



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

BELOVED COMMUNITY TEACH-IN FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS



Lesson Plan: Building a Beloved Community of Kindness

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

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Curriculum Connections: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Art and Creativity, Character Education

Thematic Focus: Kindness and Respect, Unity, Imagination, and Creativity, Empathy and Understanding, Global Citizenship

Lesson Duration: 45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will understand Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of a "Beloved Community" and its implications for unity, kindness, and respect.
2. Students will explore and discuss practical strategies for promoting kindness and respect within their school community.
3. Students will engage in a hands-on, interactive game and read excerpts from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Beloved Community" speech.

Success Criteria:

1. Students can articulate Dr. King's vision of a "Beloved Community" and its connection to values like kindness and respect.
2. Students actively contribute to discussions on strategies for promoting kindness and respect in their school.
3. Students demonstrate active participation, collaboration, and understanding through the game and speech analysis.

Introduction (10 minutes):

- Begin with a brief discussion on Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of the "Beloved Community."
- Explore key concepts of unity, kindness, and respect, emphasizing their importance in fostering a positive school community.
- Introduce the excerpt from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "The Birth of a New Age" speech.
- Introduce the reading excerpts from Coretta Scott King's autobiography, *My Life, My Love, My Legacy*
- Introduce reading excerpt from The King Philosophy

Activity 1: Community Kindness Campaign Planning (15 minutes):

- Discuss with students the idea of launching a "Community Kindness Campaign" within the school.
- In small groups, students brainstorm and plan creative ways to promote kindness and respect among their peers.
- Examples may include kindness challenges, creating positive affirmation boards, or organizing events that celebrate diversity and unity.

(Examples for Activity 1: Community Kindness Campaign Planning)

Activity 2: Kindness Quest and Speech Analysis (15 minutes):

- Introduce the "Kindness Quest" game, a scavenger hunt-style activity.
- Provide each group with a list of clues related to acts of kindness or positive behaviors.
- While engaged in the game, pause to read excerpts from Dr. King's "The Birth of a New Age" speech.
- After the game, engage in a brief analysis and discussion of the speech's relevance to the values explored during the quest.

(List of clues for Activity 2: Kindness Quest and Speech Analysis)

Assessment: Reflection and Group Discussion (5 minutes):

- Each group reflects on their experiences during the “Kindness Quest” and the impact of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech on their understanding.
- Facilitate a discussion on the interplay between the speech’s ideals and the practical strategies proposed during the brainstorming activity.
- Assess student understanding through reflections on the feasibility and impact of their proposed kindness initiatives.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Summarize the key concepts of the lesson, emphasizing the role each student plays in creating a positive school community.
- Encourage students to actively participate in the upcoming “Community Kindness Campaign.”

Extension Activity (optional):

- Assign students to write a short reflection on how the “Kindness Quest” game and Dr. King’s speech enhanced their understanding of kindness, unity, and the “Beloved Community” concept.

Accommodations**Students with Disabilities:**

- 1. Visual Supports:**
 - Provide visual aids, charts, and diagrams to support understanding.
 - Use color-coded materials to help organize information.
- 2. Auditory Supports:**
 - Offer recorded instructions or summaries for auditory learners.
 - Use assistive listening devices if necessary.
- 3. Flexible Seating:**
 - Allow for flexible seating arrangements to accommodate physical disabilities.
 - Ensure the learning environment is wheelchair accessible.
- 4. Extended Time:**
 - Provide additional time for activities and assessments as needed.
- 5. Sensory Breaks:**
 - Allow for sensory breaks if students become overwhelmed.
 - Provide sensory-friendly materials if necessary.
- 6. Peer Assistance:**
 - Encourage peer support for students who may need assistance.
 - Foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):

- 1. Modified Assignments:**
 - Adjust the complexity of assignments based on individual needs.
 - Provide alternative assessments when necessary.
- 2. Specific Goals:**
 - Align lesson objectives with the goals outlined in the student’s IEP.
 - Monitor progress toward IEP goals and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.
- 3. Communication Plans:**
 - Establish clear communication plans between teachers and support staff.
 - Regularly update parents on progress and areas that may need attention.
- 4. Adaptive Technology:**
 - Utilize adaptive technology tools and software.
 - Ensure students have access to devices that meet their specific needs.

5. **Behavioral Supports:**

- Implement positive behavior reinforcement strategies.
- Work collaboratively with behavioral specialists if needed.

English Learners:

1. **Multilingual Materials:**

- Provide materials in the students' native languages.
- Offer bilingual dictionaries or translation tools.

2. **Visual Supports:**

- Use visuals and realia to support language comprehension.
- Encourage the use of gestures and non-verbal communication.

3. **Language Buddies:**

- Pair English learners with proficient English speakers.
- Encourage collaboration and peer support.

4. **Vocabulary Support:**

- Pre-teach key vocabulary and provide glossaries.
- Offer vocabulary-building activities.

5. **Flexible Grouping:**

- Allow for flexible grouping to promote language development through collaboration.
- Provide opportunities for language practice in small groups.

6. **Cultural Sensitivity:**

- Incorporate diverse cultural references to make content relatable.
- Foster an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment.

Examples for Activity 1: Community Kindness Campaign Planning

1. **Kindness Challenges:**

- **Idea:** Create a series of weekly or monthly kindness challenges.
- **Example:** Challenge students to perform random acts of kindness such as leaving uplifting notes in lockers, helping a classmate with homework, or initiating conversations with someone new.

2. **Positive Affirmation Boards:**

- **Idea:** Design interactive boards where students can leave positive affirmations for each other.
- **Example:** Provide a board with sticky notes or a digital platform where students can write encouraging messages to their peers, promoting a culture of positivity and support.

3. **Diversity Celebration Events:**

- **Idea:** Organize events that celebrate the diverse backgrounds and cultures within the school.
- **Example:** Host a cultural fair where students can share aspects of their heritage through food, music, and presentations, fostering an understanding and appreciation for different cultures.

4. **Compliment Cards:**

- **Idea:** Introduce a system of compliment cards that students can give to one another.
- **Example:** Create small cards where students can write compliments or words of appreciation for their peers. These cards can be collected and shared during designated times.

5. **Kindness Rocks Garden:**

- **Idea:** Start a "Kindness Rocks" garden where students paint rocks with positive messages.
- **Example:** Provide rocks, paint, and markers for students to create rocks with messages of kindness. Place the rocks in a designated area to serve as a visual reminder of the importance of kindness.

6. **Peer Support Network:**

- **Idea:** Establish a peer support network where students volunteer to be available for their peers.
- **Example:** Train students to be peer supporters who actively listen, provide encouragement, and offer assistance when needed. This creates a supportive atmosphere within the school.

7. **Kindness Wall of Fame:**
 - **Idea:** Create a “Kindness Wall of Fame” to recognize and celebrate acts of kindness.
 - **Example:** Set up a wall where teachers or students can post stories or examples of acts of kindness they’ve witnessed. This creates a positive and uplifting environment.
8. **Collaborative Art Projects:**
 - **Idea:** Engage students in collaborative art projects that symbolize unity and respect.
 - **Example:** Create a mural, sculpture, or other art installations that represent diversity, unity, and the importance of treating others with respect.
9. **Peer Mentoring Program:**
 - **Idea:** Implement a peer mentoring program where older students mentor younger ones.
 - **Example:** Pair older students with younger counterparts to provide guidance, support, and a sense of connection, fostering positive relationships within the school community.
10. **Interactive Workshops:**
 - **Idea:** Conduct interactive workshops on empathy, communication, and conflict resolution.
 - **Example:** Bring in guest speakers or organize activities that help students understand different perspectives, improve communication skills, and resolve conflicts peacefully.

These creative initiatives aim to create a positive and inclusive school culture where kindness and respect become integral parts of daily interactions.

List of clues for Activity 2: Kindness Quest and Speech Analysis

1. **Clue 1: The Heart of Friendship** *Find the place where friends often gather to share stories and laughter. Either leave sticky notes/messages for others to find later or perform an act of kindness by leaving a positive note or drawing on the friendship board.*
2. **Clue 2: Blooms of Encouragement** *Visit the area where nature meets nurture. Find a plant or flower and leave an encouraging message or compliment for someone to discover.*
3. **Clue 3: The Compassionate Corner** *Seek out the designated compassion corner. Share a kind word or gesture with a classmate who might be feeling down or in need of a friend.*
4. **Clue 4: The Unity Tree** *Locate the symbolic Unity Tree. Add a leaf with your name and a message that promotes unity and understanding among all students.*
5. **Clue 5: Acts of Inclusion** *Explore the spaces where students collaborate. Perform an act of inclusion by inviting someone who may be alone to join a group or activity.*
6. **Clue 6: The Appreciation Station** *Find the board where achievements and positive actions are celebrated. Add a note of appreciation for a classmate’s recent accomplishment.*
7. **Clue 7: The Respect Zone** *Discover the designated Respect Zone. Share a brief skit or role-play demonstrating respect and kindness towards others.*
8. **Clue 8: Gratitude Wall** *Create or locate a designated Gratitude Wall. Add a positive message expressing gratitude for something or someone in the school community.*
9. **Clue 9: Team Harmony** *Visit a space where teamwork is celebrated. Perform a small act of collaboration or teamwork to enhance the sense of unity among students.*
10. **Clue 10: The Empathy Bench** *Find the special Empathy Bench. Spend a few moments listening to a classmate and offering words of empathy and understanding.*

These clues are general locations that may/may not be in schools. Teachers can use this list or customize a list so that it is designed to encourage students to explore different areas of their school while actively engaging in acts of kindness and positive behaviors.

TEACHING RESOURCES

Excerpt of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "A Birth of a New Age" speech

"The Birth of a New Age," Address Delivered on 11 August 1956 at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha in Buffalo | The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute (stanford.edu): <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/birth-new-age-address-delivered-11-august-1956-fiftieth-anniversary-alpha-phi>

Excerpt From *My Life, My Love, My Legacy* by Coretta Scott King

"I began to dream of a world in which all kinds of people would be welcome and could live in peace and harmony. Years later, a label would be attached to this vision: the Beloved Community, where love and trust triumph over fear and hatred."

"To me, the Beloved Community is a spiritual bond that claims the energies and commitment of a diverse group of people who desire to serve a cause larger than themselves. The Beloved Community is fueled by unconditional love, feels like family, and transcends race, religion, and class."

"Again, by the Beloved Community, I am not talking about a utopian dream of a perfect society in which everyone lives together without conflict. Many artists have produced lovely, bucolic renditions of the "peaceable kingdom," with lions and lambs lying down together and everyone having his or her own vine and fig tree. That is more like heaven than the Beloved Community on earth, which is not a perfect society."

To me, the Beloved Community is a realistic vision of an achievable society, one in which problems and conflict exist, but are resolved peacefully and without bitterness. In the Beloved Community, caring and compassion drive political policies that support the worldwide elimination of poverty and hunger and all forms of bigotry and violence. The Beloved Community is a state of heart and mind, a spirit of hope and goodwill that transcends all boundaries and barriers and embraces all creation. At its core, the Beloved Community is an engine of reconciliation. This way of living seems a long way from the kind of world we have now, but I do believe it is a goal that can be accomplished through courage and determination, and through education and training, if enough people are willing to make the necessary commitment."

Videos

- Martin Luther King Jr. For Kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAUvvAbzkUk>
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "What Is Your Life's Blueprint?" <https://youtu.be/ZmtOGXreTOU?si=atc8kd3k7aTf4pyu>
- Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream:" <https://youtu.be/n82rgdbM9G4?si=UPsgtofranOroW3j>

Clarification of Concepts: Nonviolence, World House, and Beloved Community

Nonviolence

Nonviolence is a love-centered way of thinking, speaking, acting, and engaging that leads to personal, cultural, and societal transformation. Review the Kingian philosophy of nonviolence: <https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/>

World House

Metaphor: The "world house" is a metaphor used by Martin Luther King Jr. to describe the interconnectedness of humanity on a global scale. It emphasizes that, just like a family living together in one house, people of diverse backgrounds, races, religions, and cultures share the same planet and must learn to coexist.

Inclusivity: The concept of the world house highlights the necessity for people to recognize and appreciate their shared humanity. It calls for unity, understanding, and cooperation among individuals and nations despite their differences.

Responsibilities: Living in the "world house" implies a responsibility to address the challenges of coexistence. King argues that, as inhabitants of this shared world, individuals and nations must learn to live with one another in peace and work together for the common good.

Beloved Community

Definition: The term “Beloved Community” refers to a society characterized by justice, equality, and brotherhood. It is a society based on love, compassion, and mutual respect among its members. King often used this term to describe his vision of an ideal and morally upright society.

Spiritual Bond: The Beloved Community is not merely a physical or geographical concept; it represents a spiritual bond among individuals who are committed to serving a cause larger than themselves. It transcends race, religion, and class.

Nonviolence Leads to the Creation of the Beloved Community: The way of nonviolence leads to the creation of the Beloved Community. The Beloved Community is fueled by unconditional love, care, and goodwill. It promotes values that go beyond superficial differences. The Triple Evils of poverty, racism, and militarism are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle. They stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community. When we work to remedy one evil, we affect all evils. To work against the Triple Evils, we must develop a nonviolent frame of mind as described in the “Six Principles of Nonviolence” and use the Kingian model for social action outlined in the “Six Steps of Nonviolence.”

Scope of Concepts

The “World House” primarily focuses on the global interconnectedness of all people and nations, emphasizing the need for unity on a planetary scale.

The “Beloved Community” is more focused on describing a society characterized by moral and spiritual principles, reflecting the quality of relationships and interactions within a community.

Geographical vs. Societal

The “World House” is a metaphorical representation of the shared Earth, emphasizing the physical space and cohabitation of diverse people on the planet.

The “Beloved Community” is a realistic vision of an achievable society, emphasizing the qualities of relationships and the moral and spiritual principles that should guide interactions among community members.

Unity and Uplift

The “World House” stresses the necessity for unity and cooperation among diverse individuals and nations for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

The “Beloved Community” emphasizes the transformative power of love and justice in creating a society where individuals uplift one another and work collectively toward a higher moral and spiritual ideal.

Want to learn more?

To learn more about nonviolence and how to apply it for personal, cultural, and societal transformation, check out The King Center’s online course, **Nonviolence365® Online:** <https://thekingcenterinstitute.org/>