

Character and Life Skills

Video Title: Justice, Responsible Decision Making

Lesson Title: Awareness and Action

Grade Level: High School



Project and Purpose

Students determine an injustice in the world they would like to correct and apply Dr. Martin Luther King's Six Steps of Nonviolent Change to form a possible solution.

Essential Question

How do we work against injustice?

Materials

- Copy of Dr. Martin Luther King's "Six Steps of Nonviolent Change" (provided; from The King Center, www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy)
- A Plan Involving The Six Steps Of Nonviolent Social Change worksheet

Procedure

1. Have the students do a quiet write (2-4 minutes) on the following prompt: *You have an opportunity to correct any injustice you see in the world, but you have to pick only one. What injustice would you correct? Why?*
2. At the end of the time, have them turn and talk with a partner about their responses to the prompt for another 2-4 minutes.
3. Distribute or post Dr. Martin Luther King's "Six Steps of Nonviolent Change" to each pair and have them annotate the document according to the format you most often use in class.
4. Share out annotations with the full group. Ask any/all of the following:
 - Which step feels the most challenging? Why?
 - Are all six steps necessary to create justice? Why/not?
 - Looking at current events, do you think people have these six steps in mind when seeking justice? Explain.
 - Should non-violence always be the way to create justice? Why or why not?
 - What other thoughts, comments, questions come to mind when reading this piece?
5. Working with their partner or independently, have students use the A Plan...worksheet to apply the six steps to the point of injustice they have chosen to "correct." Depending on time, this may have to be completed in a second session or for homework.

Conclusion

Ask students to share their response to the essential question (How do we work against injustice) with their partner.

Extension

Have students track their own involvement in their work toward justice for their selected topic.

Notes

Handout: Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change

The Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings that emphasize love in action. Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, as reviewed in the Six Principles of Nonviolence, guide these steps for social and interpersonal change.

- 1. INFORMATION GATHERING:** To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community, or institution you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.
- 2. EDUCATION:** It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstandings and gains you support and sympathy.
- 3. PERSONAL COMMITMENT:** Daily check and affirm your faith in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work for justice.
- 4. DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION:** Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and a plan for addressing and resolving these injustices. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent but to call forth the good in the opponent.
- 5. DIRECT ACTION:** These are actions taken when the opponent is unwilling to enter into, or remain in, discussion/negotiation. These actions impose a "creative tension" into the conflict, supplying moral pressure on your opponent to work with you in resolving the injustice.
- 6. RECONCILIATION:** Nonviolence seeks friendship and understanding with the opponent. Nonviolence does not seek to defeat the opponent. Nonviolence is directed against evil systems, forces, oppressive policies, unjust acts, but not against persons. Through reasoned compromise, both sides resolve the injustice with a plan of action. Each act of reconciliation is one step closer to the 'Beloved Community.'

Based on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in Why We Can't Wait, Penguin Books, 1963. The King Center, <http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy>

Notes

Handout: A Plan Involving The Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change

Name: _____

Justice issue: _____

STEPS	Your ideas for application
INFORMATION GATHERING Where can you find the research you need? Who, what will be a resource for information?	
EDUCATION How will others be informed? Letters? Social media? Street corners?	
PERSONAL COMMITMENT How does the seeker of justice commit to the work on a regular basis for this journey?	
DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION How does one use "grace, humor and intelligence" in discussions with the opposition?	
DIRECT ACTION If the opposition will not discuss or negotiate with, what non-violent actions can be taken?	
RECONCILIATION How can one befriend the opponent in order to focus on the injustice, not the person?	