

## TLC ONLINE CURRICULUM

### **Lesson Title:**

Learning to Respect Each Other

### **Grade Level:**

6, with adaptation for younger students

### **Subject Area:**

United States History, Anti-bias Education

### **Duration:**

Three class periods

### **Objectives:**

Students will understand the following:

1. Dr. Martin Luther King was a strong advocate of nonviolent protest and fought for civil rights for all Americans with an eloquence that can be found in speeches such as his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.
2. Throughout U.S. history, certain groups of people have been discriminated against for characteristics as superficial as the color of their skin. That racism still exists despite the passage of laws that make it illegal.
3. Stereotypes can lead people to make unfair judgments about individuals and groups.
4. Segregation is hurtful and unfair to those discriminated against.

### **Materials**

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech (available online at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>)
- Notebooks or journals (one per student)
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Copies of Take-Home Activity Sheet: In the Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

### **Procedures**

#### **Day 1**

1. Read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech to the class. (The speech is available on the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project site at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>.)
2. After reading the speech, write the following quotation on the chalkboard:

**“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”**

Ask the class what they think that quote means and jot their ideas down on the chalkboard.

3. Follow up the discussion of Dr. King’s quote by explaining to students that throughout American history, minorities have been discriminated against and judged for characteristics as superficial as the color of their skin. Talk about some examples of discrimination in our nation’s past. Here are some examples:
  - In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century millions of African Americans were taken from their homeland and forced into slavery.
  - For many years, Native Americans were forced from their land by European settlers who immigrated to America.
  - Japanese American citizens were unfairly imprisoned in camps in the United States during World War II simply because their ancestry was Japanese and the United States was in a war against the country of Japan.
  
4. Explain that our nation has made great strides fighting discrimination, such as
  - the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the constitution, which abolished slavery;
  - the Fifteenth Amendment, which made it illegal to deny people the right to vote because of the color of their skin or their religious beliefs; and
  - the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made it illegal to discriminate against other persons in a public place or facility based on their color, sex, or religion.But despite these tremendous accomplishments, racism still exists today.
  
5. Explain to students that discrimination, like the examples discussed above, can grow from assumptions and stereotypes that people make about others. Explain that an assumption is an idea that is taken for granted but not necessarily proven to be true. For example, it was assumed by European settlers that because the Native Americans looked different, spoke a different language, practiced different customs, and worshipped God differently, that they were somehow not as good or as “civilized” as the European settlers. How might assumptions have played a role in the other examples of discrimination mentioned above?
  
6. Now ask students to help define the word *stereotype*. Explain that when we make assumptions about an entire group of people, those assumptions are referred to as stereotypes. When assumptions and stereotypes influence our attitudes, we may find that making a fair judgment about someone or something is difficult. This influence on our judgment is called a *bias*.
  
7. Ask students what kind of discrimination they’ve observed in their everyday life. How do assumptions and stereotypes play a role in this discrimination? Do they see discrimination on TV? How about in their school or neighborhood?

## Day 2

1. Today's lesson involves arbitrarily segregating students into two groups—a "majority" group and a "minority" group—during the course of one school day. Before beginning this lesson, teachers may want to send a letter home to parents that describes this activity. In the note, explain that in this experiment children will discover how stereotypes and biases toward others come about and how it feels to be discriminated against. If any parent is opposed to the idea of their child's participation, then of course that child is excused from the exercise.
  2. Prior to the mock segregation, inform students that this exercise is merely "acting."
  3. Segregate students on an arbitrary but visible criterion. For example, you can randomly assign red and blue stickers for students to wear on their clothing throughout the experiment. The reds will comprise a majority of the population; the blues will represent the minority. The minority will not be given the same privileges or opportunities as members of the majority, for example:
    - The majority (reds) will be given free time to read or talk quietly with friends.  
The minority (blues) will work and not have free time to relax.
    - The majority will be allowed to work together on projects, if they wish.  
The minority must work independently.
    - The majority will get questions answered first.  
The minority will be called on last.
    - The majority will be dismissed first for lunch, recess, and at end of day.  
The minority will be dismissed last.
- NOTE:** The "privileges" above will be exercised during the course of one full school day. To ensure that everybody has an opportunity to be in the majority and in the minority, you may want to switch groups halfway through the day or make this a two-day exercise.
4. Have all students keep a personal journal throughout the mock segregation. Encourage them to take notes on the dynamics of segregation and discrimination, noting how it feels to be a member of the privileged group and what it feels like to be discriminated against.

## Day 3

1. Break the red and blue groups into smaller subgroups of three or four students each. All the students within a subgroup must be from the same original group. (Therefore, reds should be with other reds and blues with blues.)

2. In their small groups, have students share their ideas and thoughts on the mock segregation experiment using their journals for reference. On chart paper, have a recorder in each group write down what they felt was the most striking aspect of the mock segregation experiment. What did they find most disturbing or hurtful? What was most memorable?
3. Invite each group to report its findings to the whole class.
4. Conclude the three-day lesson plan by looking back at Dr. King's quote and students' notes about the quote. Is there anything more they'd like to add? Have students discuss what they've learned about discrimination. What didn't they know or truly understand before the experiment?
5. As a homework assignment, pass out copies of the Take Home Activity Sheet: In the Words of Martin Luther King, Jr. In this activity, students will be asked to look at quotes taken from King's "I Have a Dream" speech and describe King's message in their own words.

### **Adaptation for Younger Students**

Younger children may have a difficult time understanding the mock segregation experiment, so focus the lesson plan instead on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Explain to children who Dr. King was and why he's an American hero. Tell students that Dr. King embraced the idea of "nonviolent resistance" to protest discrimination in America. Explain that "nonviolent resistance" is done without yelling or fighting, and that it is a way of protesting against something that a person doesn't believe in without hurting other people. As you read the speech aloud, point out some of the images Dr. King had for the future. Encourage children to make illustrations to go with the speech.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Where have you observed racism? How did it make you feel?
2. Define the ideas of civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance that Martin Luther King, Jr., embraced. Do you think his tactics would work today? Why or why not?
3. How might the media (newspapers, TV, movies, advertisements) perpetuate unfair racial stereotypes? What can these sources do to eliminate racial bias?
4. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate against a person in a public place or a federally funded business based on color, sex, or religious beliefs. Do you think this law has completely eliminated racism in public places, such as restaurants, hotels, and businesses? Why or why not? What factors still play a role in racial discrimination?
5. Imagine you observe a classmate being discriminated against by other students because of some physical attribute, like skin color. What do you do? What could you say to the students who are being mean to their classmate?

6. Sometimes people make assumptions about an individual based on that person's skin color or religion. Why is that unfair? How do assumptions affect people's behavior toward others?

## **Evaluation**

You can evaluate students using the following three-point rubric:

**Three points:** Active participation during discussion of the "I Have a Dream" speech; keeps detailed, thoughtful notes in journal during mock segregation experiment; shares ideas during small group discussion; and participates in presentation of small group discussion notes to whole class.

**Two points:** Some participation during discussion of the "I Have a Dream" speech; keeps some notes in journal during mock segregation experiment, but not very deep; shares some ideas during small group discussion, but not very active participant; and participates satisfactorily in presentation of small group discussion to whole class.

**One point:** Little or no participation during the discussion of the "I Have a Dream" speech; keeps few or no notes in journal during mock segregation experiment; shares few or no ideas during small group discussion; and is not very involved in presentation of small group discussion to whole class.

## **Extensions**

### Civil Right Heroes

Students have learned that Dr. King is a civil rights hero who embraced civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. Now invite them to research another civil rights hero. Research should include some biographical information and what the person did or is doing to fight racism. Students will present their research to the class in the form of an oral report.

### Fighting Discrimination: A Story Book

Invite children to draw or paint a picture illustrating one nonviolent solution to discrimination. They should include a caption to go with their picture. They could also share their idea in a poem. After editing their work, you can compile all student pieces into a class book to be displayed in a school showcase.

### I Have a Dream

In his speech, Dr. King describes in vivid detail his dreams for a world without racial discrimination. Now students have a chance to write their very own "I Have a Dream" speech. Remind them to include rich details. When they're done, invite children to read their speeches to the class.

### In the News

Encourage students to bring in news stories having to do with some form of discrimination (such as racial, religious, or gender discrimination). These could include

newspaper or magazine articles as well as stories seen on the news. Spend a little time each day discussing these current events.

### **Related Links**

Breaking Racial Barriers

<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/harmon/>

Explore the outstanding achievements of this group of African Americans whose portraits appear courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery and the Harmon Foundation.

DoSomething.org

<http://www.dosomething.org/>

A nationwide network of young people who know they can make a difference and take action to change the world around them. Site includes polls, conversations, and a place for kids to submit and publish stories.

Jim Crow

<http://topaz.kenyon.edu/projects/neh/edu/jimcrow.htm>

A description of the system of segregation used before the civil rights movement in the United States.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/index.htm>

A collection of Dr. King's correspondence, sermons, speeches, published writings, and unpublished manuscripts as researched and compiled by Stanford University.

Seattle Times: Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/index.html>

Learn about this civil rights hero from an in-depth site on the life of MLK by the Seattle Times.

### **Under Our Skin: Kids Talk About Race**

Debbie Holsclaw Birdseye and Tom Birdseye. Holiday House, 1997.

Six students from diverse ethnic backgrounds discuss how their cultural traditions affect their daily lives, how they feel about race relations in the United States, and what their own experiences of prejudice have been like. This book is a very personal examination of race and racism and how prejudice affects children every day.

### **Everything You Need to Know About Racism**

Nasoan Sheftel-Gomes. Rosen, 1998.

This book contains a brief history of racism in the United States and of the Civil Rights Movement. It also discusses how prejudice affects us all and how each of us can cope with racism and work to eliminate it.

### **Web Links:**

#### **Southern Poverty Law Center: Teaching Tolerance**

The Southern Poverty Law Center offers numerous resources for “Teaching Tolerance” on these pages, along with the opportunity to apply for grants and request a free magazine for continuing classroom reference.

<http://www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/tt-index.html>

#### **Rethinking Schools Online: Multiculturalism: A Fight for Justice**

The Fall 2000 issue of this online journal offers a special report on the status of multicultural education. The site also includes additional links.

[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/Archives/15\\_01/15\\_01.htm](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/Archives/15_01/15_01.htm)

#### **Anti-Defamation League Education Resources**

The education resources of the Anti-Defamation League provide extensive information about combating hate of all kinds.

[http://www.adl.org/frames/front\\_education.html](http://www.adl.org/frames/front_education.html)

#### **Hateful Acts Hurt Kids**

This Department of Justice site for kids offers information “about children of different races, religions and cultures who face prejudices and must decide how they will respond.”

<http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/bias-k-5/index.htm>

#### **Race and Ethnicity**

This is an extremely useful teacher reference site, dealing with all aspects and issues related to race and ethnicity.

<http://eserver.org/race/>

### **Vocabulary**

Click on any of the vocabulary words below to hear them pronounced and used in a sentence.

**assumption**

Definition: An idea that is taken for granted but not necessarily proven.

Context: Non-Asians often make the assumption that Asians are smart.

**bias**

Definition: An attitude that always favors one way of feeling or acting over any other; prejudice.

Context: Omitting African Americans from history lessons is displaying a bias that their contributions are not important.

**discrimination**

Definition: Making a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit.

Context: Racial intolerance and discrimination are against the law because no one should be treated unfairly based on the color of his or her skin.

**race**

Definition: An arbitrary classification of modern humans based on any or a combination of various physical characteristics, as skin color, facial form, or eye shape; a group of people of common ancestry.

Context: One function of the census is to count U.S. citizens by race, such as Caucasian, African American, and Asian.

**stereotype**

Definition: An idea that many people have about a thing or a group that may often be untrue or only partly true.

Context: When we form a stereotype about a group of people, we depict all of the individuals in that group as having the same characteristics.

**Academic Standards**

**Grade level:**

6-8

**Subject Area:**

Behavioral Studies

**Standard:**

Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function.

**Benchmark:**



Understands that people sometimes react to all members of a group as though they were the same and perceive in their behavior only those qualities that fit preconceptions of the group (i.e., stereotyping), which leads to uncritical judgments (e.g., showing blind respect for members of some groups and equally blind disrespect for members of other groups).

**Grade level:**

3-5

**Subject Area:**

Behavioral Studies

**Standard:**

Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.

**Benchmark:**

Understands that resolving a conflict by force rather than compromise can lead to more problems.

**Credit**

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## In the Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was a minister and a leader of the civil rights movement who believed in nonviolent protest. In the left-hand column below, you will find quotes taken from Dr. King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech. In your own words, explain what each quotes means in the right-hand column.

Dr. King quote	What it means
I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed -- "we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."	
Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.	
I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality.	
A man who won't die for something is not fit to live.	