Consider your own “big questions” about death as you explore natural and cultural responses to life’s inevitable conclusion.

For many living beings on this planet, death is the greatest mystery of them all. The ways we experience it, celebrate life, and wonder about what’s next are part of what makes us human—yet the subject of death is often pushed aside. Through artifacts, specimens, interactives, and immersive media experiences, discover amazing animal adaptations for survival and learn how various cultures commemorate life. Reflect on death as part of the cycle of life, and leave with a profound new understanding of life’s most universal experience.

**Exhibition Overview**

Your visit begins in the main exhibition, where you’ll find displays from ancient China and Rome, and collections of animals that demonstrate how they adapt to their environment. You'll also learn about the history of human burial practices and the surprising variety of cultures that have commemorated life. The exhibit includes an interactive that explores the concept of death, and an exploration of animals that survive in harsh environments. You’ll also see a presentation of a colorful and intricate Chinese drama, “The Courts of Hell.”

**What is death?**

If a flatworm is cut in half and both parts become new worms, did it ever die? If a person’s brain stops functioning but their other organs are still working, are they dead? Challenge what you “know” about death.

**What will happen to my body?**

Investigate the natural processes and human interventions that transform bodies after death. See a fossil slab that reveals how remains can be preserved over millions of years. Consider a recreated Chancay burial chamber from ancient Peru, and discover the wide range of treatments people today choose for their remains, from green burials to gemstones made from cremains.

**What will happen to my spirit?**

Questions about the afterlife have been explored by nearly every culture and religion. View depictions of ghosts and spirits from around the world, inspect miniature objects and figures that were meant for use in the afterlife, and experience a colorful and intricate presentation of a Chinese drama, “The Courts of Hell.”

**Do I have to die?**

Do you want to live forever? Learn how people in China and Ancient Rome have thought about immortality, and witness how animals prolong their lifespans with wild adaptations—like a lungfish entering suspended animation or a gecko regrowing its tail. Come face-to-face with nature’s most incredible survivor, the tardigrade—at 4,000 times actual size.

**How will my death affect others?**

Death—and memories of the dead—shape the lives of the living. Meet the surprising variety of animals that grieve. Examine a replication of one of the earliest deliberate human burials, and understand how rituals help people cope with loss, individually and collectively. Encounter a Day of the Dead ofrenda, where loved ones are welcomed back into the world of the living. “Spark a Memory” of a loved one who has passed, and share what you would like to do before you die...or after.
**Exhibition Specifications**

**Size**
7,500 ft² (700 m²)

**Ceiling height**
12 ft (3.66 m)

**Security**
Exhibition requires a limited-access, lockable space with security staff during public hours

**Shipping**
One-way, inbound, paid by host venue

**Languages**
All text in English and Spanish; language may be converted by host venues

**Rental fee**
Please inquire

**Features**
- 100 objects and specimens from the Field Museum’s Anthropology, Zoology, and Geology collections
- 5 replications, including reconstructions of ancient burials and a whale fall diorama
- 6 media and digital interactive elements
- Exhibition does not contain human remains

**Contact**
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Tardigrade replica: © Field Museum, artwork by Blue Rhino Studios