INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SCONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to ...

1. explain different models of becoming and passing away.
2. understand that actions according to cause and effect influence rebirth.
3. reflect on the Buddhist view of the dying process, death and rebirth.
4. learn about accompanying steps in the dying process.

INTRODUCTION

Material 1 offers a quiet introduction to the topic of the lesson with the presentation of a simple coffin with flowers. The students are asked to think about death and to ask themselves if and how it somehow continues. A wide variety of ideas and beliefs may be expressed. Fear of death may also be discussed.

EXERCISE 1

Material 2 shows three possible models of life and where it comes from and where it goes. The texts next to the simple sketches explain these models. Students work out an understanding in plenary by mentally acting out these possibilities. The third model leads to the subject of the lesson, the Buddhist understanding of death and birth.

NOTES

According to Buddhist conception, birth and death are not the beginning and end of our being, but transitions. Death is like a change of clothes. The body is transient and dissolves, the "mind" remains. Its essence is omniscient, fearless space and its expression is constant, supreme joy. In enlightenment, the mind is like the sun shining by itself. The experience of this space nature of mind is possible in meditation and in the dying process. The unenlightened mind connects from life to life with a new body and with an ego conception. The Buddhist methods aim at dissolving these and realizing the true nature of the mind.

EXERCISE 2

Step 1:
Worksheet 1 offers a thought experiment. The students playfully get involved in the topic of reincarnation.

Working in groups, the students write down their ideas and gain an understanding of the connection with cause and effect. They formulate a core statement in their own words. They begin to comprehend what Buddha taught: that all actions with body, speech, and mind have effects and influence future rebirths beyond one lifetime.

If needed, open questions and findings are reconciled in plenary. There is no need to decide whether they believe in rebirth or think it is possible. Accordingly to **Answers to WS 1** only offer suggestions.

Step 2:
The text on **Worksheet 2** now brings in detail basic Buddhist information about the indestructible space nature of the mind, the stages of the dying process, and the influencing factors in rebirth.

Students read the text and answer the questions in partner work to ensure their understanding. Afterwards, the answers are presented and compared in plenary. **Answers to WS 2** offer possible solutions to the questions.

DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE

To conclude the topic, the question is asked: What helps in the dying process? What can those present do for the dying person?

Material 3 contains recommendations for relatives and friends. The students first read these silently and let them sink in. The concluding questions provide impulses for the approach that dying can take place without fear if all those involved contribute to a calm atmosphere. The students exchange ideas freely in the plenary.