Title of Lesson: Ahimsa in the Real World: Identifying Ahimsa

Lesson By: Melissa Ardon

Grade Level/ Subject Areas: 2nd Grade
Class Size: 20
Time/ Duration of Lesson: 5 days
45 minutes, each day

Objectives of Lesson:
Students will
• discuss ahimsa as truth, love, and nonviolence.
• identify, evaluate, and acknowledge examples of ahimsa at school.
• learn about the different parts of a newspaper.
• write an article for the newspaper, describing an act of ahimsa that occurred at school.

Lesson Abstract:
Students in second grade will understand the use of newspaper for relating news and educating people. Students will use examples of newspaper articles to write their own class newspaper regarding acts of ahimsa.

Lesson Content:
Gandhi understood the significance of educating people about nonviolence and the movement for independence. It was after the passing of the Rowlatt Act, that a riot occurred in Bombay.

“It was unbearable for me to find that the laborers amongst whom I had spend a good deal of my time, whom I had served and from whom I had expected better things, had taken part in the riots, and I felt I shared this guild. I made up my mind to suspend satyagraha so long as people had learnt the lesson of peace” (Gandhi, Essential 129).

Gandhi believed it was more important for people to learn about the real reasons for the movement than to have mass people go out and protest, boycott, or even riot. Through this riot he realized that people were not ready for his hind swaraj. He had to stop and educate people about the movement.

“…My error lay in my failure to observe this necessary limitation. I had called on the people to launch a upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it…. I realized that before a people could be fit for offering civil disobedience they should thoroughly understand its deeper implication… It would be necessary to create a band of well-tired pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha” (Gandhi, Essential 130).

After the riots he came to the conclusion that without explaining Satyagraha and its inner meanings, there was no movement. Furthermore, without explaining and educating people about Satyagraha, people would not understand why it was imperative to be in a nonviolent movement. Thus, he understood the importance of using the media as a tool for education. However, he knew his ideas of nonviolence, ahimsa, and satyagraha would challenge those who disagreed.
“The press laws in force in India at the time were such that, if I wanted express my views untrammelled, the existing printing presses, which were naturally run for business, would have hesitated to publish them.” (Gandhi, Experiments with truth p.395)

Because Gandhi knew no one would publish his beliefs, he agreed to become the editor of the English language, weekly Young India, and its Gujarati newspaper, Navajivan. “These journals helped me … to some extent, to remain at peace with myself, for whilst immediate resort to civil disobedience was out of the question, they enabled me freely to ventilate my views and to put heart into the people.” (Gandhi, Essential Gandhi p. 130)

Gandhi used the media to communicate his goals and plans for nonviolence. It was through his newspaper articles that he was able to mobilize so many people towards the movement of Indian Independence and civil rights. “…I am proud to think that I have numerous readers among farmers and workers. They make India. Their poverty is India’s curse and crime. Their prosperity alone can make India a fit country to live in…” (Young India, October 8, 1919)

He also used it as a place to have dialogue with the readers. Readers would often write in comments or questions and Gandhi was able to express his philosophy of nonviolence.

In this lesson, students will write articles about nonviolence on their school campus. This idea emerged from Gandhi’s view of history. “History is really a record of every interruption of the even workings of the force of love of the soul” (Parel, 90). If we examine our history, most of what is recorded are wars and those things that contridict our soul, our love. As educators, it is our responsibility to inform students about truth. This means not only wars, but also those things that are making a positive difference in our world. An English proverb says that a nation which has no history, no wars, is a happy nation (Parel, 89). Why should that be the case? If we have no wars then we have no history, is that really the case? Or if we are in a happy nation our past is not good enough to be recorded in history? Nonetheless, students in the twenty first century should learn not only about wars, but about people in society who are working towards peace. Whether that peace is in the home, school, nation, or world, it should be recorded.

Furthermore, our world is not based on wars. As Gandhi stated, the fact that there are so many men still alive shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love (Parel, 89). And although soul force is natural, it is not noted in history. Thus, the goal for this lesson is to show students that we should celebrate, discuss, write, and read about things that are natural; things such as those who are helpful on campus, students who are always willing to show love to one another, those who respect others, help keep the school grounds clean are just examples of things students should become aware of and celebrated for showing ahimsa on campus. In this way, we will be writing our own school history one that is totally in sync with our love and soul force. History does not have to be only about wars. We can begin to write our own history.

*The following are a few newspaper quotes that may be distributed to students to give examples of Gandhi’s newspaper articles.*

*Ahimsa and Justice*
“Truth and Love-ahimsa—is the only thing that counts. Where this is present, everything rights itself in the end. This is a law to which there is no exception. (Young India, 18-8-1927, p265)”

My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is helpless witness of a single wrong or single misery. …The spirit in me pulls one way the flesh in me pulls in the opposite direction, this struggle resolves itself into an incessant crucifixion on the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free. 
Young India  November 17, 1921

Gandhi and punishment
I am quite capable of recommending even punishment to wrong doers… for example I would not hesitate under the present state of society to confine thieves and robbers … but I would also admit it is not satyagraha and that it is a fall from the pure doctrine. That would be an admission not of the weakness of the doctrine but the weakness of myself I am therefore …. prisons are not to be for punishment. Young India October 8, 1925

We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make steady progress toward it. The attainment of freedom whether for a man a nation or the world must be in exact proportion to the attainment of nonviolence by each. Young India, May 20,1926

Gandhi and corporal punishment
I would draw the distinction between killing and detention or even corporal punishment. I can recall the punishment of detention. I can reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment, but once a main is killed the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life because he gives it. Young India, October 8,1925

California State Content Standards: Second Grade.
Social Studies
2.4 Students understand basic economic concepts and their individual roles in the economy and demonstrate basic economic reasoning skills.

Language Arts:
Written and Oral English Language Conventions
1.0 Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.
1.1 Distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences.
1.2 Recognize and use the correct word order in written sentences.

Reading 1.0: Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development
Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

2.0 Reading Comprehension
Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of
comprehension strategies as needed.

**Guiding Questions:**
- How do I identify ahimsa at school?
- What is ahimsa?
- Why is it important to write our truth?
- Why should we write about people who practice truth, love, and nonviolence?
- How does it make people feel when they are recognized for the good things they do?

**Materials Needed:**
**Day 1**
- Examples of newspapers
- Computers for children to type their articles, need assistance from an adult

**Day 2**
- Handout of newspaper articles.

**Lesson Context:**
Students in second grade are exposed to stories. One of the goals is for students to share stories with their peers. In this lesson, students will share stories of people doing nonviolent deeds in the classroom or on the playground. Students will not only become more aware of Gandhian principles of nonviolence, love, and truth, but also use oral and written skills to express their stories of nonviolence. The class newspaper will be an ongoing class assignment that will create an environment of love, truth, and nonviolence among the class and hopefully influence the school.

**Instructional Plan:**

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<th>TEACHER INPUT</th>
<th>STUDENT OUTPUT</th>
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<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
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<td>Students will read page 86, The Honest Woodcutter story. Students will discuss how they see other students practicing ahimsa at school. They will have some time to think about examples of nonviolence, truth, and love at home or school. Then, teacher will model how to use a bubble map and write about ahimsa episodes.</td>
<td>Discuss why it is important to tell the truth. Students read story. Answer comprehension questions about story. Students provide samples of ahimsa, teacher writes it on big bubble map. Students will then complete a bubble map about an incident that they can remember was an example of ahimsa.</td>
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Read the handout on Gandhi’s newspaper articles.

Ask the students to report about their family's newspaper reading habits. Make a list of newspapers that are read and determine which are the most common.

List the words **who, what, where, when, and why** on the board, overhead, or chart paper. Explain that these five *Ws* help with the organization of a news story and that they make up the most important details of the story.

Answer each of the five *W* questions using the popular rhyme "Humpty Dumpty"

Example:
Who? Humpty Dumpty
What? Sat and fell
Where? On a wall
When? Sometime in the past
Why? Trying to put Humpty Dumpty together again

Put students in groups of three to four members. Ask the students to choose another famous rhyme or fairy tale and answer the five *W* questions. Have each group read just the answers to their questions, and then have the class tries to guess what fairy tale or rhyme it is.

Have students discuss the 5 *W*’s according to Gandhi’s life.
Write as a whole group.
Example:
Who? Mohandas K. Gandhi
What? Lived a life of love, truth, and nonviolence
Where? In India
When? Early 1900’s
Why? Wanted everyone to live in Harmony in India. Wanted people to educate themselves.

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<td>Teacher will take out bubble map from day 1. Using that example, will explain how to write a paragraph about nonviolence/ ahimsa, explaining the topic and closing sentence. Using their bubble map from the previous day, students will then write their own paragraph on nonviolence at school.</td>
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<td>Students will discuss the story and why a newspaper is important.</td>
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Write sentences that answers: Who What Where When Why on the worksheet.

After students write 5 sentences using the 5 *W*’s by using Gandhi’s life.

Students will write a paragraph about an ahimsa episode. Students will use the five *Ws* and make sure the paragraph gives enough detail for a
**Day 4**
Teacher will demonstrate to students how cut and paste work on newsletter format for the class newspaper. As a whole class, discuss newspaper layout, addressing the following points:

- **Headline News**—Top priority articles are near the front (1-2 pages). These are typically of high interest to your entire audience of readers (e.g., town news such as a new park or community center). Long front-page articles can be continued on an inside page to provide room for other headline news.
- **Feature Articles**—Stories about topics or events that are of interest to a certain group of readers (e.g., sports, animal stories, academic topics, interviews with school staff, book reviews). These are typically grouped into sections.
- **Pictures or graphics**—The image should always appear with the story. A caption can be included. The size usually depends on how much space is available in the layout. Give students the opportunity to explore these layout items in newspapers in the classroom and online.

**Day 5**
After teacher edits the first draft students are now ready to type their final draft, with the assistance of an adult.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

The assessment is based on the worksheet provided and writing samples. The grading system is in the following rubric. It is graded based on 4 being the highest grade and 1 the lowest.

**Day 1 Informal assessment**
Students will then complete a bubble map.

**Day 2**
Write sentences that answers:

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<td>4</td>
<td>Students completed the worksheet answering all questions</td>
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<td>Students had 1-2 sentences incomplete</td>
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<td>Students 3 or more sentences incomplete</td>
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<td>Students did not do the assignment</td>
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**Day 4**
Each student will have an opportunity to play with the computer, doing cut and paste.
**Day 5**

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<td>4</td>
<td>Students wrote 6 complete sentences, using correct punctuation and spelling, about nonviolence event that occurred at school.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Student wrote 4-5 sentences, stayed on topic, but had some grammatical errors.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Student wrote 1-3 sentences, but had some grammatical errors and did not write about nonviolence.</td>
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<td>Student did not write any sentences, nor did he/she try.</td>
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**Extension Activities/ Enrichment:**

Students will continue to write sentences about nonviolence at school. There will be sentence strips available near the entrance so if a child would like to write about an event they can do so as soon as the walk through the door. At the end of the week, children will have an opportunity to publish and/or read to the class their findings for the week. Hopefully, with the cooperation with other teachers, it can be implemented school wide. Thus, having a school newspaper dedicated to celebrating nonviolence at school.

Students may conduct interviews with students who have done an act of nonviolence and write about it for the newspaper.

**Bibliography:**

Ahimsa. [http://www.dlshq.org/teachings/ahimsa.htm#meaning](http://www.dlshq.org/teachings/ahimsa.htm#meaning)


Evolution of a Second-Grade Class Newspaper. 


Name

**Directions:** Using the story of The Honest Woodcutter or another familiar nursery rhyme, for each W question, make up a complete sentence.

Title of Story______________________________

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Handout for Second Graders
Examples of Gandhi’s newspaper articles

Gandhi’s idea of the press

…I am proud to think that I have numerous readers among farmers and workers. They make India. Their poverty is India’s curse and crime. Their prosperity alone can make India a fit country to live in…
Young India, October 8, 1919

Translation: He was so proud that many farmers and workers read his newspaper. Even though they are poor, when they become successful India will be the best place to live.

We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make steady progress toward it.
Young India, May 20, 1926

Translation: It will be hard to be nonviolent by the way we do things, the words that we use and our own thoughts. But we should make nonviolence our goal.

“Truth and Love-ahimsa-is the only thing that counts. Where this is present, everything rights itself in the end. This is a law to which there is no exception. (Young India, 18-8-1927, p265)”

Translation: Have students give opinions.