Fertile Question: *Is my existence part of a bigger plan?*

Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

**TOPIC 3.3: Life after death**

**Depthing Understanding: More about symbol and ritual**

In this lesson students will explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

**For students to explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife, select from the following activities:**

1. Explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife.
   a. Examine a death ritual from an Aboriginal group in the Northern Territory of Australia.
      i. View the death scene of an ancient Aboriginal warrior from the film *Ten Canoes*. Complete the following table by listing the meaning of the actions that take place in the ceremony. What beliefs about death and the afterlife are evident in this ceremony?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Meaning or beliefs about the afterlife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving of the hands and feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeping with leaves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting of the chest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Explore the importance of Totems and Totemic Beings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
   i. Research the importance of Totems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Here are two possible starting points [Totemic and Ancestral beings](#) or this article about [Totems and birth rites](#).
   ii. How does a person’s totem affect their relationship with the land, with others and with ancestral beings? Report findings to the class.
Acknowledgement

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