



Pat Bordman

Teaching about life and death

A plane taking a group of vacationers to Mexico for a holiday, crashed precisely on the border dividing the United States and Mexico.

A major dilemma arose over where the survivors should be buried. The answer is that survivors are not buried — they are still living.

An adult may have trouble with this riddle because of inattention to wording. But, it is even easier for a child to be confused by this problem. A child has to contend not only with semantics, but also with a concept of death that is uncertain, limited, and full of misconceptions.

The very young child sees death as a form of separation and may even understand it as a state of being less alive. But he does not recognize that life is completely gone, or that death is irreversible. Words such as "survivor" and "buried" have little concrete meaning at this stage.

BY THE TIME a child reaches school age, he comes to understand death is real and final. However, he still may not grasp the idea that all living things die.

It is not until about age 9 (sometimes earlier or later) that a child will recognize death as inevitable and universal. At this point, the child may be the one trying to trick the adult with the riddle.

A project suggested by Mrs. Von Soosten's third grade class at Forest Elementary School in Farmington Hills is a good take-off point for discovering how far your child has progressed in understanding the concepts of death and dying.

INEVITABLY, play with an airplane involves a crash. Use the opportunity as a discussion starter.

The airplane is made by taking a clothespin with spring action, a popsicle stick, a pipecleaner, and two buttons. Thread the pipecleaner through the coiled spring of the clothespin. Push one button onto each end of the pipecleaner until it is touching the clothespin. Twist the pipecleaner to lock the button in place. The pipecleaner may have to be trimmed slightly.

Now, place the popsicle stick into the clip portion of the clothespin. The popsicle stick is the wing portion of a small airplane, the clothespin is the body, the buttons are the wheels.

This aircraft may be painted if desired, or stickers added to the wings, but it is dandy in its natural colors.

Patricia Bordman, a free-lance writer and photographer, has a master's degree in early childhood education. She has taught elementary school and conducted workshops and lectures. Write her c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

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An airplane homemade with clothespin, popsicle stick and buttons can draw forth discussion between child and parents on the role death has in life.

volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Further information about these and other volunteer needs at more than 200 agencies may be obtained by calling the bureau at 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the bureau.

TYPIST — The 48th District Court, Probation Department has a need for a typist one day a week at 151 Martin Place, Birmingham. The day can be flexible and they would like a one-year commitment.

PROBATION WORKERS — The 48th District Court, Probation Department in Birmingham, has a need for probation workers. The requirements are maturity, preferably having raised a family, non-judgmental, with people-oriented interests. The commitment requirement is 6-9 p.m. Tuesday or Wednesday for one year.

FRIENDS — Be a kid's best friend. Help the Wing Lake School in Bloomfield Hills, by assisting classroom personnel in daily routine, self-care training sessions, and other related duties. Volunteers must have patience and love kids. A commitment of one day a week for two or three hours during the school year is asked of volunteers. Training is provided.

FRIENDLY VISITOR — The City of Southfield Human Resources Department, is in need of persons to visit with a senior citizen on a regular basis when convenient. Days are flexible, approximately two hours per week for a six-month period. Training is provided.

CUT DOWN MICHIGAN'S UNEMPLOYMENT. CUT OUT THIS COUPON.

DEAR SENATOR RIEGLE:

We think you should propose legislation which would allow a \$500 federal tax credit for the purchase of a 1981 American-built automobile.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SEND TO: SENATOR DON RIEGLE
1411 Dirksen Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN:

We think you should propose legislation which would allow a \$500 federal tax credit for the purchase of a 1981 American-built automobile.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SEND TO: SENATOR CARL LEVIN
3327 Dirksen Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Michigan's unemployment rate is the highest in the country. At Michigan National Corporation Banks, we're trying to do something about it. We believe you should receive a \$500 federal tax credit for the purchase of a 1981 American-built automobile. Let's all help reduce unemployment and get Michigan's economy rolling again. Fill out the coupon and send it to your senator.

To start things rolling, we've lowered our prime interest rate. Again.

While other banks in this area are keeping their prime rate high, at Michigan National we're lowering ours. In fact, at the time of this writing, we have the lowest prime rate in the country. If you like our attitude, make your voice heard. Move your checking and savings accounts to Michigan National.

GET MICHIGAN'S ECONOMY ROLLING AGAIN.



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