Dear Educator,

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 1 in 9 children will experience the death of a parent by the age of 20. And students face other losses—the death of siblings, classmates, and school community members.

With support from The New York Life Foundation, Scholastic has prepared the lesson plans included in this guide to help students explore the subject of loss through the lens of language arts. These materials are intended to help students begin to gain a better understanding of grief and loss, by building greater compassion for a bereaved one. If you are seeking more concrete guidance on helping a student manage a loss, or ways to navigate a loss in the school community, please visit our comprehensive website at www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief.

We hope that the enclosed lesson plans and resources will build students’ compassion and creative expression, broaden their understanding of loss and grief, and foster open discussion in a safe environment.

Sincerely,
The New York Life Foundation and Scholastic Inc.
**“Say Not in Grief” Poetry Activity**

**ABOUT THIS LESSON PLAN**

**SUBJECT**
Language Arts

**DURATION**
45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE**
Students will read and respond to a poem, answering a series of questions about the poem’s meaning, structure, and style.

**MATERIALS**
Worksheet 1, pencil or pen, photocopy of this page.

**DIRECTIONS**
Share the poem below with students. Invite students to answer the questions. Next, pass out a copy of Worksheet 1 to each student, and invite him or her to complete the three activities.

**QUESTIONS**

1. How does this poem make you feel? Is it a hopeful or a sad poem? Why do you feel the way you do about it?

2. What does “extinguishing” mean? How does the word relate to death?

3. The poet is grateful for the life of the person who was lost. Who are you thankful for, and why?

4. The poet compares a life ending to “the putting out of the lamp/because the dawn has come.” Compare and contrast a “lamp” with “dawn.” How are they the same? How are they different?

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**Say Not in Grief**

Say not in grief that she is no more but say in thankfulness that she was A death is not the extinguishing of a light, but the putting out of the lamp because the dawn has come.

—Rabindranath Tagore

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**“I Remember You” Memory Book Project**

**ABOUT THIS LESSON PLAN**

**SUBJECT**
Language Arts

**DURATION**
45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE**
Students will be gently encouraged to deal with personal feelings by sharing favorite memories, creating art, writing letters, and expressing themselves creatively with this Memory Book project. Classroom teachers may find it helpful to include a school guidance counselor in this activity.

**MATERIALS**
Worksheet 2, old photographs, card stock (8 x 10 size, five sheets per student), markers or crayons, pencils, glue, a 3-hole punch, and yarn for binding the books together.

**SET UP AND PREPARE**
1. A few days before this project, ask students to think of a person, historical figure, or pet who has passed away whose memory they’d like to honor. Ask students to bring in a photograph or draw an illustration of this person. Students may also bring in keepsakes—such as buttons, fabric, other photographs, or drawings—that remind them of this person.

2. On the day of the project, have each student write down the person’s name and hold a brief brainstorming session to answer questions about him or her. Ask the questions (see steps 4, 5, 6, and 7) that appear in the Directions section. Students should use Worksheet 2 to take notes.

3. The session should be held in small groups if students are comfortable speaking about their memories. Or, if students prefer, they can work independently.

4. After students have completed their Memory Books, ask if anyone is comfortable sharing theirs with the class. Encourage open communication, but let students keep their books to themselves if they prefer.
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2. What does “extinguishing” mean? How does the word relate to death?

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Say Not in Grief
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5. On page 2, ask students to write about their favorite memory with this person. Encourage them to add illustrations, keepsakes from home, or keywords and decorations.

6. On page 3, ask students to write or illustrate what this person was good at, any special skills or talents, or what made him or her unique.

7. On page 4, encourage students to write or illustrate how he or she will remember this person. Maybe they can share a special poem, an activity they plan to do, or the name of a person they will talk to about the person or pet they lost.

8. After students have completed their Memory Books, ask if anyone is comfortable sharing theirs with the class. Encourage open communication, but let students keep their books to themselves if they prefer.
Dealing With Grief and Loss

A Language Arts Unit

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Page 2—Response to Literature: Have students read the poem “Say Not in Grief” and answer the questions on the page. Then have them complete Worksheet 1, along with a partner, to explore what they read.

Page 3—Memory Books: Making a memory book helps children memorialize and honor someone who has been lost. In this activity, students will create their own memory books. Have them use Worksheet 2 to brainstorm ideas for their books.

Page 4—Advice From Teachers: Read valuable tips and coping strategies from teachers who have experienced a loss in the school community.

Children and Grief Website

For further resources, please visit www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief, which contains a wealth of links and information for educators and families. It includes:

• How to React When a Death Strikes the School Community
• Leading Children Through Their Grief: Downloads and Guides
• Ways to Commemorate a Loss: Memorials, Sympathy Cards, and More

A downloadable PDF of The New York Life Foundation’s informative and helpful guide, After a Loved One Dies—How Children Grieve, You may also order a free bound copy from www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief.

Live Webcast:
March 24, 2011

Hear more from students who have experienced a loss. A live Scholastic webcast is planned for March 24, 2011, with youth grief expert Dr. David Schonfeld. It will feature advice for educators on the subject of dealing with loss.

Sign up today by visiting www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief

What’s Inside