



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
POETRY CENTER

Speak Peace: A Companion Lesson Plan

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Writer-in-Residence 2011

Grade Level: K – 6th grade

Time Frame: Approximately 90 minutes (The lesson plan could be shortened at teacher's discretion)

Learning Objectives: To gain an appreciation for “Speak Peace,” the traveling exhibit; to think both visually and verbally; to reflect upon issues of war and peace; to revel in the possibilities of language

Prior Skills and Knowledge: None required

Materials Required: Speak Peace Art Exhibit (available online at www.speakpeace.net, or at the Poetry Center from August 29-September 23, 2011); collection of pictures (any); sentence strips with words or lines of poems written on them; sentence strips with “If I _____ then _____” written on them; internet access; access to computers or ability to project images in classroom.

Arizona Language Arts State Standards Addressed (Writing):

Strand 1: Writing Process

Concept 1: PO 1, PO 2; Concept 5: PO 1, PO 2,

Strand 2: Writing Elements

Concept 1: PO 1, Concept 2: PO 2, Concept 3: PO 1, PO 2, PO 3, Concept 4: PO 1, PO 2,

Strand 3: Writing Applications

Concept 1: PO 2; Concept 5: P01, P02, P03

Sequence of Activities:

Warm Up (15 minutes) Discuss the notion of opposites. What does the word ‘opposite’ mean? What are some examples of opposites? Tell students that they will soon see an exhibit called “Speak Peace.” Ask them what the opposite of “speak” is. Ask them what the opposite of

“peace” is. Talk a little with them about speaking and not speaking. When is it good to speak? When is it good to not speak? Talk with them about peace and its opposites. When are they at peace? What is peace for them?

Brainstorm (15 minutes) Tell them we are going to play a game called “Words and Pictures.” The instructor will show them a picture, and they will tell the instructor a word that the picture makes them think of. Then the instructor shows them a word, or a line of words, and they tell the instructor the picture that comes to mind. During this “Words and Pictures” brainstorming game, students can discuss the following questions: What colors come to mind? Do words have colors? Do pictures make sounds? The students’ responses can be recorded individually or collectively and could be used to create individual or class poems, but it is not necessary for this warm-up activity. The instructor can choose images and lines that make sense for any given group of students, but at some point the group should look at an example of words and pictures from the Speak Peace catalog.

Tour (15 minutes) Give students an opportunity to tour the Speak Peace exhibit in person or online. Begin by looking at one piece together, and ask students what they see. Depending upon the reading level of the group, instructors may want to read the poem aloud. Once students feel comfortable with the concept of the exhibit, give them a chance to walk around and see what they see.

Activity (30 minutes) Gather around the exhibit piece, “A Wish For Peace” by Nguyen Le Ai No, which includes the poem, “I Want To Be” by Shreya Basu. (On the website it is available in the gallery, and in the Video Gallery there is a video of Shreya Basu reading her poem). The poem is structured around the repetition of lines beginning with “I want to be...” Read the poem and note how the repeated line gives the poem its form. Tell students that as a group, they will make their own poem out of repeated lines. They are going to work with the repetition of “If I _____, then _____.” Put students in groups of two. Give them a strip of paper with “If I _____, then _____” on it, and ask them to fill in the blanks. One student in the pair fills in the first blank, and the other fills in the second. Then collect the blanks and tape them to a big sheet of butcher paper on the long table at the center of the library. Read these taped lines to the group as their class poem. Tell them to think of the pictures that might go with this poem. Give them 15 minutes or so to draw on the butcher paper. When they finish, they will have a poem and art piece.

This lesson could be paired with reading any number of books on the theme of war and peace. See these bibliographies for specific suggestions:

<http://poetry.arizona.edu/k12/field-trips/speakpeace/childrens-books>

<http://poetry.arizona.edu/k12/field-trips/speakpeace/teaching-resources>