

elegy:

remembering a life, praising the work

LESSON FOR GRADES K-5

OBJECTIVES

- The students will be able to define the words elegy and eulogy.
- The students will compose new lyrics to a familiar song.

STANDARDS

- National Music Standard 1: Singing, alone or with others a varied repertoire
- National Music Standard 4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- National History Content Standard 4C: The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principals of American democracy.
- National Language Arts Standard 5: Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

MATERIALS

- CD player
- *Voices: Reflections on an American Icon through Words and Song* book
- *Voices: Reflections on an American Icon through Words and Song* CD

APPROXIMATE LENGTH

- Three 20 minute sessions

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- The students know information about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The students are familiar with information about the Civil Rights Movement.
- The students have written new lyrics to familiar songs.

FOCUS AND REVIEW

- Complete the timeline for the “Elegy” section of the *Voices* book (see **Timeline Activity p. 19**).
- From the “Elegy” section of the *Voices* book: Read selected quotes, show selected pictures, have the students read selected quotes aloud, or have the students read the entire section. (Selections should be made at the teacher’s discretion.)

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PROCEDURES

SESSION 1:

1. Review with the students the information they have learned thus far about the life of Dr. King. Remind the students what they learned when they read *Martin's Big Words*.
 - a. **For Grade 3-5 Students:** Have the students conduct additional research about the life and beliefs of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Have each student write a short report about the life of Dr. King.
2. Discuss with the students the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the impact that Dr. King's life had on the Civil Rights Movement.
3. Discuss with students how people are remembered both at funerals and long after their deaths.

SESSION 2:

4. Conduct a vocabulary lesson in which the word **elegy** and the word **eulogy** are defined. Discuss with the students the difference between these two words.
5. Tell students that elegies are typically poems, songs, or words of remembrance versus eulogies, which are typically speeches in praise of a person's accomplishments.
6. Read the students some of the remembrances of Dr. King from the "Elegy" section of the *Voices* book.
7. Explain to the students that we should remember the man, Dr. King, and all that he tried to do and that by remembering we might realize that one person can do many great things. While Dr. King did many great things, which we should praise, one of the most important things to learn from Dr. King is how he lived his life trying to help those less fortunate.

SESSION 3:

8. Divide the students into small groups. For the very youngest students you may want to do this activity as a whole class rather than in small groups.
9. Have the students write new lyrics to a familiar song. (This could be one of the songs they have learned during this unit or it could be a simple nursery rhyme song that all the students know.) Guide the students in writing new lyrics that create an elegy or remembrance of Dr. King.
10. If students have never written new lyrics to a song, walk the student through an example of writing lyrics.
 - a. Choose a song that all the students know like "Mary Had a Little Lamb."
 - b. Have the students come up with new words for the song.
 - c. Remind the students that when you write new lyrics they should rhythmically match the original words.
 - d. Have the students count the number of syllables in a line of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and the write a new line of lyrics with the same number of syllables.
 - e. Point out the rhyme scheme of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and have the students mimic this rhyme scheme with their new lyrics.
 - f. Sing the new lyrics together as a class.
11. Have the students sing their new song of remembrance for Dr. King to the class.

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EVALUATION

- Individual participation in/contributions to group discussions
- Individual ability to work with group members
- Individual singing posture, tone production, and participation in singing activities
- Group composition of new lyrics

EXTENSIONS

- **Language Arts Extension:** Learn to spell both elegy and eulogy
- **Creative Writing Extension:** Have the students create other types of elegies, such as a poem, in remembrance of Dr. King or have the students write an eulogy praising the work of Dr. King.

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TEACHER'S NOTES:
