



Module 3, Unit 3, Lesson Plan 1

The Beloved Community

(Grades 6-12)

Learning Targets/Objectives:

- Explain what Dr. King meant by “The Beloved Community”

Success Criteria:

- Produce an infographic that illustrates the meaning of King’s “Beloved Community”

Lesson Content Overview:

First coined by Josiah Royce, the concept of "The Beloved Community" is a global vision of world peace put into practice by embracing the philosophy of nonviolence and reconciliation developed, practiced, and taught by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There are several essential principles that guide this community.

- a. All can share in the wealth of the earth
- b. International standards of human decency will protect against poverty, hunger, and homelessness
- c. An all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood will replace all forms of racism, discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice
- d. International disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation between adversaries, instead of military power
- e. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred
- f. Peace and justice will prevail over war and military conflict

One of the key components of "The Beloved Community" is the "spirit of friendship and goodwill" that is guided by reconciliation. No matter who the adversary happens to be parents, teachers, friends, bullies, and strangers- the result *always* is reconciliation. King once said:

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 opposers 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.

Addressing the newfound liberation of Ghana under the dynamic leadership of Kwame Nkrumah in 1957, Dr. King elaborated even further on his philosophy of nonviolence in relation to the Black freedom struggle in America. "The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the "Beloved Community." The aftermath of nonviolence is redemption. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation." Several years later, Dr. King commented that, "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."¹

The Power of Love

Understanding that "good will" alone was not enough to sustain the vision of the "Beloved Community." Dr. King addressed the importance of agape- "unconditional love." What is agape love? According to Dr. King, agape love is "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 ... 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."

This call for a world-wide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all men. This often misunderstood and misinterpreted concept has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love, I am speaking of that force which all the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to the ultimate reality.

Unfortunately, Dr. King's vision of the "Beloved Community" has not been realized as both America and the world continue to ignore the powerful spirit of love as an alternative to violence, conflict resolution, abuse, and war. As Dr. King concluded at the end of *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*:

We must utilize the community action groups and training centers now proliferating in some slum areas to create not merely an electorate , but a conscious , alert and informed people who know their direction and whose collective wisdom and vitality commands respect. Among the moral imperatives of our time, we are challenged to work all over the world with unshakable determination to wipe out the last vestiges of racism.

Instructional Sequence:

Opener:

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. "Nonviolence and Racial Justice." Chicago, IL. February 6, 1957. The Martin Luther King Institute, Stanford University. Retrieved from <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/nonviolence-and-racial-justice>

Put the following MLK quote on the board. "Life's most urgent question is: what are you doing for others?" Ask students to conduct a free write, explaining how this quote applies to themselves and how the quote can be applied to their school community.

- SEL Connection: If you have newspapers available, have students look through the newspaper to find stories where individuals or organizations are working in service of others. If students can locate a few articles, ask them to discuss the details of those stories. If students cannot locate any articles, ask them what they think that says about their community.

Small Group Collaboration:

Place students into small groups of three to four. First, have students read the Lesson Content Overview. When completed, students will work in groups to answer the following questions:

1. Name one principle that guides the *Beloved Community*.
2. What is the *Beloved Community*?
3. In your opinion what are two current social conditions or concerns that the Beloved Community would address?
4. What can you do to help create the Beloved Community?
5. Do you believe your generation will see the fulfillment of the Beloved Community? Why or why not?
6. Dr. King said, "Group unity necessarily involves group trust and reconciliation." Why is unity essential to the *Beloved Community*? Why is reconciliation?

Formative Assessment:

- Working alone or in pairs, students should use canva to create an infographic that explains King's "Beloved Community."

Adaptations for Student Needs

IEP:

- Sizes of student groups range
- Students team up with a peer partner, while others would prefer to work individually.
- There is a variety of small-group work
- Chunking information
- Visual cues and wait time
- Visual supports (maps, images, PowerPoint slides, handouts)
- Assessments will be modified, and students given extra time

ELD

- Modified/simplified reading material
- Content-related lists/handouts of key terms
- Text is supported by visuals and connected to real-life experiences