Rites of Passage

Death & Grieving

Monday, April 12, 2010
Death as a Rite of Passage

- In many ways Death is the most significant Rite of Passage.
- Humans have always faced it and never escaped it.
- Happens to everyone, it is inevitable.
- Religion & Culture affect how we view Death.
Every society has complex explanations surrounding Death

- What causes it
- What happens to the body and spirit of the deceased
- What traditions are observed to ensure that he reaches the next life properly.
Ancient Egypt

- Mummification
- Canopic Jars
- The Book of the Dead
The Irish Wake

- Stop the Clocks and Open a Window
- Watch over the Body
- Keening
Navy Burial at Sea

- Family is NOT aboard the ship
- Burial Flag is returned to the family
New Orleans Jazz Funeral

- Procession followed by Band
- “Cutting the body loose”
- The Second Line dancers join in waving handkerchiefs
Adowa
The Funeral Dance of Ghana

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The Afterlife

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
A bridge or journey
Such as the Greek belief in the River Styx
Funeral Customs adapted from Ancient Times:
Funeral Customs

- Feasting and Gatherings: food offerings
- The Wake: watching over the body
- Lighting of Candles: protecting the living from spirits
- Flowers: offerings to please the deceased’s spirit
- Music: chants to placate the spirits
- Clothing: used to disguise one’s identity from the spirits
- Rifle Volley: tribal spears thrown to ward off hovering spirits
- Ringing Bells: ward off spirits
Grieving
Kubler-Ross Model of Grief

- Acceptance
- Denial
- Depression
- Anger
- Bargaining

Five Step Grieving Process
The Grief Cycle also applies to the Bereaved.

This cycle describes the stages of bereavement a person goes through upon the death of a family member or close friend.
The Grief Cycle

- Recovery
- Shock
- Denial
- Mourning
- Anger