



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

BELOVED COMMUNITY TEACH-IN FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS



GRADE LEVEL: 6-8



Lesson Title: Beloved Community Creators

Grade Level: 6-8

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: Math Activities and English Language Arts Activities for each grade level that can be assigned for various points for completion; Scenario Sheet

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to Dr. King's concept of the World House
- Students will discover creative ways to engage in collaboration and problem-solving skills
- Students will discuss the value of interacting and getting to know others

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/c00kcxdAW7M>

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 now neighbors.”

This activity empowers students to think about how they can play a role in assisting those who may be less fortunate or in need. This group activity encourages students to collaborate, complete tasks, and earn points. Students can use earned points to assist others. The points equal their available time. The points concept helps students think about what they value and the amount of time they would commit to that valued scenario.

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. Separate students into teams. As an opening activity, give students 10-15 minutes to solve a set of problems that are directly connected to the class content.

Scenario example: Group A must solve “x” number of math/grammar, or social studies problems (teacher choice). Each problem would be worth a certain number of points. By solving the problems, the group would earn points. Based upon earned points, students would be able to use their points to help others who may need assistance. The ability to help others would be based upon the required points.

Students should strategize a process on how they will complete the tasks or set of problems. Dr. King, along with his colleagues, was a master strategist. This will engage the students in the power of purpose and planning. It will also help them understand how to work as a team, how to effectively make the most of their time, and how their ability to work together will be directly connected to their ability to help others.

3. Award points (teacher decides point value) based upon their performance. Inform students that they will be able to use the points they earn.
4. While still in their teams, give each team a scenario handout (see Activity Handout 1) and explain the definition of the Beloved Community (see Learning Resource 2). Give the teams 15 minutes to discuss the scenarios on the sheet. They must choose the scenario to which they want their points to go. The team must collectively decide what they want to work for and why it is important to them.



Guiding questions for students:

Why is this scenario important?

What is the problem in the scenario that should be addressed?

5. Next, give students 20 minutes to develop a nonviolent solution to the problem.
6. Ask the teams to report out. They should explain to their classmates the following:

Describe the problem in the scenario.

Why was this scenario important to the team?

What solution did they develop to solve the problem?

**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 questions:

- Why is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. an important historical figure?
- What is “the World House?”
- What is “the Beloved Community”?
- What type of behaviors do you believe you will see in Dr. King’s Beloved Community?

Post Instruction Survey for Educators

Please complete the post instruction survey here:

https://tkc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8hKlsnDPspNHh78



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

The goal is to get at least 45 points and pick a 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of which scenario students want to give to.

| Scenario | Point Value Required to help | Solution - notes |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| There is a family that has 2 small children. They just found out that they are not able to stay in their home because the father lost his job, and the landlord has decided not to renew their lease. They do not have enough money to move into another home. | 15 points | |
| There is a girl in the 7 th grade who is being bullied by another group of girls. She wants to tell the teacher, but she is afraid that the girls will try to get her back for telling. She needs someone to talk to. | 15 Points | |
| A teacher is trying to raise money for a group of women. They each have children and they are trying to raise money to get clothes for their children, and buy gas to get back and forth to their job. | 15 Points | |
| There is a campaign going on to help raise awareness about gun violence in the city. The campaign will include peaceful protests and community meetings to discuss solutions. | 15 Points | |
| There is a case of vandalism at the school. There are a few students who know what happened, but they are afraid to tell anyone. You have an idea who may have done it, but you are also afraid to tell anyone. You have been given the opportunity to be on a committee to interview students to see who may know something about the situation. If you choose to be on this committee - tell why this is important to you. | 15 Points | |