

## In Flander's Fields

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1

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

2

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

3

Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you from failing hands, we throw  
The torch—Be yours to hold it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though  
poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

### Vocabulary

In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

1: Flanders, poppies, larks, scarce, amid

3: quarrel, foe, torch, ye

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

1: Flanders fields, poppies blow, between the crosses, bravely singing

2: sunset glow

3: failing hands, throw the torch, hold it high, break faith, poppies grow

**Mechanics** Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker?

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

1: What do crosses mark "row on row" marking a place refer to? What is in the sky? What is heard below?

2: What happened “short days ago”? Have you thought of those that lived in the past this way before?

3: What is being tossed to us? Is this a “torch” you can touch? If not, to what is the author referring? Explain and discuss “If ye break-faith with us who die.” Compare/contrast with John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the three stanzas.

Discuss the message of this poem in light of John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

What does the Bible have to say about perserverance? Give Biblical examples of those demonstrating perserverance. Give historical examples, past and present, of those role modelling perserverance.

What is the opposite of perservance? Give Biblical examples and historical examples of same.

What does the Bible have to say about trust? Give Biblical and historical examples of those placing their trust in others.

### **The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author’s name for this poem is Captain John D. McCrae. His poem became popular in 1915. By 1918, Moina Michael began to weave poppies in remembrance of those who had died in WWI while working at the YMCA canteen. Madame Guerin learned of this in 1920 when she visited New York from France. On her return home, she began making poppies to earn money for the children of veterans and the worn torn Europe. The USA tends to wear poppies on Memorial Day while other countries (e.g., Canada, etc.) wear them in November. So, why the poppy? During the Napoleonic wars, it was observed that the fields were bright with colorful red poppies before a battle. Strangely enough, it was discovered that the bombardment of these fields helped the poppy to grow!

### **Geography**

Locate New York, France, and Canada on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Flanders on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast weather from New York, France, and Canada with your own for one week.

Make a meal from New York, France, and/or Canada for your family.

## Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each stanza. (Note: that will be three different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the poem and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event this poem reported.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals connected with or reflect this poem (e.g., living/dead soldiers and their families, Founding Fathers, Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, Oliver Cromwell, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *In Flander's Fields*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Captain John D. McCrae and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.