



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: 9-12**



### Lesson Title: A World House Revealed

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**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:** Activity Handout

#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to Dr. King's concept of the World House
- Students will discuss the power of the words that Dr. King used to help convey the message of the Beloved Community
- Students will discover creative ways to engage in collaboration and problem-solving skills

#### 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.”

This activity helps students tap into critical thinking and deep reading. 25 Alive is a seek-and-find activity. Adjectives are the words that help us visualize the things and thoughts around us.

### **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. Give students 15 minutes read Activity Handout 1. Ask students to identify as many adjectives as they can. Next, they should look up the meaning of the words and explain how they are used to enhance the message.

This activity will enable students to understand how Dr. King strategically used language and how language is important.

3. Next, give students 15 minutes to read the second King excerpt (Activity Handout 2). After students have completed the reading, divide them into teams. Ask each team to think about new inventions or innovations they would develop to help further the Beloved Community. Students should use Activity Handout 3 to identify past developments and future developments. The future developments will be their unique contribution to helping to create the Beloved Community.
4. Divide students into teams, ask them to create a team video identifying what their future contribution to the Beloved Community will be.

**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\\_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

Inhabitants of the globe are now neighbors. This world-wide neighborhood has been brought into being as a result of the modern scientific and technological revolutions. The world of today is vastly different from the world of just one hundred years ago. A century ago, Thomas Edison had not yet invented the incandescent lamp to bring light to many dark places of the earth. The Wright brothers had not yet invented that fascinating mechanical bird that would spread its gigantic wings across the skies and soon dwarf distance and place time in the service of man. Einstein had not yet challenged an axiom and the theory of relativity had not yet been posited.

Human beings, searching a century ago as now for better understanding, had no television, no radios, no telephones and no motion pictures through which to communicate. Medical science had not yet discovered the wonder drugs to end many dreaded plagues and diseases. One hundred years ago military men had not yet developed the terrifying weapons of warfare that we know today—not the bomber, an airborne fortress raining down death; nor napalm, that burner of all things and flesh in its path. A century ago, there were no sky-scraping buildings to kiss the stars and no gargantuan bridges to span the waters. Science had not yet peered into the unfathomable ranges of interstellar space, nor had it penetrated oceanic depths. All these new inventions, these new ideas, these sometimes fascinating and sometimes frightening developments, came later. Most of them have come within the past sixty years, sometimes with agonizing slowness, more characteristically with bewildering speed, but always with enormous significance for our future.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1968).



### Activity Handout 2

“The years ahead will see a continuation of the same dramatic developments. Physical science will carve new highways through the stratosphere. In a few years astronauts and cosmonauts will probably walk comfortably across the uncertain pathways of the moon. In two or three years it will be possible, because of the new supersonic jets, to fly from New York to London in two and one-half hours. In the years ahead medical science will greatly prolong the lives of men by finding a cure for cancer and deadly heart ailments. Automation and cybernation will make it possible for working people to have undreamed-of amounts of leisure time. All this is a dazzling picture of the furniture, the workshop, the spacious rooms, the new decorations, and the architectural pattern of the large world house in which we are living.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1968).

### Activity Handout 3

Developments	Then	Now
Medical Science		
Transportation		
Automation		
Architecture		