Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Lesson:</th>
<th>Life Rules for Nonviolence</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Lesson By:</td>
<td>Natasha Efseaff</td>
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<td>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</td>
<td>Class Size:</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School- World History (sophomores)</td>
<td>35 students</td>
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</tbody>
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Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:
- Students will understand how to apply the basic ideas of Mohandas Gandhi (truth and Ahimsa (nonviolence)) and its application in global change.
- Students will define violence and nonviolence and create a list of examples for each.
- After viewing the handout titled Some Basic Rules, students will apply the ideas of Gandhi’s by creating their own set of basic rules they can apply in their lives.
- Students will apply the strategies of nonviolence to major world conflicts and determine alternative forms of action.

Lesson Abstract:
After learning about the life and experiments of Mohandas Gandhi students will apply his experiments on truth and ahimsa (nonviolence) to their daily lives. Students will discuss the definition of violence versus nonviolence and the importance of applying the idea of Ahimsa. Using Some Basic Rules from Gandhi’s Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolutions, students will create their own rules from which they will live by.

Lesson Content: (write about 2 pages explaining the actual content of your lesson)

Mohandas Gandhi or later known as the Mahatma (good soul) is currently the most quoted individual in the United Nations. His quest to establish swaraj (self-rule) in India through nonviolent means provides a success story for the modern world. As a true leader of the people Gandhi’s nonviolent approach has inspired individuals such as Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez and Nelson Mandela to follow in approach. Through their struggles, they were able to create social and political changes using nonviolent means. Their success has helped to shape the notion that great leaders do not have to resort to violent acts to be successful. A good leader is one inspires his people through his thought, actions and deeds never resulting to violent methods but focuses on truth and ahimsa (nonviolence).

Throughout Gandhi’s life he sought the idea of truth. Just like a scientist would experiment to find conclusions in his research, Gandhi experimented and refined the idea of truth. According to Gandhi truth is God. The notion of God is not tied to a specific religious sect but refers to the importance of individuals striving for good and justice. In essence, truth is love, a person’s soul influenced by a higher power, takes precedent over man made laws that are injustice. This is achieved through the practice of nonviolence (ahimsa).

Ahimsa is not a strategy but a way of life. According to Gandhi nonviolence is the notion of doing good, non injury to others but also it means compassion in your thought, speech, and
actions. Violence on the other hand, is the infliction of harm or hurt onto others. Gandhi view on these notions are clear, “I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary the evil it does is permanent.” Conflict between individuals must take this notion into consideration. Resolution will only take place when each individual views both sides of the argument and does not force their views upon the other. The process must focus on truth and ahimsa in doing so, a transform of mind and soul will occur.

Ahimsa is a moral force that is achieve through satyagraha, truth force or the pursuit of truth through nonviolence. Through the action of ahimsa and satyagraha, individuals can then achieve swaraj (oneness). Gandhi used his ideas of obtaining swaraj within himself and his country. He tried to obtain swaraj within himself by first controlling the passions of man: greed, lust, and anger. He then experimented with the idea truth. His experiments became more intense when he applied his theories first in South Africa. He helped to establish more rights for Indians in South Africa by challenging the governments’ laws against Indians always through nonviolent means. This resulted in much pain for Gandhi: beatings, prison sentences and problems within his own family. Through his perseverance, Gandhi found success. Gandhi also established ashrams (communal farms) in South Africa, where individuals became independent within themselves and helped the community became self reliant. He later transferred his ideas and experiments in India helping India gain Independence from the British. The focus of his campaign was not to kick the British out, but to help India become reliant and achieve swaraj.

Gandhi is a model of a true leader. Gandhi’s life is his message. Unlike most leaders, Gandhi practiced what he taught. He not only searched for the truth, he practiced nonviolence, lived simple, all the while constantly striving against injustice. The world would be different if leaders of today practiced the ideas and teachings Gandhi. Even though Gandhi was not perfect, we can use imperfection as growth for hope in our own lives. If we constantly grow and search for the truth, we can achieve oneness within ourselves. In the end we can achieve swaraj within our societies through ahimsa and satyagraha.

California State Content Standards:
World History 10.4 Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of New Imperialism in at least two of the following regions or countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America and the Philippines:
3. Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.
4. Describe the independence struggles of the colonized regions of the world, including the roles of leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen in China, and the roles of ideology and religion.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Chronological and Spatial Thinking
2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Historical Interpretation
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

**Guiding Questions:**
- What is violence? (Provide example)
- What is nonviolence (ahimsa)? (Provide example)
- Which of the ten Basic Rules is the most important and why?
- Which Basic Rule is the least important?
- What makes a good leader?
- What type of action must a good leader portray?

**Materials Needed:**
- Handout: Some Basic Rules (See Appendix)
- Handout: Some Basic Rules with examples of Gandhi’s life (See Appendix)

**Lesson Context:**
This lesson will be part a unit on imperialism focusing on the British Empire in India and the influences of Mohandas Gandhi. It can also be incorporated at the beginning of the year teaching about conflict resolution and establishing nonviolence within the classroom.

**Teaching Activities:**

**Step 1:** Whole class discussion: The class will create a definition for violence. (Use the Webster definition as a guide “intense, turbulent, or furious often destructive action or force”) Students will then provide examples from major events in World History and in their own life. (History: French Revolution, WWI, the Armenian genocide. Personal: hitting, yelling, gossiping, tardiness, etc)

**Step 2:** Repeat step 1 using the term nonviolence. (Use Gandhi’s idea of nonviolence: notion of doing good in your thoughts, speech and action) Then create a list of examples for nonviolence. (History: Nonviolent protest in the Russian Empire or Gandhi’s quest for independence from the British. Personal: Forgiveness, love, compassion, etc.)

**Step 3:** Text Reading and Analytical Thinking: Have the student take turns reading the handout: Some Basic Rules (see attached). Stop and discuss each rule as you read, the teacher provides an example how it applied to Gandhi using Basic Rules with Gandhi Examples (see attached) and, the students will create an example from their own lives.

**Step 4:** Class Discussion: After reading the handout, students will individually select their most important rule and write how they can apply that rule in their lives. First, they will discuss their rule with a partner, then as a whole class.

**Step 5:** Applying concepts: Students will create their own set of five rules using the ideas of discussed in the handout.

**Step 6:** Analytical Thinking/Socratic Seminar: As a whole class, students will describe factors that make a great leader. Students must determine what actions must a good leader portray?

**Step 7:** Critical Analysis/ Historical Interpretation: Students will list the major leaders from Modern World History currently discussed and determine if they were good leaders by applying the discussion from step 6.
Ex: Socrates, Thomas Jefferson, Napoleon Bonaparte, David Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, Mohandas Gandhi, Benito Mussolini.

**Step 8:** Critical Analysis/ Historical Interpretation: Referencing major events from World History, students will create alternative actions/response to previous historical events using the conflict resolution guide.

Ex: American Revolution, French Revolution, Treaty of Versailles,

**Step 9:** Closing: Put up on the board: “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 towards it. The obtainment of freedom, for a man, or for the world must be in exact proportion must be in attainment for each” Gandhi, Young Indian, May 20, 1926.

Students will write a paragraph on the meaning of the above quote.

### Assessment/ Evaluation:

Students will internalize the ideas of Ahimsa by creating their own Basic Rules.

- Students will create five rules for themselves-
- They can borrow one rule from their handout
- Teacher will make a copy to place in the student’s personal folder to be used when there is a behavior issue.
- Assessment will be based on a credit/ no credit basis and class participation

### Extension Activities/ Enrichment

Possible ways to extend the lesson:

- Focus as a class on one rule a week. (10 week activity)
- Students create class rules maintaining the notion of Ahimsa within the classroom.
- Students examine school rules and create a list on nonviolent rules for the school or district.
- As a class, read the case studies in *Gandhi’s Way: A handbook of conflict resolution*, role playing the scenarios.
- Create a peer mediation program on campus using Juergensmeyer’s steps to conflict resolution, to counsel and advise students.

### Bibliography:


Parel, Anthony J. (Ed.) *Hind Swaraj: And Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Some Basic Rules

1. **Do not avoid confrontation**
   Avoidance simply prolongs the underlying conflict between principles. Instead, you should welcome an encounter between positions, and the clarity it brings.

2. **Stay open to communication and self-criticism**
   Each side in a conflict has only a partial view. It needs the critical perspective of the other to sort out truth from untruth.

3. **Find a resolution and hold fast to it**
   Once a harmonious alternative becomes apparent, you should seize onto it and base your strategy on it—but be willing to challenge and change it as well.

4. **Regard your opponent as a potential ally.**
   Do nothing to harm or alienate your opponent. Remember your goal is to join forces to struggle together against untruth.

5. **Make your tactics consistent with the goal.**
   Use the goal itself as the weapon for fighting, when possible. When not, use only those actions that are consistent with it.

6. **Be flexible**
   Be willing to change tactics, alter proximate goals, revise your notion of who your opponent is, and even reconsider your conception of the truth.

7. **Be temperate**
   Escalate your actions by degrees. The idea is to keep your opponent from feeling intimidated, so that he or she will be communicative rather than defensive in responding to you.

8. **Be proportionate**
   Determine which issues are trivial and which deserve your time and energy. The basis for judgment is the degree to which life and the quality of life are abused. Mount a campaign with a strength equal to that of the opponent, and appropriate to the issue.

9. **Be disciplined**
   Especially when a large number is involved in a collective effort, make certain you’re your side is committed to a nonviolent approach and that your position is coherent. Consistency is one of your strengths.

10. **Know when to quit**
    A deadlocked campaign, or one with negative results, may require that you revise your tactics and perhaps even change your proximate goals. A concession to your side without an agreement on principle is not victory. In a Gandhian fight, you can claim to have won only if your opponent can say the same.
**Teacher Guide**

**Some Basic Rules:**

**With Gandhi examples and student examples**

1. **Do not avoid confrontation**
   Avoidance simply prolongs the underlying conflict between principles. Instead, you should welcome an encounter between positions, and the clarity it brings.

   Ex: stole from his brother and wrote a letter of confession to his father
   Ex: student misses curfew, instead of hiding from their parents they go and talk to them

2. **Stay open to communication and self-criticism**
   Each side in a conflict has only a partial view. It needs the critical perspective of the other to sort out truth from untruth.

   Ex: Tried to kick his wife out of the ashram because she struggled with doing an untouchables job
   Ex: A friend supposedly talked behind your back, go talk to them maybe they were too afraid to talk to you and maybe your previous actions were hurtful to them

3. **Find a resolution and hold fast to it**
   Once a harmonious alternative becomes apparent, you should seize onto it and base your strategy on it—but be willing to challenge and change it as well.

   Ex: Fasting, never gave in until the problems was solved
   Ex: A couple agrees to compromise on a movie, be willing to change for the sake of the other but open to a better option

4. **Regard your opponent as a potential ally.**
   Do nothing to harm or alienate your opponent. Remember your goal is to join forces to struggle together against untruth.

   Ex: Relationship with General Smuts
   Ex: Treat everyone with respect, even those you do not like

5. **Make your tactics consistent with the goal.**
   Use the goal itself as the weapon for fighting, when possible. When not, use only those actions that are consistent with it.

   Ex: In South Africa burning the ID cards when the new law was passed
   Ex: Don’t be defiant about electronic device rule on campus (no cell phones or iPods allowed) and refuse to follow the rules, go through the proper procedures: write articles in the school newspaper, talk to your principal, or petition the school board

6. **Be flexible**
   Be willing to change tactics, alter proximate goals, revise your notion of who your opponent is, and even reconsider your conception of the truth.

   Ex: His notion of eating meat, changed his views after he experimented
   Ex: Compromise: students must have their cell phones off during class time but they are allowed to use cell phone during lunch
7. **Be temperate**  
    Escalate your actions by degrees. The idea is to keep your opponent from feeling intimidated, so that he or she will be communicative rather than defensive in responding to you.  
    Ex: Salt march, first petition then took nonviolence with a march to the sea  
    Ex: Talk first about the problem to a teacher, write an article in the school newspaper to examine peer support, talk with your principle, create a petition

8. **Be proportionate**  
    Determine which issues are trivial and which deserve your time and energy. The basis for judgment is the degree to which life and the quality of life are abused. Mount a campaign with a strength equal to that of the opponent, and appropriate to the issue.  
    Ex: Focused on self rule by having the masses join together to have the British leave  
    Ex: Pick your fights, do not fight for a no homework policy, fight for healthier foods on campus

9. **Be disciplined**  
    Especially when a large number is involved in a collective effort, make certain you’re your side is committed to a nonviolent approach and that your position is coherent. Consistency is one of your strengths.  
    Ex: Gandhi as a model, he prayed, fasted, lived simple, watched his diet  
    Ex: Act on behalf of the student body, do not let personal vendettas sway you (Infer a teacher is bad because you received a bad grade and they should be fired)

10. **Know when to quit**  
    A deadlocked campaign, or one with negative results, may require that you revise your tactics and perhaps even change your proximate goals. A concession to your side without an agreement on principle is not victory. In a Gandhian fight, you can claim to have won only if your opponent can say the same.  
    Ex: Changed tactics started at a local level in his ashrams and continued outward with the masses.  
    Ex: When challenging a school rule (no electronic devices) do not demand complete change but increments (iPods are allowed on Fridays during lunch)