

Nonviolence Week Poetry Contest

A perfect ELA project to start the year!

October 2-8, 2022, marks the annual Ohio Nonviolence Week, which was founded by Youngstown City School Sojourn to the Past students in 2013. Three years ago, a K-12 poetry contest was included among the week's festivities. The purpose of Nonviolence Week and the focus of the contest is to promote peace in our local, national, and global community. **Local English teachers and professors** will be judging this year's contest, and careful consideration will be given to all poems submitted.

Cash awards will be given to winners in each of four categories:

- K-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

To submit poems: email attachments to mhowell@simonroofing.com or email her to notify that hand-written copies are ready for pick up.

Important details to know about the Nonviolence Week Poetry Contest:

1. The contest is open to all students in the Mahoning Valley from kindergarten through 12th grade.
2. Poems **must** focus on themes related to nonviolence: justice, peace, reconciliation, anti-racism etc. (Dr. King's six principles of nonviolence and six steps of nonviolent social change are listed on the back and are good places to start when brainstorming for ideas.)
3. Poems can be of any length or style—as long as it's original. **Plagiarism will result in disqualification.**
4. Poems can be typed, handwritten, or recorded as an audio or video file. Typed poems should be 200 words or less. Audio/video files should be three minutes or less.
5. All entries must include a SEPARATE COVER SHEET with the student's name, grade, school name or organization, and the poem title. **The student's name, address, or school should not appear on the poem.**
6. All poems received by **September 15th, 2022**, will be eligible for prizes.

SIX PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

Fundamental tenets of Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence described in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. The six principles include:

1. **PRINCIPLE ONE: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.** It is active nonviolent resistance to evil. It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally.
2. **PRINCIPLE TWO: Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.** The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation. The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.
3. **PRINCIPLE THREE: Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people.** Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not people.
4. **PRINCIPLE FOUR: Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.** Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation. Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.
5. **PRINCIPLE FIVE: Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.** Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative.
6. **PRINCIPLE SIX: Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.** The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.

SIX STEPS OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

The Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings that emphasize love in action. Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, as reviewed in the Six Principles of Nonviolence, guide these steps for social and interpersonal change.

1. **INFORMATION GATHERING:** To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community, or institution you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.
2. **EDUCATION:** It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstandings and gains you support and sympathy.
3. **PERSONAL COMMITMENT:** Daily check and affirm your faith in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work for justice.
4. **DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION:** Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and a plan for addressing and resolving these injustices. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent but to call forth the good in the opponent.
5. **DIRECT ACTION:** These are actions taken when the opponent is unwilling to enter into, or remain in, discussion/negotiation. These actions impose a "creative tension" into the conflict, supplying moral pressure on your opponent to work with you in resolving the injustice.
6. **RECONCILIATION:** Nonviolence seeks friendship and understanding with the opponent. Nonviolence does not seek to defeat the opponent. Nonviolence is directed against evil systems, forces, oppressive policies, unjust acts, but not against persons. Through reasoned compromise, both sides resolve the injustice with a plan of action. Each act of reconciliation is one step close to the 'Beloved Community.'