

LESSON M-UVI-L4

Using Music to Remember and Memorialize

Unit VI: Remembrance and the Creation of Memory

Grade Levels: 6–8

Time: 80 minutes



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Objectives

- Demonstrate an understanding of music as a vehicle for self-expression.
- Explain how music can help heal in time of tragedy.
- Give examples that demonstrate the value of music as a means of remembering and memorializing.

Key Terms

- commemorate
- memorialize

Lesson Materials

- lyrics to “The Rising” by Bruce Springsteen (found at http://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/bruce+springsteen/the+rising_20025196.html)
- lyrics and performance of “The Rising” by Bruce Springsteen (found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOm-uIPzqpl>)
- copies of the lyrics to “United We’ll Stand” by Patricia Welch (found at http://www.patriciawelch.com/united_lyrics.htm) (one copy for each student)
- lyrics and performance of “United We’ll Stand” by Patricia Welch (found at <http://patriciawelch.com/911.htm>)
- lyrics to “Imagine” by John Lennon (http://www.lyrics007.com/John_Lennon_Lyrics/Imagine_Lyrics.html)
- Check out <http://www.9-11Songs.com> for examples of other songs of remembrance for 9/11. Patriotic songs may also be appropriate.

Lesson Plan

- Have the students listen to “The Rising” by Bruce Springsteen and/or other music written for 9/11 that may be related to the event.
- Discuss the power of music and the effect it may have on a listener. Have the students share personal reactions to particular songs (i.e., the connection or reaction one has to a song and the reasons behind those connections or reactions).
- Discuss the power of music to heal an individual or a nation.
- Ask the students:
Is it necessary for this type of music to cause sadness to be effective? Why? Why not? Encourage the students to give examples.
Do you think this is only an American practice? Explain.
- After discussing “The Rising” or other songs, distribute the lyrics and play “United We’ll Stand” by Patricia Welch. Have the students read the lyrics while listening to the music. Then discuss the following questions:

Why is it important for the world to see the United States as “united?”

Is this unity/united front important in other aspects of life as well?

What does the phrase “children of freedom” mean? Why is it significant to the impact of this song?

The lyrics suggest that both police and firefighters emerged as “a new brand of hero.” Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Were they heroes before the incidents of 9/11?

Why is it important to remember events such as 9/11, Pearl Harbor, and the end of WWII?

- Finally, brainstorm a list of other events that are commemorated through art and music. Ask:
Why do you think music has been written to remember/honor/commemorate events such as these?
Why do we, as Americans, hold certain buildings or memorials in such high regard?
What significance does the destruction of such a building or memorial have?

Evidence of Understanding

- Have students write an essay with their personal reactions to the questions in the lesson.

Additional Activities and Resources

- Organize a debate around one of the questions or around an issue that emerges.
- Choose a familiar song and have students rewrite the lyrics in honor of the victims of 9/11, the events of 9/11, the effects of 9/11, etc.
- For interested individual students or as a class project, try rewriting the words to “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel. Use the Wikipedia web site for historical information behind each entry in the lyrics. The version written by your students should focus on the history of 9/11, the events, the people, the consequences, etc.
 - “We Didn’t Start the Fire” lyrics: <http://www.billyjoel.com/music/storm-front/we-didnt-start-fire>
 - “We Didn’t Start the Fire” (Wikipedia): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_Didn%27t_Start_the_Fire
 - Students can also view the music video on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFTLKWw542g>

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Have students write an editorial to a newspaper expressing their opinions about remembering 9/11 through words, music, and art.
- Using John Lennon’s song, “Imagine,” ask the students to write new lyrics as a class to be performed by a choral group at a 9/11 Commemorative Day program.