



THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CENTER  
FOR NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE, INC.

# **BELOVED COMMUNITY TEACH-IN**

## **FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS**

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**GRADE LEVEL: PK-2**



### Lesson Title: What Makes A Neighbor?

**Grade Level:** PK - 2

**Curriculum Connections:** Social and Emotional Learning, Social Studies, History, English/Language Arts

**Thematic Focus:** Caring, Kindness, World House, Beloved Community

**Duration:** 45 - 60 minutes (or may be delivered over several class periods)

**Materials:** Globe or World map, manipulatives (Legos, puzzle, coloring sheet)

#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to Dr. King's concept of the World House
- Students will learn creative ways to engage in community connections
- Student will learn the characteristics of a good neighbor

#### Teacher Preparation

##### Review

The World House is the concept that we are all neighbors regardless of our geographical location in the world. The World House and the Beloved Community are connected concepts in Dr. King's thinking. The World House is the reality that we are all connected. The Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.

Dr. King's Beloved Community was not devoid of interpersonal, group or international conflict. Instead he recognized that conflict was an inevitable part of human experience. But he believed that conflicts could be resolved peacefully and adversaries could be reconciled through a mutual, determined commitment to nonviolence. No conflict, he believed, need erupt in violence. And all conflicts in The Beloved Community should end with reconciliation of adversaries cooperating together in a spirit of friendship and goodwill (use Learning Resource 1 and Learning Resource 2 for explanation of The World House and The Beloved Community).



## Preview

To assist with helping students learn about Dr. King, use the animated film, Our Friend Martin:  
<https://youtu.be/c00kcxAW7M>

## **Overview**

In his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (1968), Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said:  
“All inhabitants of the globe are our neighbor”

The activity focuses on what it means to be a good neighbor and how neighbors help and empower each other. (“Neighbors” being the classroom and the home setting). Students learn best by hands-on experiences and opportunities to interact with the learning material. In order to help early learners connect as neighbors, we have to help shape their understanding of the world, their role as citizens of the world, and their role as productive human beings.

## **Instructional Sequence**

1. Introduce students to the concept of the World House and the Beloved Community (use Learning Resource 1 and Learning Resource 2).
2. Use a globe (you can use a world map if a globe is not available). Point to a place on the globe and wherever your finger lands, explain to students that this is their neighbor. Now, allow students to spin and stop the globe to demonstrate that the world is our neighborhood. Explain that you will be discussing neighbors and what makes them unique and special.
3. Next, ask students what family means to them. Discuss the following questions:  
“How do families/neighbors work together?”  
“Who is a part of a family?”  
“What are some things family members/neighbors do for each other?”  
“What events do they share with each other?”  
“Where are some places they go together?”  
“How are families/neighbors the same and how are they different?”  
“What do families around the world look like?”  
“How do you feel about your family/neighbor?”

List on the board some details students share.

4. Next, ask all students to sit on the floor in a circle. The circle will simulate the world. (Adhere to your school’s COVID-19 safety protocols). Explain to the students that the circle represents the World House and that each of them has a role to play in being a part of the World House.



Ask the students to stand up one at a time and explain to their peers what would make them a good “Neighbor.” The teacher should demonstrate what this looks like. For example. The teacher may stand up and say, “Being kind.” The next person may say “helping,” “sharing,” “telling the truth,” etc. This continues until everyone is standing up. If a student gets stuck, ask others to help. This will reinforce the concept of being a good neighbor.

Next, provide each student with a word from the Characteristics List (see Activity Handout). Students must figure out if the characteristic is an attribute of a good neighbor or if the characteristic is not an attribute of a good neighbor. Discuss the words aloud as a class. This activity will help early learners understand what good character traits look like. Explain what each one means and also give examples or role play for students to see. Students will also be able to discuss the traits that describe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

5. Following the Character activity, create 3-4 collaborative workstations (i.e., Lego stations, puzzle stations, coloring sheet stations).

**Activity Differentiation Option**

Ask students to create a “YES/NO” card. Students can glue their card to a painters stick. This will enable students to utilize the card during the activity.

**Legos or manipulatives** - Give each student a Lego piece or other manipulative that can be connected. They must work together to create a connection that is a compilation of the pieces to create a whole object.

**Puzzle** - Allow a group of students to work together to put a puzzle together. Require everyone in the group to work together.

**Coloring sheet** - Give 3-4 students one coloring sheet and require that they each help color the sheet together.

6. Once the students have had about 8-10 minutes to work in their stations bring them back to the World House location (circle on the floor) and discuss what happened when they were in their groups. Monitor for student responses like: “They weren’t sharing,” or “I didn’t get a turn,” etc. This is an excellent time to talk about how Dr. King understood that although everyone may not always get along or share, this does not mean that we are not a part of a great World House (reference the circle in which everyone is sitting). Explain to students that being part of the World House requires that we find a way to work together. Working together is how we will bring about the Beloved Community that Dr. King talked about.
7. Discuss with students the following question: “What can we all do better to make sure that we all get a turn to be a part of this great World House?”

You may hear things like “be nice,” “share,” “take turns,” “ask the teacher to help”, etc. This is a great indicator that students are thinking about what the World House is and can look like in their current environment.



**Did your students enjoy this lesson? We would love to see it!  
Take a class photo and tag us on social media @TheKingCenter**

**Assessment:**

Have students respond to the following question:

- What can we all do better to make sure that we all get a turn to be a part of this great World House?

**Post Instruction Survey for Educators**

Please complete the post instruction survey here:

[https://tkc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8hKIsnDPspNHh78](https://tkc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8hKIsnDPspNHh78)





### Learning Resource 1

Selected Excerpts from Martin Luther King, Jr.

...before we can finish eating breakfast in the morning we are dependent on more than half of the world. We get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for a sponge, and that's handed to us by a Pacific Islander. Then we reach over for a bar of soap, and that's given to us at the hands of a Frenchman. And then we reach up for our towel, and that's given to us by a Turk. And then we go to the kitchen for breakfast, getting ready to go to work. Maybe this morning we want to follow the good old American tradition, and we drink coffee. That's poured in our cups by a South American. Or maybe we are desirous of having tea. Then we discover that that's poured in our cup by a Chinese. Or maybe we want cocoa this morning, and then we discover that that's poured in our cup by a West African. Then we reach over for a piece of toast, only to discover that that's given to us at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And so before we finish eating breakfast in the morning we are dependent on more than half of the world.

Martin Luther King, Jr. *The Man Who Was a Fool*, Sermon Delivered at the Detroit Council of Churches' Noon Lenten Services (1961)

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

Martin Luther King, Jr. *The Letter from Birmingham Jail* (1963)

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*. (1968)



## Learning Resource 2

### **Martin Luther King and the Beloved Community**

“The Beloved Community” is a term that was first coined in the early days of the 20th Century by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce, who founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation. However, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., also a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, who popularized the term and invested it with a deeper meaning which has captured the imagination of people of goodwill all over the world.

For Dr. King, The Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian goal to be confused with the rapturous image of the Peaceable Kingdom, in which lions and lambs coexist in idyllic harmony. Rather, The Beloved Community was for him a realistic, achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence.

Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.

Dr. King’s Beloved Community was not devoid of interpersonal, group or international conflict. Instead he recognized that conflict was an inevitable part of human experience. But he believed that conflicts could be resolved peacefully and adversaries could be reconciled through a mutual, determined commitment to nonviolence. No conflict, he believed, need erupt in violence. And all conflicts in The Beloved Community should end with reconciliation of adversaries cooperating together in a spirit of friendship and goodwill.

As early as 1956, Dr. King spoke of The Beloved Community as the end goal of nonviolent boycotts. As he said in a speech at a victory rally following the announcement of a favorable U.S. Supreme Court Decision desegregating the seats on Montgomery’s busses, “the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opponents into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.”



An ardent student of the teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi, Dr. King was much impressed with the Mahatma's befriending of his adversaries, most of whom professed profound admiration for Gandhi's courage and intellect. Dr. King believed that the age-old tradition of hating one's opponents was not only immoral, but bad strategy which perpetuated the cycle of revenge and retaliation. Only nonviolence, he believed, had the power to break the cycle of retributive violence and create lasting peace through reconciliation.

In a 1957 speech, *Birth of A New Nation*, Dr. King said, "The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community. The aftermath of nonviolence is redemption. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation. The aftermath of violence is emptiness and bitterness." A year later, in his first book *Stride Toward Freedom*, Dr. King reiterated the importance of nonviolence in attaining The Beloved Community. In other words, our ultimate goal is integration, which is genuine inter-group and inter-personal living. Only through nonviolence can this goal be attained, for the aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of the Beloved Community.

In his 1959 Sermon on Gandhi, Dr. King elaborated on the after-effects of choosing nonviolence over violence: "The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, so that when the battle's over, a new relationship comes into being between the oppressed and the oppressor." In the same sermon, he contrasted violent versus nonviolent resistance to oppression. "The way of acquiescence leads to moral and spiritual suicide. The way of violence leads to bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. But, the way of non-violence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community."

The core value of the quest for Dr. King's Beloved Community was agape love. Dr. King distinguished between three kinds of love: eros, "a sort of aesthetic or romantic love"; philia, "affection between friends" and agape, which he described as "understanding, redeeming goodwill for all," an "overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative"...the love of God operating in the human heart." He said that "Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people...It begins by loving others for their sakes" and "makes no distinction between a friend and enemy; it is directed toward both...Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community."

In his 1963 sermon, *Loving Your Enemies*, published in his book, *Strength to Love*, Dr. King addressed the role of unconditional love in struggling for the beloved Community. 'With every ounce of our energy we must continue to rid this nation of the incubus of segregation. But we shall not in the process relinquish our privilege and our obligation to love. While abhorring segregation, we shall love the segregationist. This is the only way to create the beloved community.'





One expression of agape love in Dr. King's Beloved Community is justice, not for any one oppressed group, but for all people. As Dr. King often said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." He felt that justice could not be parceled out to individuals or groups, but was the birthright of every human being in the Beloved Community. I have fought too long hard against segregated public accommodations to end up segregating my moral concerns," he said. "Justice is indivisible."

In a July 13, 1966 article in Christian Century Magazine, Dr. King affirmed the ultimate goal inherent in the quest for the Beloved Community: "I do not think of political power as an end. Neither do I think of economic power as an end. They are ingredients in the objective that we seek in life. And I think that end of that objective is a truly brotherly society, the creation of the beloved community"

In keeping with Dr. King's teachings, The King Center embraces the conviction that the Beloved Community can be achieved through an unshakable commitment to nonviolence. We urge you to study Dr. King's six principles and six steps of nonviolence, and make them a way life in your personal relationships, as well as a method for resolving social, economic and political conflicts, reconciling adversaries and advancing social change in your community, nation and world.

**Source:** <https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/>



### Activity Handout 1

**Characteristics List:** Cut out the below statements and give to students. These represent attitudes and actions of different people. If students are not able to read the cards, call them up one at a time and read the word aloud. You can use the Yes /No cards that were created OR you can create two buckets to place at the front of the classroom and the students can decide if the word goes in the Yes bucket (“Yes this is a characteristic of a good world neighbor”) or the No bucket (“No, this is NOT a good characteristic of a good world neighbor”)

Showing Kindness to everyone	Sharing with others	Taking things from others
Telling lies	Not listening when others have a turn to talk	Helping in the classroom
Being honest	Laughing when someone gets hurt	Keeping trash picked up
Hitting others	Taking turns	Respecting others
Saying nice things to other people	Saying mean things to other people	Working together to get a job done
Never saying thank you	Bullying others	Smiling