

LESSON PLAN TITLE: Take Refuge

Writer-in-residence: Peter Markus

Grade Level: Grades 6-12

Model works used: "Refuge" by Robert Fanning

Literary Learning objective(s): Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

Themes: In times of trouble there are always things to hold onto, to take refuge in, to find something beautiful in the broken, the run-down.

MDE/SEL Standards: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Materials needed: Pen, paper, video

Pre-Discussion

What does the word "Refuge" mean?

What are some other words that mean the same thing (words that are synonyms, that are synonymous for "refuge").

Shelter, safety, home, comfort, peace, hopefulness are all words that are synonymously connected to the word "refuge."

Model Poem Discussion

Read the poem "Refuge" by Robert Fanning, which is a prose poem. It's not broken into lines or stanzas, it's one long paragraph with lots of repetition. One thing you're going to hear in this poem are the words, the phrase, the admonition, "Take refuge."

Turn on the video, close your eyes, and as I read the poem to you try to picture some of the things that the speaker of the poem "takes refuge" in.

Pre Writing

Brainstorm some other possible ways of saying "take refuge."

Find peace in, feel the joy in, seek shelter in, make a connection to, etc. Lots of ways to say "Take refuge."

Or if you want to go with "Take refuge" as your repeating phrase — a fancy word for repetition in a poem is an anaphoric device — go for it.

Writing Prompt

Make a list of things that you see in your own neighborhood that you might take refuge in, or find comfort in.

Or, if you'd prefer, find a book of photographs and, just like the poet did, flip through the book to find the things to take refuge in. Then use that repeating phrase you've chosen to write a poem that uses sensory detail to describe the places and objects that create a sense of comfort for you.

Remember, a good poem or any piece of good writing allows the reader to participate in it by paying attention to the particulars of the experience. The experience itself is made visual through those particulars, through those details.

Share / Reflect

Did you find or feel a sense of refuge or relief as you wrote your poem? If not, what would you write about, if you could write about anything, that might offer you that refuge or relief or joy that was missing in this experience.

For fun, when you have time, write about whatever might offer you a place of refuge through the process of writing.

Supplemental Materials

For teachers: Link to essay: "Offering Refuge to Children in Dark Times through Poetry" published in Teachers & Writers Magazine.

<https://teachersandwritersmagazine.org/offering-refuge-to-children-in-dark-times-through-poetry-4642.htm>

Check/Highlight all that apply

- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- A step of the writing process
- Planning & Reflection Strategy
- New device, concept or theme
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Self-Management



- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible-Decision Making
- Self-Awareness

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