 61, US 40 East/Pulaski Highway, Go approximately 2 miles, Turn left on Chesaco Avenue

# Resurrection/ St. Paul School for November 16 Workshop 3155 Paulskirk Dr. Ellicott City, MD 21042

Take Route 40 West off of Route 29. Make a right at the first stoplight, St. John's Lane. Turn left at Churchgate, and then another left on Paulskirk Drive. The school is straight ahead and parking is available if you follow the church driveway around to the right.

# Incarnation School for November 18 Workshop 2601 Symphony Ln, Gambrills, Maryland 21054

Merge onto I-695 E/Baltimore Beltway Outer Loop toward Glen Burnie /Key Bridge. Take Exit 4 on the Left onto I-97 S /Annapolis /Bay Bridge. Merge onto MD-3 S/Crain Hwy via EXIT 7 toward Bowie/Odenton. Turn Right onto Waugh Chapel Road, Turn Left onto Symphony Ln. 2601 Symphony Ln is on the Left.

## Workshop Registration Form

# Catholic Elementary School Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

Each registrant must complete an individual registration form.

Confirmation of registration for each participant will be sent via e-mail upon receipt.

E-Mail Registration: Send the registration form to kwitte@loyola.edu

Fax Registration: Fax the registration form to 410.617.2052

- Limited space available on a first-registered, first-served basis.
- Limit 4 members of a single school's administrative team
- A waiting list will be created once a workshop is filled
- Some accommodations for persons with disabilities can be provided if requested one week prior to the workshop start date.
- Questions? Call 410.617.2838.

Name:		
School:		
		_
Address:		
	Phone:	<del></del>
State:	Zip:	
E-mail:		
Number of Years Se	erving in Catholic School Administration:	
Number of Years Se	erving in Current Position:	
Please check which	workshop you wish to attend:	
Novemb	oer 10 at St. Clement Mary Hofbauer Sc	chool/Parish
Novemb	oer 16 at Resurrection/ St. Paul School	
Novemb	ner 18 at School of the Incarnation	

# Kristin Witte, Doctorate of Ministry Candidate The Catholic University of America

# Catholic Elementary School Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

### HANDOUT RESOURCES

### **Workshop Timeline**

- 8:30 Arrival and Hospitality
- 9:00 Pre-Test and Opening Prayer
- 9:30 Basics of the Four C's
- 9:45 Timeline of Crisis from an Administrator's Perspective (with activities)
- 11:30 4C MACRO Response School Wide for Administrators
- 12:00 Child vs. Adult Grief and Developmental Differences
- 1:00 Lunch
- 1:30 4C MICRO Response Pastoral Response in the Classroom
- 2:30 Evaluation

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross once said, "People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within." Catholic churches are known for their stained glass. When crisis strikes a Catholic parish or school it is the light of Christ that emanates from within revealing true love and beauty.

Lord,

When those we love are gone from this earthly dwelling they leave behind those who mourn their absence. Grant that as communities grieve, we may hold memories dear and live in the hope of the eternal kingdom where you will bring all of us together again. AMEN

Luke 24: 13 - 35 (NAB)

In this scripture passage, Christ models ministry to those in crisis and grieving. He did so in four distinct ways:

- 1) Listening (Communicate)
- 2) Providing spiritual grounding (Communio)
- 3) Through ritual and action by breaking bread (Commemorate)
- 4) And through his departure so they could continue their journey (Continue).

Think of a time you have experienced a loss. With one or two people at your table, please share an experience where, one of these four techniques was helpful to you. Please explain why you found it helpful in that situation...

Loving and Compassionate Lord,

We share the faith of your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to time of testing and pain as we pray for all who grieve through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Taken from the Rites for the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Dying, 1982, Prayers After Death

## Four C's of Responding to the Death of a Student

### Communication

**Communio** 

**Commemoration** 

Continuation

Using the Four C's: Communication, Communio, Commemoration, and Continuation

### TIMELINE ACTIVITY

6:30 PM The principal receives a phone call on their cell from the Home and School President who says that Harvey Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, died in a car accident last night. You are aware that Harvey's parents are parishioners and he has a little sister, Julia, who is three years old. The Home and School President tells you that the accident happened on a wet road and that the rest of the family was treated and released. Harvey has two cousins in 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. The H & S President offers assistance in any way they can.

What goes through your mind?

#### 1. STAGES OF COMMUNICATION:

Administrative Team (plan for next day/ known facts)

Faculty/ Staff (remember: web/ resource teachers)

Parents (Phone Tree/ Ideally everyone/ Voicemail- situation call back/ E-mail to classes?)

Student (always preferable parent's communicate)

#### 2. Communicate a simple message

What would a brief statement include?

#### 3. Communicate - Three Meetings in the Morning

1.ADMINISTRATION MEETING

2. FACULTY/ STAFF MEETING

Brief Prayer and Information as is known now (changes/ media interest)

Give out Announcement. Prayer, Copy of Letter, Craft Supplies Plan of action for morning/ Schedule Changes

3. CLASSROOM PROCESS

NEVER, EVER, MAKE AN ANNOUCEMENT OR FOCUS PRAYER OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER

#### 4. Draft Communication - THREE WRITTEN TOOLS TO DRAFT (DESKTOP)

- A. The Letter to be Sent Home (15,16,17)
- B. Classroom Announcement for the next day
- C. Adjust Prayer

#### **5. Resource Assessment**

What resources do you have at your disposal?

#### 6. Vulnerability Assessment

Who are the vulnerable people/ classes?

#### **Communication Ideas**

#### Get the Facts

- Verify the event and acquires any additional necessary information.
- In the event of a death, acquires additional information regarding services and the family's wishes and makes this information available to staff and students
- Be as truthful as possible, but continue to respect the family's right to privacy.
- Rumor control during staff meetings and meetings with students is very important.

<u>Prepare Resources</u>: Draft Letter to Parents, Announcement by Homeroom teacher, Prayer, Craft Resources Assembled, Connect w/ Personnel Resources

#### Three Meetings in the Morning

- 1. Admin and Resources
- 2. Faculty and Staff
- 3. Classroom Processing

#### Telling families

- If possible, tell parents via telephone tree so that they can inform their child at home. Notify parents of students who are affected by the crisis via letter.
- Provide information about the incident. Include a brochure or information sheet that describes the warning signs of emotional difficulty and actions parents can take.

#### <u>Draft Announcement to be read in Homeroom</u>

- Do not announce death or tragic event on the school intercom or in a large assembly format. The intercom is cold and impersonal.
- The large assembly format promotes group hysteria and is nearly impossible to contain or return to a state of calm. It is always preferable to make announcements in the classroom by the classroom teacher.
- Teachers should deliver the message simultaneously. Provide assistance to teachers who do not wish to deliver the message themselves.
- If necessary, arranges for some modification of the schedule so students have time to ask questions and express feelings.
- Make an initial determination of the teachers/ classrooms most heavily impacted. Are any substitute teachers needed? What rooms will additional resources be needed in? Determine if any school events will need to be rescheduled (field trips, guest speakers, or programs, testing, etc)
- Be on the "lookout" for high-risk students
- Be aware that stress can aggravate such physical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy. The school nurse is an important contact for students with these types of problems.

Meet with faculty to discuss concerns about the crisis, review facts, and dispel rumors.

- Several faculty meetings (especially an information session at the beginning and debriefing at the end of the day) may need to be held.
- Make support available to school personnel who have had personal relationships with the deceased.
- Meets with all staff members to share information and provide guidance, advice, etc., in dealing with affected students.
- Designates someone to speak personally with those staff members specifically involved with the crisis and provides support for their feelings

### Communio Ideas

Using the Four C's: Communication, Communio, Commemoration, and Continuation

- Your prayer/ prayer with each "layer" of community
- Prayer Space Creation Photo, Basket
- School Mass not funeral Mass, Intercession and possibly symbols
- Parent Prayer Service immediately following Carpool or ½ hour before school ends

## **Commemoration Ideas**

- Scholarship / Tree
- Yearbook
- Advocacy Activity –reframe one that already exists?
- Memory Book/ Cards/ Note Box

**Ex. Prayer Chain** - Each of the students in the class (and possibly in the school) gets a small slice of construction paper no bigger then the size you would use for Christmas loops for decorating a tree. Every student decorates and puts a prayer for the family on their piece of paper – then the eighth or seventh graders assemble the chain and it placed in a location where students will see it often so that they can remember the student and their family in their prayers every time they see it. **Supply Preparation**: Multiple strips of Construction paper cut longwise at 2 inch increments. Have a large quantity of staplers available to teachers and students. . .

## **Continuation Ideas**

- Removal of Desk/ Prayer Space
- Returning Items to Family If the deceased student's schoolwork is displayed, do not remove it immediately. When it is removed, return it and the student's belongings to the family.
- Parent Education and Formation
- One Year Out Return for Prayer

### P

ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DISCUSS:			
1.	What if the death happens during the day?		
2.	What changes if it is a long term illness?		
3.	Scheduled Event? When on the phone the fourth grade teacher asks "What should I do about the scheduled Field Trip for tomorrow?"		
4.	Attending the Funeral/ Closing School		
5.	Harvey's Catholic but		

## **Child vs. Adult Grief Similarities**

#### Both need:

- to express grief openly
- to have their grief acknowledged by other
- to have extra support through the grief process
- assurance it was not their fault (magical thoughts)
- assurance they are not "going crazy"

## **Child vs. Adult Grief Differences**

#### Adult's Grief:

- 1. Continual awareness and experience of loss
- 2. Has a context for loss
- 3. Able to express feelings verbally
- 4. Ability to remember the deceased: fully developed memories are complete
- 5. Have preconceived notions about how people respond and may not share their feelings
- 6. Basic needs can be met by self

#### Children's Grief:

- 1. Intermittent, sometimes seemingly absent, spurts
- 2. May have no experience of loss
- 3. May express through art
- 4. Ability to remember the deceased: limited before puberty, may need help remembering
- 5. May talk openly about death
- 6. Depends on a consistent caregiver to meet basic needs

## **Activity of Three Ages Responses**

#### **Grades K-2**

"When he comes back from being dead, he will want his eraser back" and/or "How do you breathe if you are dead?"

- They may be able to recognize the physical death as temporary or gradual, reversible and not final.
- The child may also experience 'magical thinking', in which they believe that their thoughts caused the action
- Often temporarily regress with symptoms such as bladder and bowel control, use baby talk, thumb sucking, want to sleep with a sibling or parent, and experience a change in eating and sleeping habits.
- They may also have worries of abandonment and fear that when others leave that they are not going to come back.
- Children at this age are also much more impressionable and are greatly influenced by the emotions that others are expressing, especially sadness.
- Fowler: Intuitive- Projective –Stage I fantasy filled, imitative phase, influenced by reactions, emotions and statements of primary adults

Suggestions: Honesty/ Use the words "dead" and "died"/ behavior did not cause death/\approve that their feelings go up and down / Rituals Provide Comfort

### Grades 3-5

#### "How do you breathe if you are dead?" and "Where is Joey?" Seminarian Story

- Often "morbid" fascination with death, graphic drawings. Questions are often blunt and direct. May "play dead" and "funeral"
- May view death as a spirit, ghost, or angel.
- Boys often displace their grief as being aggressive and destructive whereas girls may become very clingy and attached.
- Often have trouble putting words to the emotions that they are feeling, so being cued into their actions is most helpful.
- Deep concern for who would care for them if their caregiver died.

- Some children will complain of physical ailments, like a stomachache, rather than being able to say that they feel afraid or sad.
- Fowler Stage II Mythic/ Literal Often Excessive Narrative and storytelling, Superhero and Mythic Characters / more linear, narrative construction of coherence and meaning. Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience.

Suggestions: Be honest about details/ Be prepared for Body Questions/ Be ready to answer same question multiple times/ explain what to expect/ have children help in memorial planning/ **Rituals Provide Comfort** 

### Grades 6-8

"We killed our teacher" and "Who is going to pay her tuition?"

- Death is final, but often experience denial or "block out" thoughts
- May want even more details about the death, the status of the body, and what will happen next.
- Looking to write feelings, letter to the deceased, journal
- May dwell over their own death
- Possibly making poor decisions
- Fowler Stage II also Mythic/ Literal,

Suggestions: Avoid euphemisms/Remind them they have support/ Provide details/ Involve them in planning and implementation of commemoration ideas/ **Rituals Provide Comfort** 

### **COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

#### A. Announcement

#### **B. Debriefing/Storytelling/Sharing**

When did you find out that \_\_\_\_ died?
What were your first thoughts/ feelings?
What are your thoughts/ feelings now?
Do any of you have a story or something special that you would like to remember about \_\_\_\_?
Do you have any questions for me?
Do you think we can draw some pictures/ write some prayers for \_\_\_\_ and his family?
What are some things we might put on a card or include in a prayer?
(write on board common sayings, etc.)

Adapted Seven Stage Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Model (Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell and Everly, 1996)

### **COMMUNIO IN THE CLASSROOM**

Prayer Time in Classroom Intercession, language around faith Candle for Student – in classroom Prayer Space in Classroom– Photo, Basket

### COMMEMORATE IN THE CLASSROOM

#### A. Memory Scrapbook

Scrapbook can be placed in the back of church during a funeral. which can also be called "Card making for the family" which can be bound with ribbon as well.

**Supply Preparation**: Multiple pages of Construction or Scrap booking paper with holes pre-cut into them. A long ribbon to bind the pages upon return of the pages.

<u>Distribution:</u> Hand out the pages to faculty, staff, classmates and other young people who show interest in participating, "best friends" are not the only ones who often need to mourn the loss and are hit hard by the death of a child or young person. (for elementary school – each member of their class should probably receive a page). Remind the young people that they should bring the pages back to school and we will assemble it with ribbon and give it to the family (after reading it and making sure it is alright) Remind the young people that they can write a prayer, a poem, draw a picture or write a message.

#### **B. Memory Ouilt**

Each student and teacher has a square to decorate with a prayer or picture that represents the person who has died to them. (It looks best if the top squares of the quilt spell out the child's name and some of the children decorate squares with the letters in it. . . then each hole is tied with a ribbon to another hole to create a very large and colorful quilt of prayer reminding them that people who die are still with us in spirit through Christ

<u>C. Cards/Notes</u> - Prayer and poems, Songs written,

D. Letter Basket / Candle

### **CONTINUATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

- Return to class work. Change classes. Ring the bell.
- Students need structure, ritual and normalcy and can only grieve in small bursts.
- On to the Next Subject
- Physical Exercise/ Ability to focus
- Student's Work and Possessions/ Moving Desk/ Cubby

# **EDIT A LETTER**

#### Letterhead

Dear Parents,
On Tuesday afternoon, one of our _th grade students,, was involved in an automobile accident with his father. Mr is in stable condition in the intensive care unit of hospital died as a result of his injuries. This is a tragedy for thefamily, our school and our community.
was a very bright and student at Elementary School. Staff members went into each of the classrooms prayed with and facilitated discussion with the children about this tragedy. For many, this was their first exposure to death. Although classroom instruction will continue, I anticipate the next few days will be particularly difficult for everyone. To assist you in further dialogue with your child, we have attached strategies that you might find helpful. Please realize that these are merely suggestions that you might find helpful as a resource to your family.
We have been told that various groups in the community have offered support in many different ways to the family. At this time we are not aware of the funeral arrangements. We will inform you as soon as they are known.
Please join us in extending our sympathy and prayers for the family. Sincerely,
Ms. Principal, Principal

# **EDIT A LETTER (option two)**

### Letterhead

Dear Parents and Guardians,

,
I am deeply saddened by the news I have to share with you today. On afternoon we received word that, a grader (known for?) died
suddenly.
I was reminded recently that when elementary age children hear of an experience such as this, it is not unusual for them to want to talk about other loved ones who have died or to ask about death in general. In order to support your family as you discuss these questions, I am including the attached resources. Please know that the entire faculty and staff are here to be of support in any way you may need at
this time.
I would like to thank the entire community for the outpouring of sympathy
that I have seen during the day today. Your willingness to provide assistance is a
testament to the love and family here at School. At this time, we are not
aware of the funeral arrangements. We will inform you as soon as they are known.
Please join us in extending our sympathy and prayers for, the
family, and family and friends.
In Christ,

# **EDIT A LETTER (option three)**

### Letterhead

Dear Parents and Guardians,
I am deeply saddened by the news I have to share with you today. On Friday
night,(father and son) died tragically. Some of you may have seen or heard
about this on the news.
The family has been involved in here at the school and in their parish.
I was reminded recently that when elementary age children hear of an
experience such as this, it is not unusual for them to want to talk about other loved
ones who have died or to ask about death in general.
Although instruction will continue, I anticipate the next few days will be
particularly difficult for everyone. Often when a loss occurs, children have questions
and concerns that are challenging for adults to answer. In order to support your
family as you discuss these questions, I am including the attached resources. Please
know that we are here to be of support in any way you may need at this time.
I would like to thank the entire community for the outpouring of sympathy
that I have seen during the day today. Your willingness to provide assistance is a
testament to the love and family here at At this time, we are not aware of the
funeral arrangements. We will inform you as soon as they are known.
Please join us in extending our sympathy and prayers for all those affected by
this terrible loss.
Sincerely,

# Resource to Copy / Links to Post for Parents

Helping Your Child Deal With Death <a href="http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/death.html">http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/death.html</a>

Talking to Children About Death <a href="http://www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html">http://www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html</a>

Dealing with Death <a href="http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/death.aspx">http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/death.aspx</a>

Talking to Children About Death <a href="https://www.cc.nih.gov/ccc/patient\_education/pepubs/childeath.pdf">www.cc.nih.gov/ccc/patient\_education/pepubs/childeath.pdf</a>

Helping your school-age child cope with a death <a href="https://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/.../Helpingschoolagecopedeath.pdf">www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/.../Helpingschoolagecopedeath.pdf</a>

# SCHOOL WIDE CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT

#### **Reminder Notes for the teacher:**

- Children should be told of death in a quiet, direct manner.
- Use age appropriate language.
- ❖ Build your explanation on what the children know and move to new information
- ❖ After the announcement, children should be allowed to:
  - Ask questions
  - o Express their thoughts and feelings
  - o Produce a response in art, poetry, cards, etc.

<u>Announcement</u>				
Something has happened over the weekend that we need to talk about. Late Friday				
night,, died in a car accident was ath grader here at our school. I				
know this news may be upsetting to some of you. If you need to talk to someone				
about your concerns, please let me know.				
Possible follow-up questions				
Did any of you know? What about his child? What can you tell us about him?				
Do you think we can draw some pictures/ write some prayers for and his				

What are some things we might put on a card or include in a prayer?

#### **Closing**

I think it is important that we say a short prayer for \_\_\_\_ and his entire family. Our Father. . .

# DIRECTLY AFFECTED CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT

#### **Reminder Notes for the teachers:**

- Children should be told of death in a quiet, direct manner.
- Use age appropriate language.
- ❖ Build your explanation on what the children know and move to new information
- ❖ After the announcement, children should be allowed to:
  - o Ask questions
  - o Express their thoughts and feelings
  - o Produce a response in art, poetry, cards, etc.
  - o Collect their for the family in a memory book to be shared with the family

<u>Announcement</u>
Something has happened over the weekend that we need to talk about. Late Friday
night,, died in a car accident. I know this news may be upsetting to some of
you.
<u>Debriefing <sup>237</sup>Summary Notes</u>
When did you find out that died?
What were your first thoughts/ feelings?
What are your thoughts/ feelings now?
Do any of you have a story or something special that you would like to remember
about?
Do you have any questions for me?
Do you think we can draw some pictures/ write some prayers for and his
family?
What are some things we might put on a card or include in a prayer? (write on
board)
I think it is important that we say a short prayer for and his entire family. Our
Father

 $<sup>^{237}</sup>$  J. Mitchell and G. Everly *Adapted Seven stage Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Model* (See also Mitchell, (1983) $^{237}$ ; Mitchell and Everly (1996) $^{237}$ )

#### Summary of the Debriefing Process

#### Introduction

- \* Introduce self
- ★ Define the process, goals, and rules

# Facts Go Round – (This gets at the cognitive level and clues you in to the level of trauma. This should include...)

- \* How did you find out?
- \* What did you see? Hear? (If they were at the scene go through all five senses.)
- **★** What were your first thoughts?
- **★** What are you thinking now?
- \* Make sure you provide the factual information that you have!

#### Feelings Go Round -

- **★** What were your first feelings?
- **★** What are your feelings now?
- \* What was the worst part for you?
- \* Allow venting!

#### Life review if death occurred -

- \* Access positive memories
- \* Share "Remember when?" stories
- **★** How do you want to remember the person who died?

#### **Reactions: Transition from Emotions -**

- \* What physical, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and spiritual reactions are you having to what happened?
- **★** What distress signals or symptoms are you having?
- \* How do you know this is effecting you? (e.g., can't sleep, nauseous, can't think, can't eat, withdrawing, etc.)

#### Learning -

- \* Talk and teach about normal stress reactions...especially those specific reactions the group has expressed. (See the pages on common immediate and delayed responses to extreme stress.)
- \* Help the students normalize their thoughts about symptoms and recovery.

#### **Questions & Answer Time-**

- \* Solicit questions!
- \* Answer the answerable.
- \* Redirect or reframe the unanswerable. (e.g., someone might ask "Why did God allow this to happen?" Redirecting or reframing might be, "I can't answer that, and maybe you'll never be able to answer that, but a more pertinent question for now might be how can we make sure his/her life was meaningful?"
- \* Recommend that the individuals in the group take time on their own to **think** about the meaning of what happened, and to do something **physical** to workout their stress and tension.
- \* Prescribe no alcohol and no drugs. These will definitely get in the way and limit one's ability to work through the issues they still need to work through. Alcohol and/or drugs may ease the pain temporarily, but they will ultimately cause more pain, lengthen the time needed to deal with issues, and cause some very poor decisions while trying to cope.

#### Closure-

- \* Restate and summarize what has happened in the group.
- \* Reassure members that what they are going through is natural and normal.
- \* Let them know where to get further help. Watch for signs that certain individuals may need further attention. Don't be afraid to ask if anyone is having thoughts of suicide. Don't let them leave if they are.)
- \* Reinforce the need for self care at this time.
- \* Reinforce the need for routine in one's life, especially now.
- \* If other issues arise, you're not yet at closure

Adapted Seven Stage Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Model (Mitchell, 1983<sup>238</sup>; Mitchell and Everly, 1996<sup>239</sup>)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> J.T. Mitchell. "When disaster strikes. . . The critical incident stress debriefing process". *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, 8, (1), (1983) 36-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> J.T. Mitchell and G. Everly. *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: An Operations Manual for the Prevention of Traumatic Stress Among Services and Disaster Workers*. (Ellicott City, MD :Chevron Publishing Corporation. 1993).

# Classroom Prayer Service for Adaptation

Prayer Service to
Celebrate the Life of
\_\_\_\_\_Male\_\_\_\_



#### Opening Prayer

Lord of Life and Death,

We pray for the soul of our beloved friend, \_\_\_\_. Your breath gave him life. Your presence sustained his life, and your hand holds him now at the end of life. Thank you for the gift of life that \_\_\_\_ was to our Church, his family, and all who knew him. Through his witness and his love, he brought the Good News of Jesus to all who met him. As he lies in eternal peace in your arms, help us to mourn his death and celebrate his life, now and forever. AMEN.

#### A Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (Rom 6:3-9)

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

The Word of the Lord

R. Thanks be to God

#### Intercessions:

**Leader:** Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for his Church. Confident that God hears the voices of those who trust in the Lord, we join our prayers to his:

Reader: Our response is, " hear our prayer". In baptism \_\_\_ received the light of Christ. Scatter the darkness now and lead him over the waters of death. Lord, in your mercy: [response] Our brother was nourished at the table of the Savior. Welcome him into the halls of the heavenly banquet. Lord, in your mercy: [response] Many friends and members of our families have gone before us and await the Kingdom. Grant them an everlasting home with your Son. Lord, in your mercy: [response] Many people die by violence, war, and famine each day. Show your mercy to those who suffer so unjustly these sins against your love, and gather them to the eternal kingdom of peace. Lord, in your mercy: [response] Those who trusted in the Lord now sleep in the Lord. Give refreshment, rest, and peace to those whose faith is known to you alone. Lord, in your mercy: [response] The family and friends of \_\_\_ seek comfort and consolation. Heal their pain and dispel the darkness and doubt that come from grief. Lord, in your mercy: [response] We are assembled here in faith and confidence to pray for our brother . . Strengthen our hope so that we may live in the expectation of your Son's coming. Lord, in your mercy: [response] Leader. Lord God, giver of peace and healer of souls, hear the prayers of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the voices of your people, whose lives were purchased by the blood of the Lamb. Forgive the sins of all who sleep in Christ, and grant them a place in the kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. All: AMEN Taken from the Rite of Christian Burial Prayers of the Faithful Leader: We now pray to the Blessed Mother, advocate and comforter. Remembering that \_\_\_\_ called upon Mary to be with him "now and at the hour of his death." Hail Mary....

#### Closing Prayer

Lord,
is gone from this earthly dwelling and has left behind those who mourn his
absence. Grant that as we grieve for our brother we may hold his memory dear
and live in the hope of the eternal kingdom where you will bring us together again

Lord, our God, the death of our brother recalls our human condition and the brevity of our lives on earth. But, for those who believe in your love death is not the end, nor does it destroy the bonds that you forge in our lives.

We share the faith of your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of testing and pain as we pray for \_\_\_\_ and those who love him through Christ our Lord.

Taken from the Rites for the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Dying, 1982, Prayers After Death

Leader: Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

All: And let perpetual light shine upon him.

Leader: May he rest in peace. All: Amen.

Leader: May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,

through the mercy of God, rest in peace. All: Amen

# Catholic Elementary School Administrators' Response to the Death of a Student

# Agenda

8:30	Arrival and Hospitality
9:00	Pre-Test, Opening Prayer and Introduction
9:30	Basics of the Four C's
9:45	Timeline of Crisis from an Administrator's Perspective (with activities
11:30	4C MACRO Response - School Wide for Administrators
12:00	Child vs. Adult Grief and Developmental Differences
1:00	Lunch
1:30	4C MICRO Response - Pastoral Response in the Classroom
2:30	Evaluation

Appendix 8

# Opening Prayer

Luke 24: 13 – 35 (NAB)

The Road to Emmaus

# Four C's of Responding to the Death of a Student:

Communication

Communio

Commemoration

Continuation

## **Communication Theory**

#### THEOLOGICAL BASIS:

Response begins with Communication

"What are you discussing as you walk along?"/ "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene"

#### RELEVENT AT SCHOOL:

Catholic school administrators will collect accurate information surrounding the death, disseminate that information, and do so in a way that proclaims not only the information regarding the moment of death, but the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church in regards to death.

## Communio Theory

#### THEOLOGICAL BASIS:

communio, is named by the disciples in hindsight.

"Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" The disciples became aware of the presence of the divine in the relational experience that had occurred.

#### RELEVENT AT SCHOOL:

The death of a student evokes a foundational need for *communio*. Having been informed of the loss, the community gathers to acknowledge the significance of the moment as well as re-defining who they are as they reach out to God in prayer for consolation.

# **Commemoration Theory**

#### THEOLOGICAL BASIS:

**commemoration,** reflects the importance of ritual following a loss. "And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them." (Luke 24:28-30)

#### RELEVENT AT SCHOOL:

At crisis moments, creative and expressive outlets which actively ritualize are critical. Children may or may not be developmentally capable of articulating their emotions verbally

# **Continuation Theory**

#### THEOLOGICAL BASIS:

In the final stage, **Continue**, the disciples who have experienced Christ return to their daily lives and relationships with new perspective, having begun the process of integrate the experience of loss into their lives. "With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight." So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" (Luke 24:31-35)

#### RELEVENT AT SCHOOL:

While continuing to educate and form, the school community acknowledges that in the experience of in the death of a student, the community has changed.

# PRACTICALITY OF TODAY:

A Presentation of Recommendations Knowing your site

# Timeline Activity

- 6:30 PM Sunday The principal receives a phone call on their cell from the Home and School President who says that Harvey Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, died in a car accident last night. You are aware that Harvey's parents are parishioners and he has a little sister, Julia, who is three years old. The Home and School President tells you that the accident happened on a wet road and that the rest of the family was treated and released. Harvey has two cousins in 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. The H & S President offers assistance in any way they can.
- · What goes through your mind?

# Timeline Activity

- · Are you in a safe place?
- · Personal Prayer
- · Confirm Facts / Pastor Tree Story
- Family of Child Speak to the Family
- · Communicating with the community

## Communicate

Administrative Team (plan for next day/ known facts)

Faculty/ Staff (remember: web/ resource teachers)

Parents (Phone Tree/ Ideally everyone/ Voicemail- situation call back)

Student (always preferable parent's communicate)

Appendix 8

# Communicate a simple message

What would a brief statement include?

I am calling with extremely sad news. Last night, Harvey Smith, a second grader at our school died as a result of a car accident. I ask that you tell your child tonight. Tomorrow, we will be praying together and talking about this as a community. We are here if you need us. . .

# THREE MEETINGS IN THE MORNING

1. ADMINISTRATION MEETING

Don't "tie up" Admin/ Parent Help - Where? / Confidential Info

- 2. FACULTY/ STAFF MEETING
  - Brief Prayer and Information as is known now (changes/ media interest)
  - Give out Announcement. Prayer, Copy of Letter, Craft Supplies
  - · Plan of action for morning/ Schedule Changes
- 3. CLASSROOM PROCESS

NEVER, EVER, MAKE AN ANNOUCEMENT OR FOCUS PRAYER OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER

# THREE WRITTEN TOOLS TO DRAFT (DESKTOP)

- A. The Letter to be Sent Home (15, 16, 17)
- B. Classroom Announcement for the next day (19,20)
- C. Adjust Prayer (23 25)

## Resource Assessment

What resources do you have at your disposal?

Pastor/ Clergy

Parish Staff

Psychologists/ Counselors (pros and cons)

Police and Fire Fighters (pros and cons)

Diocesan resources (ex. Cross/ Team/ Communications)

Family who brings food for lunch/ faculty breakfast

# Vulnerability Assessment

Who are the vulnerable people/ classes?

Faculty/ Staff who have had children who have died

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher

Possibly (K and 1st – who may have taught Harvey - often K)

4th and 7th - especially not knowing if kids are in school

Classes with previous loss

Faculty/ Students with Recent loss

Faculty/ Students with Mental Illness

Faculty/ Students with predilection for drama (7th grade)

## Communio for the school

Your prayer/ prayer with each layer of community

Intercession, language around faith

Prayer Space Creation - Photo, Basket

School Mass

Parent Prayer Service - immediately following Carpool or ½ hour before school ends

# Commemoration for the School

Prayer Chain

Memory Book/ Cards/ Note Box

Scholarship / Tree

Yearbook

Advocacy Activity -reframe one that already exists?

### Continuation for the School

Removal of Desk/ Prayer Space

Returning Items to Family

Parent Education and Formation

One Year Out - Return for Prayer

# What if the death happens during the day

In loco parentis. . .

Admin/ Faculty told carefully and quietly

Decision as to school wide effect

Too Close to the end of the day to process? Tell faculty in the afternoon, parent phone call, and process the next morning

# What if this is a long term illness?

Community has prayed/ Worn Bracelets . . .

"Did our prayer not work?"

Same "drill"

### Scheduled Event?

When on the phone the fourth grade teacher asks "What should I do about the scheduled Field Trip for tomorrow?"

Remember, you have a cousin.

Community needs to be together

Aunt and Uncle sending them in?

Can you process and still go?

Parents want to see their child is safe and in the right place, lingering in the hall

Tell parents of fourth grade your decision.

## Attending the Funeral/ Closing School

Ideas? Thoughts?

In loco parentis - Parents take/ their right to

Faculty Grief vs. Chaperone

Not all students knew

Parents taking off work

Sets precedent

Parking and Parking Lot? (practicality)

# Harvey's Catholic but. . .

What if he was Christian, but not Catholic?

We still are. . .intercession at Mass

Have your Pastor/ You communicate with his pastor to offer support (and food for services)

Be careful of prayer words about "at the table of the Eucharist. . ."

What if he was not Christian?

Light candle, have prayer, careful of images of cross, sending home cards that are insensitive to family's beliefs

Question and Answer

# Similarities between Child and Adult Grief

#### Both need:

to express grief openly

to have their grief acknowledged by others

to have extra support through the grief process

assurance it was not their fault (magical thoughts)

assurance they are not "going crazy"

# Child vs. Adult Grief Differences

## Adult's Grief:

- Continual awareness and experience of loss
- 2. Has a context for loss
- 3. Able to express feelings verbally
- 4. Ability to remember the deceased: fully developed memories are complete
- Have preconceived notions about how people respond and may not share their feelings
- 6. Basic needs can be met by self

#### Children's Grief:

- Intermittent, sometimes seemingly absent, spurts
- 2. May have no experience of loss
- 3. May express through art
- 4. Ability to remember the deceased: limited before puberty, may need help remembering
- 5. May talk openly about death
- 6. Depends on a consistent caregiver to meet basic needs

# Developmental Responses

Factors other than age influence how a child grieves: intelligence, previous experience with death, family environment, religion, and culture

Questions they might ask? Behavior you might see?

$$K-2$$

$$3 - 5$$

## K-2

"When he comes back from being dead, he will want his eraser back"

- They may be able to recognize the physical death as temporary or gradual, reversible and not final.
- The child may also experience 'magical thinking', in which they believe that their thoughts caused the action
- Often temporarily regress with symptoms such as bladder and bowel control, use baby talk, thumb sucking, want to sleep with a sibling or parent, and experience a change in eating and sleeping habits.
- They may also have worries of abandonment and fear that when others leave that they are not going to come back.
- Children at this age are also much more impressionable and are greatly influenced by the emotions that others are expressing, especially sadness.
- Fowler: Intuitive- Projective –Stage I fantasy filled, imitative phase, influenced by reactions, emotions and statements of primary adults

Suggestions: Honesty/ Use the words "dead" and "died"/ behavior did not cause death/\approve that their feelings go up and down / Rituals Provide Comfort

## 3 - 5

## "How do you breathe if you are dead?" and "Where is Joey?" Seminarian Story

- Often "morbid" fascination with death, graphic drawings. Questions are often blunt and direct. May "play dead" and "funeral"
- · May view death as a spirit, ghost, or angel.
- Boys often displace their grief as being aggressive and destructive whereas girls may become
  very clingy and attached.
- Often have trouble putting words to the emotions that they are feeling, so being cued into their
  actions is most helpful.
- · Deep concern for who would care for them if their caregiver died.
- Some children will complain of physical ailments, like a stomachache, rather than being able to say that they feel afraid or sad.
- Fowler Stage I Mythic/ Literal Often Excessive Narrative and storytelling, Superhero and Mythic Characters / more linear, narrative construction of coherence and meaning. Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience.

Suggestions: Be honest about details/ Be prepared for Body Questions/ Be ready to answer same question multiple times/ explain what to expect/ have children help in memorial planning/ Rituals Provide Comfort

## 6 - 8

## "We killed our teacher" and "Who is going to pay her tuition?"

- · Death is final, but often experience denial or "block out" thoughts
- May want even more details about the death, the status of the body, and what will happen next.
- · Looking to write feelings, letter to the deceased, journal
- May dwell over their own death
- · Possibly making poor decisions
- Fowler Stage II also Mythic/ Literal,

Suggestions: Avoid euphemisms/Remind them they have support/ Provide details/ Involve them in planning and implementation of commemoration ideas/ Rituals Provide Comfort

# MICRO - In the classroom/ class that has experienced loss

# Communication Communio Commemoration Continuation

# MICRO Response

In the classroom

Communication - Announcement and Debriefing Process

Communio - Prayer

Commemorate – Activities

Continue - Moving forward

# Communication in the classroom

#### Announcement

Debriefing/Storytelling/Sharing

When did you find out that \_\_\_\_ died?

What were your first thoughts/ feelings?

What are your thoughts/ feelings now?

Do any of you have a story or something special that you would like to remember about

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you think we can draw some pictures/ write some prayers for \_\_\_\_\_ and his family?

What are some things we might put on a card or include in a prayer? (write on board common sayings, etc.)

Adapted Seven Stage Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Model (Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell and Everly, 1996)

## Communio in the classroom

Prayer Time in Classroom

Intercession, language around faith

Candle for Student - in classroom

Prayer Space - Photo, Basket

# Commemoration in the Classroom

Memory Scrapbook

Memory Quilt

Letter Basket

Candle

Cards/ Notes - Prayer and poems, Songs written,

What do you pass forward to the family? Activity

## Continuation in the Classroom

On to the Next Subject

Physical Exercise

Ability to focus

Student's Work and Possessions

Moving Desk/ Cubby

# MODELING SELF - CARE

Your Prayer Life

Take off your jacket

Your personal support team

You don't have to make all announcements/ Draft all letters

Healthy decisions (ex. to stay at the office)

Know your own bells

Expect people to push/ respond "badly" – you can't control their reaction only your response. . .



# Question and Answer

# Closing Prayer

God of all healing and compassion,

Who has called us to lead our school communities through both joy and grief. Guide us in our pastoral responses that they might reflect your love to all those we encounter. May we be strong faith-filled companions to our entire school community.

We ask this in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Appendix 8

# Post Evaluation and Thank You

# Workshop Self – Assessment

1. Have you ever attend	led the Catholic fu	neral of a child?	
	Yes	No	
2. Have you ever exper	ienced the loss of	your own child?	
	Yes	No	
3. Have you ever exper	ienced the death o	f a child you were close to?	
	Yes	No	
4. Have you ever exper	ienced the death o	f a child in a school setting?	
	Yes	No	
5. In your role as an ad	ministrator, have	you ever had a student in you	ır school die?
	Yes	No	
6a. Have you ever been	the crisis coordin	ator of a school wide crisis?	
	Yes	No	
<ol> <li>Quite 1</li> <li>Mildly</li> <li>Mostly</li> </ol>	omfortable were y Uncomfortable Uncomfortable Comfortable omfortable	ou in that role? (please rate	)
7a. Have you ever been	the crisis coordin	ator a situation where a chile	d has died?
	Yes	No	
<ol> <li>Quite</li> <li>Mildly</li> <li>Mostly</li> </ol>	omfortable were y Uncomfortable Uncomfortable Comfortable omfortable	ou in that role? (please rate)	)

## Satisfaction with In-Service Please circle the answer that is most appropriate DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. How would you rate the quality of the in-service you have received?
  - 4. Excellent
  - 3. Good
  - 2. Fair
  - 1. Poor
- 2. Did you get the kind of in-service you wanted?
  - 1. No, definitely not
  - 2. No, not really
  - 3. Yes, generally
  - 4. Yes, definitely
- 3. To what extent has our in-service met your overall needs?
  - 4. Almost all of my needs have been met
  - 3. Most of my needs have been met
  - 2. Only a few of my needs have been met
  - 1. None of my needs have been met
- 4. If a colleague or friend were in need of similar content, would you recommend our in-service to him or her?
  - 1. No, definitely not
  - 2. No, I don't think so
  - 3. Yes, I think so
  - 4. Yes, definitely
- 5. How satisfied are you with the amount of content you received?
  - 1. Quite dissatisfied
  - 2. Indifferently or mildly satisfied
  - 3. Mostly satisfied
  - 4. Very satisfied

- 6. Has the content you received prepared you to deal more effectively with the death of a student?
  - 4. Yes, it helped a great deal
  - 3. Yes, it helped somewhat
  - 2. No, it really didn't help
  - 1. No, it seemed to make things worse
- 7. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the in-service you have received?
  - 4. Very satisfied
  - 3. Mostly satisfied
  - 2. Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied
  - 1. Quite dissatisfied
- 8. If you were to seek an in-service again, would you come back to one provided by the same presenter?
  - 1. Definitely not
  - 2. No, I don't think so
  - 3. Yes, I think so
  - 4. Yes, definitely

The thing I liked best about this in-service was. . .

If I could change one thing about this in-service, it would be...

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