

## Story Songs: Creating the Earth's Community with Mark Vollmer and Jim Eaglesmith

Grades 4 – 5

*Discover the story of Nevada's fascinating landscape through geology, photographs, music, and creative writing. This lesson brings to life the story of how Nevada's fascinating geology supports all animals & plants. From this presentation students will create a new verse to an original song.*

**Materials:** note-taking/journaling materials (paper & pencil), 2 stones or sticks collected from outside for use as percussion instruments, PDF of song "One Community"

### The Lesson:

1. Introduce the lesson and what the student will do during the program.
2. 5-minute Nevada geology slide show. Student takes notes.
3. Pause video & go outside & take notes of surroundings: Are there stones – what color/shapes are they & are they round or have sharp edges? How big are they? If there are no stones, are there sticks? How long & how thick? Also, foliage/tree observations, animal sounds, sky activity, anything nature oriented. Before going back inside, student collects 2 stones or 2 sticks to be used as percussion instruments.
4. Student writes down what inspired them/what they learned from the slide show & from their exploration outside.
5. Using key words selected from their journal, student creates a new spoken word verse to song "One Community." Here are some sample words to help the student get started: lakes, lava, rhythm, sunrise, iron, rivers, earth, nature, sunset.
6. Perform song "One Community", including the new verse, with stones/sticks as percussion.

### Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.
- Performing: Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.
- Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

**4-ESS1.C** The History of Planet Earth: Local and regional patterns of rock formations reveal changes over time due to earth forces such as earthquakes.

**W.5.3d.** Use words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events.

**MU:Cr2.4.1** Demonstrate, select, and organize musical ideas for an improvisation, arrangement, or composition to express intent.

**MU:Pr6.4.1** Perform music, alone or with others, with expression and technical accuracy, and appropriate interpretation.

**MU:Pr4.5.1** Sing and play instruments to age-appropriate literature.

### Connection to Literacy:

- *Active listening* – throughout the lesson, viewing & taking notes during the Nevada geology slide show, listening to the sounds of nature outside, and listening to the song "One Community" to help establish foundation for songwriting/performing.
- *Vocabulary* – geology terms appropriate for grades 4-5 during the slide show, music terms during the songwriting and performance process.
- *Reading* –read previously written verses of "One Community"

- *Writing* –write in their journal about geology slide show, observations from outdoor excursion, and songwriting.
- *Speaking* – the “One Community” verses are spoken word in a rap rhythm when student(s) perform it.
- *Expressing ideas* –express and interpret in the creation of a new song verse

## **Resources**

StorySongs: Celebrating the Land and Community”, part of a Spark the Imagination video series presented by Sierra Arts Foundation and City of Sparks.

Part 1: <https://www.facebook.com/SierraArtsFoundation/videos/2710582465932677/>

Part 2: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1391045031090599>

Part 3: <https://www.facebook.com/SierraArtsFoundation/videos/600994613855583/>

“StorySongs: From the Soul of the American West” visual/music DVD by Mark Vollmer and Jim Eaglesmith. Jim’s original music tells captivating stories of the landscapes of the Great Basin Desert, Sierra Nevada, and the American Southwest with their human interactions, matched to Mark’s award-winning outdoor photography. Available from the artists, and from <https://timelessproductions.com/story-songs/> .

“Under One Sky” CD by Jim Eaglesmith and Cherokee flutist Eric Ray. Jim’s original song encourages peace between all peoples and the land. Available from the artist.

“Mother Nature’s Child” DVD by Fuzzy Slippers Productions. Video explores how nature plays a role in children's health and development.

*Rock Collecting for Kids: An Introduction to Geology* by Dan R. Lynch. Children’s introduction to the excitement of finding, collecting, and identifying rocks and minerals.

*Keepers of the Earth* by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Native American stories combine with related follow-up activities to inspire children with a deep respect and interest in the Earth.

*Talking to the Sun: An Illustrated Anthology of Poems for Young People* by Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell. This children’s book combines nature-themed poems from around the world with matching art pieces from the New York Museum of Art.

## **About the Artists**

### **Mark Vollmer**

A widely published photographer, freelance writer and instructor, Mark Vollmer is based in Sparks, Nevada. His long time collaboration with Reno singer/songwriter Jim Eaglesmith includes their live science/music/visual art edutainment program “StorySongs” for schools, libraries, & museums. Since 2009 they have enjoyed grant-funded support from Nevada Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Pioneer Center Youth Programs, Sierra Arts Foundation, and Great Basin Outdoor School. Their very popular DVD “StorySongs: From the Soul of the American West”, was released in 2010 and funded by the NAC & NEA.

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**Jim Eaglesmith**

A lifelong eclectic songwriter, storyteller, performance artist and author, Jim believes that the underlying truth to all mythic cultures was embodied in the music, dance, and stories, and that borrowing from these traditional ways helps to bring inspirational ideas to the artistic environments of 21st Century Edutainment.

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artists 

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 in schools + 

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 communities

**Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster**

*The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster* is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>