

LESSON PLAN: THE MESSAGE IN THE LYRICS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson presents students with three ways/activities to focus their attention on the messages in Melanie’s “Lead with Love” song lyrics and to interpret the meaning of the words. They include using a metaphor to explore the lyrics, speaking them out loud with intentional rhythm and drama, and discussing their ideas with a partner using a worksheet.

PREPARE

- Display the **Lead with Love** lyrics on a smartboard, re-write on chart paper, or project the lyrics page included in this lesson file. Consider keeping the lyrics visible in your room throughout the year as a reminder of how we can lead with love!
- For **Activity # 3** outlined below, distribute copies of the **PAIR & SHARE** Worksheet for every student. Each pair will need their own sheet to record both their own thoughts as well as summarizing their partners thoughts.

ACTIVITY 1: THINK AND DISCUSS USING A METAPHOR

One metaphor to explore is imagining that Melanie’s lyrics are a **recipe** for “Leading a life with love.” Other metaphors to consider are a **road map** that leads to love, or **planting seeds** in a garden to grow love.

1. Melanie DeMore wants the world to be a better place for all of us. Her song, “Lead with Love”, expresses her **hopes, dreams and visions** of this better place.
 2. The first challenge is to **know it when we see it**. Ask students to share a time or event when they noticed or experienced someone **Leading with Love**, doing the right thing, acting with kindness,
 3. The next challenge is **how to do it** – in our family, school, teams, clubs, churches, neighborhoods, etc. **HOW** is a HUGE QUESTION!
 4. **Remind students that they do not need to be famous or well-known in history books in order to be a leader, and that they have the power within them to lead with love through their lives and in their communities.**
- Pose this question of “HOW?” to students in your own words, or use the prompts below:

HOW can we make our communities kinder and more caring places?

HOW can we Lead with Love?

MINNESOTA STATE STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

ARTS:

Create:

- Generate and develop original artistic ideas.
- Create original artistic work.
- Revise and complete original artistic work.

Perform:

- Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance.

Respond:

- Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work.

Connect:

- Integrate knowledge and personal experiences while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work.

LITERACY ANCHOR STANDARDS

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it;...
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text...summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media...

5. Use a metaphor to engage students in a conversation about the question. “Could we think of *Leading with Love* as...

... a **recipe** for making our communities kinder and more caring places? What ingredients do we need?”

... a **road map** whose directions lead us to love?”

... **planting seeds** in a garden to grow love? What supplies and things do plants need to grow? How can we think about what things it would take to ‘grow’ love?

6. Expand on one of the above metaphors.
- For the **recipe** metaphor, ask if anyone bakes or cooks and knows their way around a recipe and the process of following one. (As the conversation unfolds, frequently link the recipe metaphor back to the song.) You might ask:
 - ⇒ Do any of you know how to make cookies? What’s your favorite?
 - ⇒ Where do you start? Do you use a recipe — one in your head, in a cookbook, or from a friend?
 - ⇒ Why do you need a recipe?
 - o It has the information about ingredients you need and the directions or steps to take in a specific order.
 - Together, create a recipe from the lyrics. Students who cook can take some of the spotlight in transferring the song lyrics into a list of ingredients and the process to combine them. It might look something like the example recipe included in the sidebar — but encourage student’s originality and creativity.
 - For the **road map** and **planting seeds** metaphors, use a similar process to crafting a recipe by recording student responses about what “directions/turns” or “items for growth” are required to lead us to love, or to grow love.
7. Discuss the metaphor. Does it work for them? And ask them to identify other metaphors that could help us better understand how to *Lead with Love*.
8. Ask students to share examples of *Leading with Love* from their own families, neighborhoods/communities, and life experiences. **Include both experiences when they were leaders of love, or when they experienced others in their life leading with love.**

RECIPE: LEADING WITH LOVE

Into one special life-sized bowl, mix the following ingredients:

- One foot in front of the other
- Keep movin’ on (and around)
- Stir in a full cup of hope (‘cause you are not alone)
- Look up, not down — keep your eyes on the path ahead to doing good in your community
- Mix in what you hope to see ahead — your dreams and goals
- Keep finding new paths
- Note: recipe does not call for any despair!

PROCESS

Mix all ingredients in the best order with which you see fit. The final product is a life full of hope, love for one another, and confidence about being a leader.

ACTIVITY 2: SPEAK OUT THE LYRICS

1. Use the art of spoken word poetry to understand and illuminate Melanie's lyrics.
 - Speak the words of the refrain in unison, snapping, tapping, and feeling the beat as they speak. Practice starting and stopping together. Cue them for when to begin each repetition.

*You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love,
Put one foot in front of the other and lead with love.
(sing Chorus 2x each time)*

2. Listen again to a recording of Melanie (included in the Lesson Plan "Learning the Song Lead with Love by Melanie DeMore", also located directly here: <https://youtu.be/9w22S8foSbk?si=TZ3X4TwY87v7pTOE> and focus students' attention on the call and response phrases in the song's three verses.

- Practice **speaking** the solo 'calls' and group 'answers' to the three verses.
- Find three volunteers to be solo "callers". Each will **speak** the **four phrases** of one verse in order, with energy and conviction.
- The rest of the class responds by echoing the speaker's words in a call and response pattern:

Verse 1: Caller: *Don't give up hope,* (Group: *"don't give up hope,"*)
Caller: *"You're not alone,"* (Group: *"you're not alone,"*)
Caller: *"Don't you give up,"* (Group: *"don't you give up,"*)
Caller: *"Keep movin' on."* (Group: *"keep movin' on."*)

Verse 2: *"Lift up your eyes..."*
"Don't you despair..."
"Look up ahead..."
"The path is there..."

Verse 3: *"I know you're scared..."*
"Well I'm scared too..."
"But here I am..."
"Right next to you..."

- Both the solo "caller" and the group who responds will keep the underlying beat steady and perform without stops and starts. As they speak, remind them of the energy and focus of spoken words.
3. Speak the whole song with solo student "callers" from beginning to end, with the whole class keeping a steady beat (claps, snaps, pats, foot taps). Experiment with faster and slower tempi, softer and louder vocal inflections, and encourage creativity in interpreting the lyrics.

ACTIVITY 3: PAIR & SHARE

Students will work in pairs to summarize their ideas, thoughts, interpretations, and what they understand about Melanie’s song.

1. Students will work with a partner in pairs, and will follow the directions listed on their own copy of the **PAIR & SHARE Worksheet**. Together, they will record their own interpretations of the lyrics in “Lead with Love”, while also jotting down a summary of their partner’s shared interpretations. It is not necessary for them to agree. Each person has a worksheet to complete.
 - **Step one:** Each will think about the question and fill out the first column of the worksheet with their own responses.
 - **Step two:** Partner 1 shares and partner 2 listens. They switch roles as partner 2 shares and partner 1 listens. Each takes notes in the second column that summarizes what they hear from their partner.
 - **Step three:** The two will discuss together what they want to share with the class, combining ideas from both partner’s responses.
2. After completing the worksheet, reconvene the class and return to the question: “**HOW** do we Lead with Love?” and discuss their viewpoints as a class. New ideas, insights, and descriptive words can be added to the WORD WALL (which would have been created by completing the Lesson Plan “Leading with Love: The 2024 WITNESS Theme”.)

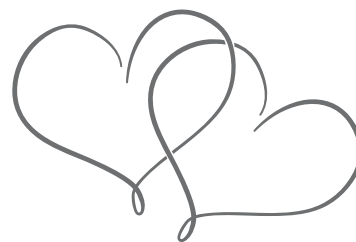
EXTEND

- ☺ **View a Video.** Motivational speaker Joe Beckman recorded his thoughts about what *Leading with Love* means and how one can do that. The video is available via <https://youtu.be/tjVg5B5D6cE?si=p88ISjWIIbHYnq1d>. Notice the Minneapolis background. Ask students to respond to Beckman’s ideas, connect it to Melanie’s song and message, and apply it to their own definitions. Record student responses on a smart board or chart paper.
- ☹ **Create Artistic Interpretations.** Encourage students to expand the meaning of the “Lead with Love” lyrics through creating artistic interpretations. Here are some ways to do this:
 - **Sing and Move to Melanie’s Lyrics:** In small groups, students work together to create a sequence of movements, body actions, or tableau to illuminate the meaning of the lyrics for both the chorus and for a specific verse. Reconvene and sing together as each group of ‘movers’ perform their sequence and refrain. Finally, as a large group, perform all together simultaneously.
 - **Make Brilliant and Colorful Posters** that communicate the messages in “Lead with Love.”
 - **Spoken Word:** Rehearse and perform/read the lyrics out loud as a spoken word poem.
 - **Create a Group Mural** inspired by “Lead with Love,” in class or in collaboration with your school’s visual arts teacher.
 - **Create Your Own Song** about *Leading with Love*.
- ☹ Create logos for a *Leading with Love* campaign – for your classroom, school, or community. Then, **make it real and launch a project that gives your students a chance to practice leading with love!**
- ☹ Make cookies (a kind gesture) and share them with the class. As you enjoy them, think about Melanie’s words and the ideas of *Leading with Love* as a recipe for life.

AN INVITATION

Please feel free to share any student work that grows out of the lesson or the extension activities – poems, posters, video of movement pieces, etc. with Rob at VocalEssence (robert@vocalessence.org). There may be opportunities for student art work to be displayed at Orchestra Hall and/or projected on the cubes and back wall of the Orchestra Hall stage.

LYRICS TO “LEAD WITH LOVE”
BY MELANIE DEMORE



CHORUS (ALWAYS SING 2X)

*You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love,
Put one foot in front of the other, and lead with love.*

VERSE 1

*Don't give up hope,
You're not alone.
Don't you give up,
Keep movin' on.*

CHORUS (2X)

VERSE 2

*Lift up your eyes,
Don't you despair.
Look up ahead,
The path is there.*

CHORUS (2X)

VERSE 3

*I know you're scared,
Well I'm scared too.
But here I am,
Right next to you.*

CHORUS (2X)

PAIR & SHARE

Reflecting on the Lyrics of “Lead with Love” by Melanie DeMore

What do the lyrics of “Leading with Love” mean to you? What’s the message?		
My ideas about the lyrics & what they mean (Think, then write your thoughts below)	My partner’s ideas about what the lyrics mean (Listen to your partner and record <i>what you hear</i> them share below)	What we will share in class together (Discuss and agree on what you will say, then summarize talking points below)

1. Think about the lyrics, then each of you write your thoughts in the first column of your worksheets — your own ideas about the song’s meaning.
2. Discuss what each of you wrote in column #1. Listen closely, then summarize your partner’s comments in column #2 of your worksheet.
3. **Decide Together** what you will share with the class about what the lyrics mean to you. What’s the message?

My Name _____ My Partner’s Name _____ Date _____