

**LESSON E-UVII-L2**

# Peace Poems

**Unit VII:** Building Better Futures: Narrative, Recovery,  
and Responsibility

**Grade Levels:** 4-5

**Time:** 30-60 Minutes



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## Interdisciplinary Connections

Literacy

## Objectives

- Interpret the poem “For Our World” by Mattie Stepanek.
- Write a poem for the future or a peace poem in light of learning about September 11, 2001.

## Key Terms

- judging
- humility
- mosaic
- nurture
- vengeful

Note to Teacher: The key terms are from the poem “For Our World.”

## Lesson Materials

- biography of Matthew Stepanek (found at [http://www.mattieonline.com/?page\\_id=15](http://www.mattieonline.com/?page_id=15))
- “For Our World” from *Hope Through Heartsongs* by Mattie J. T. Stepanek (Hyperion, 2002, page 49)
- definitions of key terms
- paper
- pencils

## Lesson Background

Before reading the poetry he wrote as a young child, guide the class to learn more about Matthew Stepanek and his life. Read Mattie’s biography to the class or have students read the biography. You may also want to read President Jimmy Carter’s eulogy for Mattie Stepanek (found at <http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc1791.html>)

## Lesson Plan

- Read the poem “For Our World” aloud to the class or ask a few students to alternate turns reading it.
- Discuss the following questions with the students:
  - What is Mattie asking us to do in this poem?
  - Why do you think he is asking his readers to do this?

At the beginning of the poem he says, “We need to stop.” What do you think he means by this? What do we need to stop?

- Ask the students to each write their own poem for the future or a peace poem.

## Evidence of Understanding

- Have the students read their completed poems to the class and/or in an assembly with their grade level or school.
- Explore ways to post the poems in the school or on the school web site.

## Taking Action and Giving Service

- Ask other classes at the same grade level but at a different school in the community to participate in the poem-writing activity.
- Hold a poem contest and ask the principal or vice principal from each school to select one poem per class and/or grade level to be read over the “sister” school’s intercom at the beginning or end of the school day. One poem should be read each day until all selected poems have been read.
- Create an album, school newspaper tribute, or display in the community of the peace poems written and illustrated by the students.
- Arrange for students to present a copy of the album/newspaper to the mayor of the town at a meeting, to present copies to local community organizations, and to keep a copy on display in the school library.