

Grave Considerations

The topic Making our lives count

The object Some kind of grave marker. Check the yellow pages (you'll be more likely to find listings under *memorials* than *tombstones*). Find a business that displays grave markers or memorial markers, and arrange to borrow one—or make a simple wooden or clay marker (or get a handyman from the Sunday school class of retirees to make one). If you're making your own, enscribe on it one of the epitaphs on this page.

FYI, you can find *lots* more epitaphs in places like these:

- *Epitaphs*, Nigel Rees (Carroll & Graf, 1994)
- *The Sunny Side of Genealogy*, compiled by Fonda D. Baselt
- On the Web at www.ancestry.com

The lesson With the grave marker center stage, read some of the gag epitaphs. Then for the segue: sooner or later, remind your students, all of you will die (unless you're a pretribulationist, in

B. ARNOLD
COLD IS MY BED, BUT
OH, I LOVE IT.
FOR COLDER ARE MY
FRIENDS ABOVE IT.

PEGLEG PETE, THE
RIVER PIRATE,
WALKED THE PLANK
AND SANK.

REST IN PEACE
MOONSHINE LENNY
SEEMS HE TOOK ONE
DRINK TOO MANY.

BOBBY LEE SAID HIS CAR
WOULDN'T SKID
THIS TOMBSTONE SHOWS
THAT IT COULD AND DID.

A NEAR-SIGHTED
MINER IN SHAFT 39
LIT HIS CIGAR AND
BLEW UP THE MINE.

FLORA FINCH
SWEEP AWAY
BY APRIL SHOWERS,
HERE SHE LIES
BENEATH THE FLOWERS.

IT WAS BECAUSE OF A COUGH
THAT THEY CARRIED HIM OFF
IT WAS A COFFIN THEY
CARRIED HIM OFF IN.

which case some will *not* die, but be "raptured" instead). And when you

do, **someone will probably put a concrete marker over your grave (or a plaque on your mausoleum crypt, or the urn of ashes on the mantle).**

So what kind of epitaph might someone write on your gravestone or plaque—one simple phrase—that sums up all your years? HAD A VERY COOL CAR . . . LOOKED AWESOME IN A BATHING SUIT . . . MADE A TON OF MONEY . . . YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT HE COULD DO ON A SKATEBOARD. Or THIS LIFE TOUCHED MANY FOR GOOD . . . SHE BROUGHT JOY TO ALL SHE MET . . . HE NEVER WAS RICH, BUT HE HAD A FAMILY THAT LOVED HIM, FRIENDS THAT RESPECTED HIM, AND THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE . . . WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

The Word Matthew 16:26; 1 John 2:15-17

Discussion starters

1. What makes a life to have been worthwhile when it's over?
2. What does it mean to "not love the world or anything in the world"?
3. What did Jesus mean about a person who "forfeits his soul"?

Life changers

1. An old hymn goes like this: "Only one life, 'twil soon be passed / Only what's done for Christ will last." What did you do last week that will actually last?
2. Write a phrase you'd like people to read—one that would sum up your life at the end of it.

