

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text: **Caterpillar** by Christina Rossetti

Ideas, Values: Change, Nature, Life & Death, Transformation

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

Brainstorm together and make a list of things in nature that change.

Then discuss what it’s like to witness a change in nature like the temperature, the seasons, or the blossoming and wilting of a flower.

1st Read:

Read aloud the text while family and/or friends listen.

Vocabulary:

Discuss the unfamiliar words in the story. Explain what they mean, figure them out from the sentence, or look them up in a dictionary.

2nd Read:

If time permits watch this brief clip **Poems from the Field: Caterpillar**. It features mother and daughter talking about communication, gardening, and poetry.

https://youtu.be/CbVkkxvIwGo

The poem is read 2.21 seconds in and can be access directly here: <https://youtu.be/CbVkkxvIwGo?t=141>

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Share why you are having the discussion.

(Sample script from our classroom Paideia Seminars: Modify to fit your household.)

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.”*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”*

* Describe what you want to accomplish.
* Set a Family Goal.
* To balance the talk time
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
  + What is one thing you like about change? What is one thing you fear about change? (Don’t share your why until after everyone has had a chance to answer.) Parents, have younger kids share first if they feel comfortable and advance by age.
  + Why did you pick the answer that you did? (Anyone can share)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
  + What might the author be trying to teach us using a caterpillar?
  + What in nature, besides caterpillars, transform through life and death?

(Why do you think this?)

* + Toads and birds are known to eat caterpillars, why does the author mention these two predators in lines 7-8? How could a toad or bird drastically change this poem?
  + What is the difference between when the caterpillar “dies” and when the butterfly dies?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
  + What are ways we process changes or life & death in nature? Do we process the life and death of other things differently? (Why?)

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Ask each person what they liked most about the discussion.”*

* Have the family do a quick check of the discussion goal.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing:

Review and discuss key ideas that you heard, said and thought during the family seminar.

* Brainstorm:

If you were the last person to see the caterpillar before it became a butterfly what might you say in a conversation?

* Writing Prompt:

Giving our parents advice: Write a letter to a parent giving them advice on how to say good bye to a friend or family member; come to peace with a loss; and how best to remember someone or something after they are gone.

Think about what you shared with your family regarding what you would say to the caterpillar before it became a butterfly; how is the conversation alike or different from the advice you would share with your parent?

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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\*Text is attached if open sourced.

Caterpillar

by Christina Rossetti

Brown and furry

Caterpillar in a hurry,

Take your walk

To the shady leaf, or stalk,

Or what not,

Which may be the chosen spot.

No toad spy you,

Hovering bird of prey pass by you;

Spin and die,

To live again a butterfly.