

Potential Integration:
ELA; Science

Health
3.MEH.2.1 Identify common sources for feelings of grief or loss.
3.MEH.2.2 Summarize how to seek resources for assistance with feelings of grief or loss.

Materials:

Appendix 1: Life Cycle of a Butterfly

Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying. Joyce C. Mills, Ph.D.

Appendix 2: Leaf Template

Focus:

Show students the illustration in Appendix 1 (Life Cycle of a Butterfly). Ask them to tell you what it is. How long will it live? Answer: 6-8 weeks for its life cycle; 2 – 6 weeks as an adult.

What is the next stage for the butterfly? Answer: it will die

Why does it die? So more eggs can hatch and new butterflies can grow.

Statement of Objectives:

Today we are going to talk about what causes us to feel grief or loss and how we can get helped for those feelings. After I read the book, Gentle Willow, we will discuss Amanda's experiences and she coped. At the end of class, we will create a letter on how we can deal with loss.

Teacher Input:

Read the children's book, Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying

[Summary: Gentle Willow is a book for children to learn about death and dying. Amanda the squirrel is upset that she is going to lose her friend Gentle Willow, but the Tree Wizards give advice that help both her and Gentle Willow accept the change that comes with death. This comforting story about a tender-spirited tree and her friends in the forest will help children with the death of friends, family members, or even pets. A healing metaphor, it addresses our feelings of sadness, love, disbelief, and anger, and provides children with a transformational way of viewing death and dying. This book also includes additional guidance to parents by children's author and psychologist Jane Annunziata, Psy.D.]

Ask students the following:

What is the story about?

What is the main idea of this story?

Who are the characters in the story?

What happened to the characters?

What are some losses you have experienced that make you sad?

When Amanda was climbing Gentle Willow's trunk, why did Amanda think that something was wrong with Gentle Willow? How did she identify that this was an unhealthy situation?

Why did Amanda go get the tree wizards?

How did Amanda react when the tree wizards told Amanda that they couldn't fix Gentle Willow?

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ELA; Science

What special medicine did the tree wizards tell Amanda that Gentle Willow needed? What kinds of special gifts did Gentle Willow give Amanda? What kind of "gifts" or memories have you received from special people in your life?

Tell students that we will experience loss in our lives and that it is important to know where we can go for support.

Ask students the following:

Who can you go to in your school to help you if you are feeling sad when someone you love is sick or dying?

Who can you go to in your family or in your community if you are feeling sad when someone you love is sick or dying?

In the story, memories helped both Amanda and Gentle Willow feel better when they were sad. What special memories do you have that can help you feel better when you are sad?

Assessment:

Provide each student with a leaf from the template (Appendix 2). Tell students to write a story of a memory that they could have shared with Gentle Willow if she had been a tree in their backyard. Include some activities that you would have shared, why you cared about Gentle Willow and what memories you would have of her. Also tell Gentle Willow who you can go to for help when you experience grief or loss.

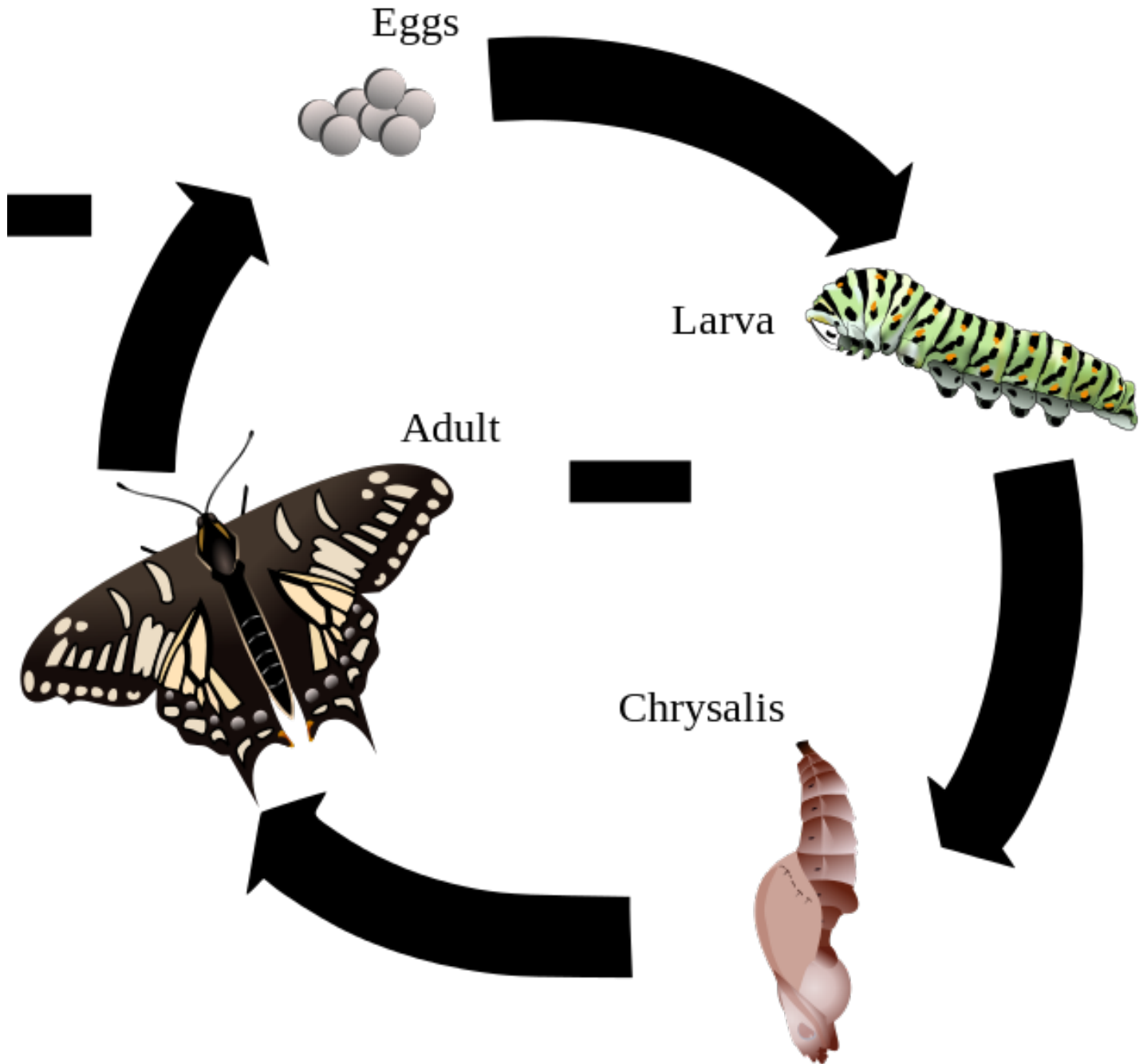
The letters can then be attached to colorful leaf cutouts to make a 'caring tree'.

Closure:

The story of Gentle Willow and Amanda's friendship is one we can all relate with. Your letters to Gentle Willow indicate that you understand that loss will happen but that there are healthy ways to grieve and cope.

Life Cycle of a Butterfly

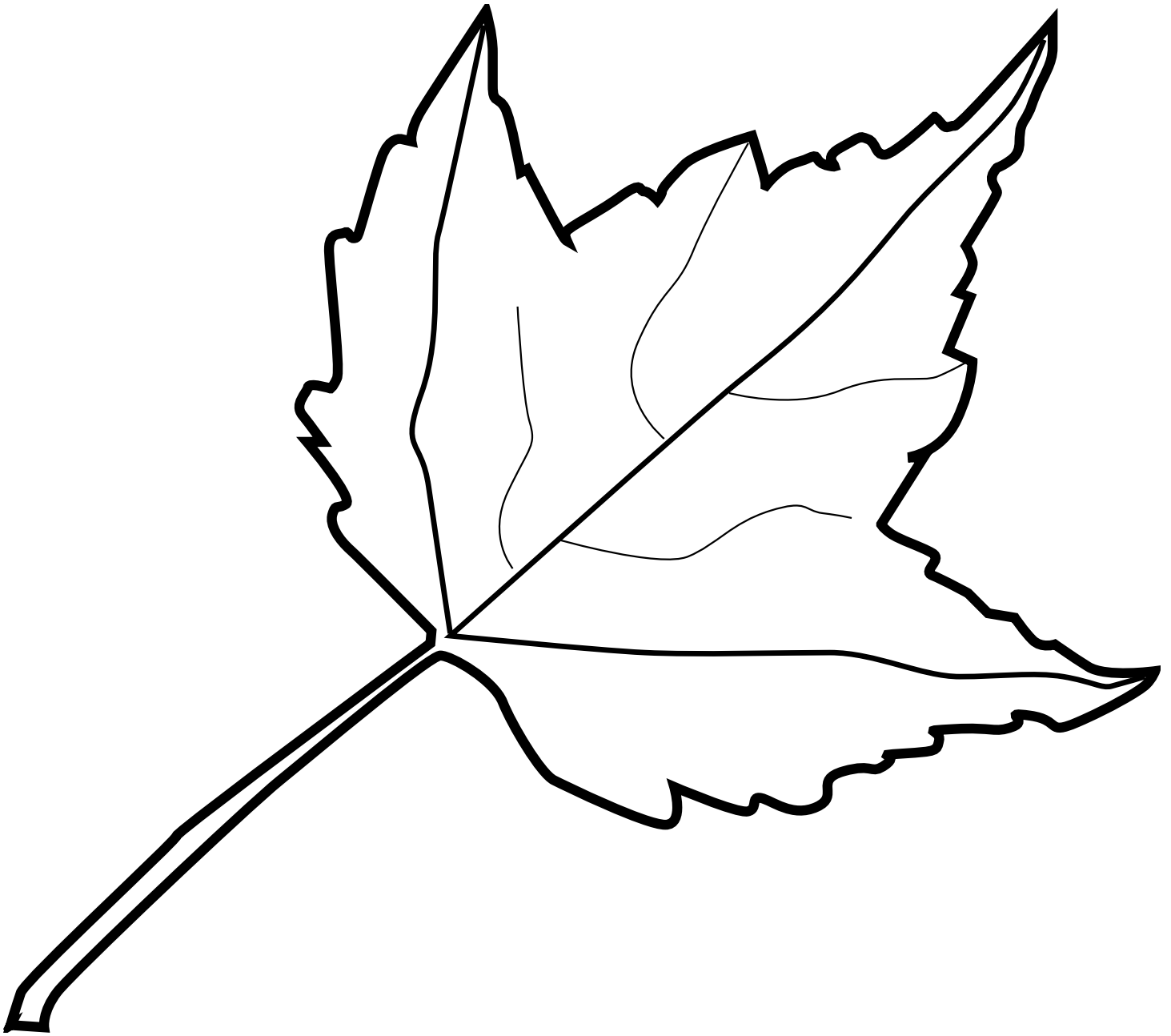
Anise Swallowtail Life Cycle



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anise_Swallowtail_Life_Cycle.svg

Potential Integration:
ELA; Science

Leaf Template



<https://freesvg.org/fall12>