



Living and Dying 1: What is Life?



Opening Affirmations

Before we begin our Soul Talk, we want to remind you that we are coming together to learn from one another. This means that this is a safe place to share our ideas and questions. Please take the hand of the person to the right and left side of you and share one of two possible affirmations.

“I am happy to share my ideas with you.”

[or]

“I respect and honor you and your beliefs.”

The Heart of the Soul Discussion: “What is Life?”

1. What do you think the word *alive* means?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Some people think you need a beating heart to be considered alive
- Many people believe that if something can grow or breathe, it can be considered alive
- Some people believe that life is in everything and everyone
- Many people believe that the things that give us life are alive, like the food we eat, the air we breathe, the land we stand on and the water we drink
- A lot of people consider our feelings to be alive. For example, the ability to feel love, happiness, sadness and peacefulness

2. What are some different things that are alive?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- People (*Feel free to ask the children to name specific people in their lives*)
- Nature (*This could be plants, trees, food, fire, water, land, air*)
- Emotions (*Happiness, pain, sadness, joy, laughter, love, excitement, anger*)
- God
- Memories and experiences
- Universe (*Planets, sun, moon, stars*)
- Animals
- Everything (*This includes literally everything*)

3. What are things that a living human has to do to stay alive?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Eat
- Drink
- Use the bathroom
- Sleep
- Breathe
- Finds a place to live
- Takes care of their health

4. Is there a difference between being alive and living a full life?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Some people think that being alive and living a full life are the same thing
- Many people believe that a full life is filled with all of the things that help them to feel complete, love, happiness, peace, god, family, friends (to name a few)
- A lot of people think a full life relates to all of the experiences they have. Whether those experiences are happy or sad, they all provide growth and add to the quality of life you can live

Activity - Option 1: Book of Life

Materials Needed:

Paper (cut each 8 x 11 piece of paper into four $\frac{1}{4}$ sheets)

Markers or crayons

Stapler or hole punch and string

Directions:

- Have the children express what life looks to them on each sheet of paper, they could use both the front and the back if they would like. Perhaps their vision of life has pictures of animals, their family, the solar system, nature...there are no wrong answers to this.
- Once they have completed their drawings, bind the pictures with either a stapler, or a hole punch and string to tie the binding of the book.

[Note: There may not be time to complete this full project during the soul talk. Please encourage the children to take their books home and add to them. If this is the case, perhaps you send the hole-punched pages and the string home to bind together once complete.]

[Feel free to play one of our recommended songs while the kids work on their projects.]

Follow Up Discussion:

[After everyone has completed all or some of their project, sit down together on the floor and talk about what life means to each of them. As you all take the time to share what makes everyone feel alive, using the pictures the children drew as a guide, take a moment to talk about why or how those things are alive for each person. For example, if someone has a memory as an example of life, discuss how that person felt during that memory and how that memory still makes them feel today.]

Story Time – Activity Option 2

[In order to complete this activity, your group will need a copy of one of the suggested books. Our library has a collection of books dedicated to each Soul Talk which is updated constantly! You can visit our library at the link below. Search for the Living and Dying section.] https://spiritualplaydate.com/spiritual_playdate_library

Since our Soul Talk was about *What is Life?*, we are going to read a book out loud. As you listen, start to think about how this story relates to what we just spoke about.

Calming Exercise - Meditation:

[Invite the group to find a relaxing position, take a mat or towel, if you are working on a hard floor. They may sit on the floor or lie down to be comfortable. Speak slightly slower in a soft, soothing tone throughout, pausing briefly between sentences. You may play soft, instrumental music in the background while reading the meditation script]

Welcome to our Meditation Time: The time where we relax and connect to the spirit in and around us. I invite you to lie down on a mat or towel and make yourself comfortable. Quietly do that now. *[Wait until the group is settled, then read the meditation script]*
[Optional: Begin music.]

I am going to guide you through our meditation to help you relax. Let's close our eyes, and let's start by putting our hands on our bellies, and taking a deep, long breath in. Feel your belly rise as you breathe in – to the count of 1, 2, 3. Then feel your belly fall, as you slowly breathe out – to the count of 1, 2, 3. Now breathe in – 1, 2, 3. And slowly breathe out like a tire losing air – 1, 2, 3. Continue to breathe in and out slowly and steadily. Relax your body into the floor beneath you. Keep breathing.

You are alive. You breathe in the air, your heart beats, and you are always growing and changing. *[Pause.]* So many things are alive: People, animals, insects, plants and trees, the oceans, the universe we live in. Take a moment to think about the people and things you know that are alive. *[Long Pause.]* How do we know we're alive? We need to breathe, eat and drink, and sleep. Life is a wonderful gift. We get to do so many things – make friends, think and learn, play, work, and show how we feel. What are some things you did last week? *[Pause.]* We make the most of being alive by being loving, happy, active, peaceful, generous, and kind. We feel fully alive when we take care of our bodies and do our best each day. What will you do to feel really alive this week? Picture it in your mind now. *[Long Pause.]* Whatever you do, remember to be grateful each day for this amazing thing called Life. Now let's take one more deep breath, and slowly let it out. Now slowly open your eyes and slowly roll to the side and sit up to end our time of meditation.

[Optional: Turn off music] [Optional: Say: Please return your cushion to its starting place]

Closing - Choose One:

Closing Affirmation - Option 1:

Turn to the person to your right, look them in the eye and say "I am happy I could share this time with you and hear about your beliefs."

Closing Prayer - Option 2:

The light of god surrounds us

The love of god enfolds us

The power of god protects us

The presence of god watches over us

Wherever we are, god is and all is well!