CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
The following activity ideas are adaptable to all grade levels.

1. Social Studies
Put yourself in the shoes of the American kids in this story:
The story of the Hiroshima children’s drawings is one that exemplifies the power of cross-cultural goodwill and exchange. The children of All Souls Church in Washington, DC responded to the plight of the children in post-war Hiroshima with an act of generosity and kindness: gathering and shipping school supplies. Discuss this aspect of the story with your students. Does it inspire them to do something similar for children their age who are in need?

Invite your students to brainstorm countries or regions of the world in which people are currently suffering—whether as a result of war (e.g., in the Middle East), poverty (e.g., in countries of Africa), or natural disaster (e.g., earthquake/tsunami in northeast Japan). Have the students conduct research to find out more details about what these people are experiencing. Strive to gather information from as many different sources as possible: news accounts, TV or internet images, first-hand description from the victims themselves and/or outside observers. Discuss the results and decide as a group if there’s anything they can do, personally, to help alleviate these people’s suffering to any extent. What would enhance their quality of life even just a little bit?

What would it take to carry this out? Is there a governmental agency or international relief organization on the ground there that your class could contact? Manifest the idea, and extend a helping hand!

2. Art
Put yourself in the shoes of the Japanese kids in this story:
Another angle of this story is the aspect of cross-cultural sharing through art. The children in Hiroshima, when given art supplies, chose to illustrate their daily lives using watercolor paints and/or crayons, as well as calligraphy, and to share those visuals with their new American friends. When the children in Washington, DC received them, they were able to learn a little about Japanese culture.

Invite your students to brainstorm: if they had the opportunity to share—through watercolor paintings or crayon drawings or photographs, etc.—their own culture with children in a different country, what images would they create? How would they show
kids in a place far away, what their school, families, neighborhoods, favorite holidays were like?

Using the appropriate art medium, have the students create images of their daily lives that show some aspect of their culture.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

On Hiroshima/Atomic-Bombing

Kids’ Peace Station:
http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/kids/KPSH_E/top_e.html
Interactive website for students (and adults!) to learn more about the story of Sadako Sasaki, and to engage in peace-related activities. Administered by the Hiroshima Peace Museum.

Hiroshima: Perspectives on the Atomic Bombing:
http://spice.stanford.edu/catalog/hiroshima_perspectives_on_the_atomic_bombing/
Published curriculum for secondary students by the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education.

Hibakusha Stories: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Future Generations:
http://hibakushastories.org/index.html
Website containing resources and tools to empower students to co-create a peaceful and sustainable future.

On Cross-Cultural Exchange (Art-Related)

“Art-Link” Program, Creative Connections:
http://www.creativeconnections.org/current-programs/artlink.php
Facilitates art-exchange projects between classrooms in the US and other countries of the world.

Colored Pencil Project:
http://www.thecoloredpencilproject.org/index.php
Facilitates the distribution of art supplies to children in developing countries and providing curriculum allowing children to express themselves through the visual arts.

Website for Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard documentary film:
http://www.hiroshimaschoolyard.com/about.html

This webinar and the development of the curriculum resources were funded by a generous grant from the US-Japan Foundation.