



The Final Stop

Garry Seidel

Title: Give Peace a Chance

Overview:

Through an examination and discussion of the photograph *The Final Stop*, by artist Garry Seidel, students will learn about the use of symbols to convey a message.

They will compare and contrast the symbolism of the black cat (on the railroad tracks leading into Auschwitz) with the significance of the paper crane as a symbol for peace (which originated after the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima).

After listening to the famous anti-war song *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream* (written by Ed McCurdy; performed by Garth Brooks), and watching the YouTube video *Sadako's Story*, they will learn to fold origami peace cranes, create a personal symbol of peace, and incorporate these into a hanging mobile.

This lesson plan is adaptable for a community service-learning project (see Extensions below).

Subjects:

Social Studies, Visual Arts, Language Arts, Math. Adaptable for Service Learning (see Extensions below).

Age Group:

Adaptable for Grades 6 - 12

Standards:

21st Century Learning Skills:

- Critical Thinking and Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Collaboration
- Self-Direction
- Invention

Colorado Academic Standards:

Visual Arts

- Observe and Learn to Comprehend
- Envision and Critique to Reflect
- Invent and Discover to Create
- Relate and Connect to Transfer

Language Arts

- Oral Expression and Listening
- Reading for All Purposes
- Research and Reasoning

Math

- Shape, Dimension and Measurements

Social Studies

- **History** develops moral understanding, defines identity and creates an appreciation of how things change while building skills in judgment and decision-making. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills to analyze, interpret and communicate.
- **Geography** provides students with an understanding of spatial perspectives and technologies for spatial analysis, awareness of interdependence of world regions and resources and how places are connected at local, national and global scales.

Additional Standards:

National Geographic Standards

- National Geographic Standard 13
 - *How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.*
- National Geographic Standard 17

- *How to apply geography to interpret the past.*
- National Geographic Standard 18
 - *How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.*

Service Learning Standards (see Extensions below)

- *Reflection:* Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.
- *Partnerships:* Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Essential Question(s):

- *How do symbols represent big ideas?*
- *What is peace?*
- *What are things we can do to raise peace consciousness?*
- *How can art influence peace consciousness?*
- *What can individuals do to generate peace?*

Quote:

- *"I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world." ~Sadako Sasaki*

Rationale:

"A picture is worth a thousand words." Students will learn that there are many ways to communicate a message. Learning about particular symbols and how they are used will broaden students' understanding while making connections with different cultures. Creating a personal symbol enhances student self-esteem.

Objectives:

Students will:

- explore the power of symbols through an examination and discussion of *The Final Stop*, by artist Garry Seidel
- learn about the Auschwitz concentration and death camps
- participate in a discussion about peace
- compare and contrast symbols and their meanings
- discover the history of origami peace cranes and learn to fold them
- create a personal symbol of peace
- fashion a hanging mobile consisting of peace cranes and their personal symbols

Materials:

- **The Art and the Artist** information on *The Final Stop*, by artist Garry Seidel (found at the end of this lesson plan)
- The ability to project the image *The Final Stop* onto a wall or screen
- Ability to project internet websites and YouTube videos onto a wall or screen
- Globe or projection of a map of the world
- Journal or writing paper
- Drawing paper
- Pencils and erasers, markers, crayons
- Scissors

- Glue
- One-inch foam brushes (one per student)
- Assortment of 9" x 9" origami paper and other lightweight decorative papers (card stock is too heavy)
- Flexible clear beading wire or fishing line
- Needles (with eyes big enough to thread the clear beading wire or fishing line)
- Assorted beads (with holes drilled for jewelry making)
- ½" plastic o-rings
- Ability to hang mobiles

Duration:

Three 50-minute session (more as wished)

Vocabulary and Things to Know:

- *Symbol*: something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance
 - a visible sign of something invisible: *The lion is a symbol of courage.*
- *Symbology*: the study or interpretation of symbols
 - the art of expression by symbols
- *Icon*: a graphic representation of something, a person or thing that is symbolic or is a noted figure
- *Iconography*: images collectively associated with a person or thing
 - the study of images in the visual arts.
- *Origami*: the Japanese art of folding paper into shapes that look like birds, animals, etc.
- *Auschwitz*:

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It included three main camps, all of which deployed incarcerated prisoners at forced labor. One of them also functioned for an extended period as a killing center. The first prisoners began arriving in May, 1940.

The camps were located approximately 37 miles west of Krakow, near the prewar German-Polish border in Upper Silesia, an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet army entered Auschwitz and liberated around 7,000 prisoners, most of whom were ill and dying. It is estimated that the SS and police deported at a minimum 1.3 million people to Auschwitz between 1940 and 1945. Of these, the camp authorities murdered 1.1 million.

~ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005189>

- *Hiroshima*:

Best known as the first city in history to be targeted by a nuclear weapon when the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) dropped an atomic bomb on it at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, near the end of World War II. For all practical purposes, this ended WWII.

Lesson :

Preparation: Review and cue all internet resources (see Additional Resources below). Assemble materials.

1. Open a discussion on symbols.

- Begin by reviewing the definition of a symbol.
- Invite students to explore symbols and icons in their own lives, and brainstorm a list of personal images. Challenge students to think of symbols at school, at home, on the internet, in advertising, in the media, in music, movies and TV. List their responses on the board.
 - Possible examples of some symbols: the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, computer icons, symbols in advertising (Nike) etc.
- Ask students the Essential Question, “How do symbols represent big ideas?”

2. Show and discuss *The Final Stop*, by artist Garry Seidel.

- Artist Garry Seidel is a photographer interested in studying WWII and the holocaust. The black cat is on the railway track that led many people to their deaths at the Auschwitz concentration camp. What is the symbolism of the black cat on the railroad tracks?
 - In Western history, black cats have often been looked upon as a symbol of bad luck. If a black cat crosses paths with a person, it is considered to be an omen of misfortune and death.
- Read the Artist Statement (found below in **The Art and The Artist**).
- Locate Germany and Krakow, Poland on a map or globe.
- Briefly discuss the Auschwitz concentration camps:
 - **Auschwitz:**
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- Remind students of the old adage, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Ask them to discuss the meaning of this adage in correlation to the imagery in *The Final Stop*.

3. After discussing the holocaust, lead students in a discussion on peace.

- Ask students the Essential Question, “What is peace?” Additional questions and comments may include examples of peace on the world, national, community and personal fronts. Allow students suitable time to frame their answers.
- Shift the focus by posing additional questions as to how peace might be affected by individuals:
 - *What can individuals do to find peace?*
 - *What are things we can do to raise peace consciousness?*
- Show YouTube video of Garth Brooks singing *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream* (see Additional Resources below).
 - *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream* was written in 1950 by Ed McCurdy, an American folk singer, songwriter, and television actor. His anti-war classic inspired and gave hope to those in the peace movement.

4. Introduce students to origami peace cranes.

- Locate Hiroshima, Japan on a map or globe.
 - Explain that Germany and Japan were allies during WWII.
- Show the YouTube video of Sadako's story (the origin of peace cranes) (see Additional Resources below).
 - Ask students to share their thoughts after watching the video.
 - Share the quote *"I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world."*
~Sadako Sasaki
 - Solicit responses to the Essential Questions
 - *What are symbols for peace?*
 - *How can art influence peace consciousness?*
 - *Why is it important to develop a peace consciousness?*
- If desired, share with the students that peace cranes have also been adopted as symbols of peace following the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School.
- Ask students to compare and contrast the symbols they have been viewing. Remind them once again of the adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Have them reflect on how they feel when they view *The Final Stop, Sadako's Story*, and other symbols they have mentioned.
- Explain that they will be joining the **Peace Crane Project** (see Additional Resources below) by creating their own origami paper cranes.
 - *Origami* is the Japanese art of folding paper into shapes that look like birds, animals, etc.
 - Allow students to select a few decorative papers for their peace cranes.
- Cue up the YouTube video tutorial for folding peace cranes.
 - The video tutorial is 9:03. Each step in the folding process is demonstrated. Stop the video at each step to allow students time to make their folds.
 - After students have completed one peace crane, explain that they will be making several in order to create a hanging mobile.
 - If necessary, allow students to use the video tutorial to make more cranes.
 - They may also make additional cranes during "free time."
- If preferred, find internet images for how to fold a peace crane. Project or print copies and distribute. (see image search results in Additional Resources below)

5. Students will create a personal symbol of peace.

- Display the website with examples of symbols of peace (see Additional Resources below).
- Distribute art supplies: drawing paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, markers, scissors.
- Instruct students to create a personal symbol of peace.
 - Ask them to re-examine what peace means to them. How do they experience peace in their lives?
 - They may draw a symbol personalizing peace on any of the levels already discussed: personal, community, national, worldwide.
 - Once they have finalized a design, they should create two symbols of identical size and shape. (They will be gluing these together later.) These should be the approximate size of their peace cranes.
 - Ask for volunteers to share their personal symbols with the class.

6. Students will create their mobiles.

- They will be making a mobile using their peace cranes, their personal symbols, beading wire, beads and an O-ring.
- Make art supplies accessible for creating mobiles: Flexible clear beading wire or fishing line, needles, assorted beads, ½" plastic o-rings and glue.
 - Have students select an assortment of beads.
- Have students measure and cut off lengths of clear beading wire.

- They will determine the length based on how many cranes and personal symbols they will include, and the final length of the mobile they wish to create.
 - For example, if they have made five cranes, and will include one personal symbol, then they should measure at least a hands-length between each crane/symbol, for a total of six hands-lengths.
 - Then they should multiply this length $\times 3$ and cut their beading wire.
 - If desired, demonstrate the math on the board to help students determine an appropriate length.
- Once students have cut their beading wire, have them thread the wire through the eye of a needle.
- Have them select a bead, thread it through the wire and tie a knot to keep the bead in place.
- Next, thread wire through the bottom center of a crane, being careful as they pull the wire through the crane and up through the top.
- Tie a knot, add beads as desired.
- Repeat, having them space cranes as desired. Make sure they tie a knot or place a bead under each crane to keep it in place.
- Add their personal symbols.
 - Students may place their personal symbols anywhere they please on the mobile — top, bottom or middle.
 - When they are ready to attach their personal symbols, have them lay one of the matching symbols, design side down, on their work surface.
 - They will need to work quickly and efficiently on this segment:
 - Add glue.
 - While the glue is still damp, have them lay their beading wire in the center of their symbol.
 - Glue the other matching symbol to the first one (design side up), being careful to center and match both symbols while keeping the wire in place.
 - Allow some time for the glue to dry.
 - Continue placing beads and cranes as desired.
- When mobiles are complete, the final step is to attach an O-ring to the top of the mobile, for hanging purposes.
 - Have them tie a very secure knot or double knot around the O-ring with their mobile wire.
- Create a hanging display of the mobiles. (If materials for this specific mobile aren't available, modify using available materials.)

Extensions:

- Partner with other classrooms at school to create a school-wide exhibit.
- The **Peace Crane Project** is designed to connect children around the world, through the arts. Sign up to participate with them and be placed on their project map.
 - <http://peacecraneproject.org>
- Create a *Service Learning Project*. Have students discuss and select an individual, business or organization for community outreach. Have them gift their mobiles accordingly. They should either include directions for hanging the mobiles, or visit the site to hang the mobiles themselves.
 - Examples: children's hospitals, veterans hospitals, nursing homes, etc

Additional Resources:

- YouTube video of Garth Brooks singing *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ty4L9kEhTs0&list=PLskKWhn-LBThHL8ttmywjcmWvS6sLmPg&index=146>
- YouTube video of Sadako's story (the origin of peace cranes), 4:40

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcsKcgEtlNc>
- YouTube video tutorial for folding peace cranes, 9:03
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxHr5BCf16E>
- Internet image search for folding origami peace cranes
 - <https://www.google.com/search?q=tutorial+folding+origami+peace+cranes&client=safari&rls=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=ObSZVNyuFtGdyASx54CgAw&ved=0CFAQsAQ&biw=2230&bih=1180>
- The **Peace Crane Project** is designed to connect children around the world, through the arts.
 - <http://peacecraneproject.org>
- Website with examples of symbols of peace
 - <http://www.symbols.com/category/33>

The Art and the Artist



The Final Stop

Garry Seidel

Photography

Garry is a photographer interested in studying WWII and the holocaust. What is the symbolism of the black cat on the railroad tracks? The black cat - often a symbol of misfortune - is on the railway track that led many people to their deaths at the Auschwitz concentration camp. Photographers are very aware of the composition of a photograph. How does the composition affect where your eye travels in the photograph? Your eye tends to travel along the railroad tracks with the cat to the white space framing the entrance to Auschwitz.

“As I entered the Auschwitz-Birkenau visitor’s office, I heard a faint “meow.” I looked down and saw a small black cat sitting in a doorway. The cat was the pet of one of the railroad

workers. After petting the cat, it followed me onto the railway track leading into the camp. Immediately, I realized the symbolism of the black cat on the railway track that, essentially, led most people to their deaths. My guide and I lured the cat down the railway track where I managed to take five photographs. This was the perfect one.

When I exhibit this image, young people have the strongest reaction to it. Many times, at first their attention is drawn toward the cat, then they express curiosity about the place where the education about the subject of Auschwitz and its place in history begins.