Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Lesson:</th>
<th>Gandhi’s Life and Guiding Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson By:</td>
<td>Leila Joseffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</td>
<td>Class Size:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2- Language Arts/Social Studies</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives of Lesson:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students will learn about Gandhi’s life and his philosophy of satyagraha by listening to the book “Gandhi” by Demi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will create a character map for Gandhi and identify Gandhi’s thoughts, actions, and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will analyze Gandhi’s transformation using the pictures and text from “Gandhi” by Demi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will begin to make connections between Gandhi and other known civil rights leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Abstract:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This whole class lesson for second grade students provides an introduction to Gandhi’s life and his philosophy of Satyagraha. Students will listen to the book “Gandhi” by Demi, discuss the key events in Gandhi’s life and his principles and complete a character map. Students will begin to connect Gandhi’s philosophy with other known civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Content:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This lesson serves as an introduction to Gandhi’s life and his ideals, which are evident in his thoughts, words and actions. It is important to highlight these ideals while reading the text as they serve as the bridge between Gandhi and other civil rights leaders in subsequent lessons. Gandhi came to his ideas about each through his experiments with truth, his extensive reading of Thoreau, Ruskin, Tolstoy and religious texts including the Bible, Koran, and Bhagavad Gita. Below are the important values and Gandhi’s thoughts about each:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Truth**

Gandhi said “Truth is god.” He was constantly striving to understand the truth and to act upon it. He experimented with food and medicine, read, met as many people as possible, and reflected on truth. He accepted that truth was fluid and he would change his position if he gained new information that created a new understanding of the truth. He encouraged people to see the truth in each other’s positions. He used methods like negotiating, fasting, the Salt March and boycotts to get other people to examine the truth and resolve conflicts. Being true to oneself in thoughts, actions and words was essential to Gandhi.

**Sacrifice**

Sacrifice was an essential part of the satyagraha movement. People had to be willing to sacrifice their own lives and wellbeing in the struggle for truth and justice for all. Some people in the struggle were imprisoned, physically beaten and killed. Material sacrifice and simplicity were also essential for Gandhi. Over the course of his lifetime he abandoned most material possession and by the end of his life his loincloth, glasses, sandals, and a religious book were all
that he possessed. This change is illustrated throughout the book. Gandhi also sacrificed his time with his family for the good of the movement.

Service
Gandhi enjoyed providing service to other people. He did not view it as a hardship. He took pleasure in it. He believed that the best way to live was in service to others. Evidence of this attitude is found in how he helped with household tasks like emptying chamber pots, which traditionally have been women’s work. Additionally, Gandhi wanted the leaders of the Congress Party to become civil servants following independence.

Conservation of all living things
Gandhi was a vegetarian and believed in the sanctity of life for all creatures. He also was concerned with sustainability. His Ashrams had gardens and all members of the Ashram participated in the work and were vegetarian while living there. This belief came through his experience with the Jain religion.

Non-violence
Gandhi believed that “an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” His strategy of non-violence (Ahimsa) was based on a theory of reverence for all life and on achieving rights and restorative justice while maintaining one’s dignity and the dignity of the opponent. In confronting an issue he separated the action that was bad from the individual doing the act. Gandhi believed that the way to win was not through force but through tactics that would enable the other side to see his perspective and to have a change of heart and to recognize the moral truth. The people in the satyagraha movement were trained to confront violence with non-violence and he used negotiation, strikes, marches, fasts, and other forms of civil disobedience to overcome his opponents. Gandhi saw non-violence as an active process and did not use the term passive resistance. Gandhi trained himself to be fearless. He encouraged the people following him to be fearless also but knew it was a process. He believed that courage was essential. He believed in non-violence in thought, word, and action. Gandhi’s campaigns were based on the use of “soul force” and morals rather than violence.

Equality
Gandhi’s movements in South Africa and India were about equality. In South Africa, after experiencing racism on the train, he became active in the struggle to secure rights for Indians. Through his work, the movement was able to get the government to change its laws that discriminated against the Indians. In India, Gandhi worked to establish home rule for Indians from the British. Through the satyagraha movement this was accomplished. Gandhi wanted India to be an inclusive nation that embraced its religious and economic diversity. He worked for Hindu-Muslim unity and he advocated for the end of discrimination against the “untouchables.” Gandhi advocated against the traditional caste system. He also advocated for women that they be treated with equality. Women played an active role in the satyagraha movement. They were involved with marches, boycotts and other active measures that helped to bring about independence.

Kindness
Gandhi understood the power of personal relationships. He made an effort to be kind to people
and to hear people’s concerns. He traveled around India to the villages to meet people. In dealing with opponents he addressed them with kindness. People often came to visit Gandhi at his ashrams and he would talk and laugh with them. He enjoyed interacting with the children at the ashram. He had the capacity to connect with people in a sincere and meaningful way even if the person had previously committed an injustice.

**Forgiveness**
Gandhi believed in the goodness of all people. He recognized that people are fallible and was able to distinguish the deed from the person doing it. On several occasions he had the opportunity to punish people but he believed in the power of forgiveness. He believed in restorative justice which encourages people to admit their mistakes, be forgiven and move on with dignity and in friendship.

**Self-knowledge/self-discipline**
Gandhi was a reflective learner. He was able to identify his own weaknesses and try to make amends. He also had discipline over his material and physical needs. He reduced his diet, changed his attire, and had very few possessions. He derived strength for his way of life and discipline from his spirituality. He prayed twice a day and enjoyed spiritual music. Self-discipline was necessary for Gandhi and his followers in their use of non-violent tactics.

---

**Massachusetts State Content Standards:**

**Social Studies:** Grade 2
2.10 After reading or listening to a variety of true stories about individuals recognized for their achievements, describe and compare different ways people have achieved great athletic, or artistic distinction (e.g. scientific, professional, political, religious, commercial, military)

**Language Arts:** Grades Pre-K-4
8.9 Make predictions about the content of a text using prior knowledge and text features (headings, table of contents, key words), and explain whether they were confirmed or disconfirmed and why.
8.10 Restate main ideas.
13.5 Restate main ideas and important facts from a text heard or read.

**Guiding Questions:**
- Who is Gandhi?
- What were Gandhi’s guiding principles?
- How did Gandhi transform over the course of his life?

**Materials Needed:**
- “Gandhi” by Demi
- World Map (optional)
- Biography map for each student (sample attached)

**Lesson Context:**
This lesson should precede the lesson and digital movie “Gandhi’s Path to Peace” It establishes students’ understanding of Gandhi and should enable students to make connections to the other
Teaching Activities:

Lesson Overview:
- Ask students to identify what they know about Gandhi
- Explain that over the next week they will be learning about Gandhi and how his ideas impacted other civil rights leaders
- On the world map shown students India and South Africa.
- Explain to students that as you are reading aloud “Gandhi” they should pay attention to the illustrations as to how Gandhi looks and what he is wearing as it will help explain how he changed over his lifetime.
- Read aloud “Gandhi” and highlight how his values of truth, justice, forgiveness, service, non-violence and Satyagraha are developed through his religious beliefs, study, and experiences in S.A. and India
- Use the illustrations to discuss how Gandhi’s dress shows his transformation in making his appearance match his beliefs
- Discuss how the fasts, imprisonment, care for others, making of Khadi, spreading of information and non-violence were part of Satyagraha
- Ask students if the injustices Gandhi and other Indians faced reminds them of struggles of people in other countries (U.S. civil rights movement, South Africa).
- Explain that Gandhi thought that one should be true to oneself and that an individuals’ thoughts, actions, and words should be true and aligned.
- Students should complete the biography map as a whole class if it has not been used before or individually if it has been used previously. The biography map should then be discussed as a whole class. *(This could be done on a different day following a recap of the text)*

Assessment/ Evaluation:
1) Students’ discussion will be evaluated to determine if they are able to identify the main events in Gandhi’s life and his principles.
2) Students’ biography maps will be evaluated to determine if they are able to identify Gandhi’s thoughts, words, and actions.
3) Students’ discussion will be evaluated to determine if they are able to make connections between Gandhi and other activists.
**Extension Activities/Enrichment**

- Students could take home their biography maps after the lessons are concluded to share with their family members.

**Bibliography:**


Biography Map of ________________

Name:

**Directions**: Think about what you heard in the book and saw in the pictures and fill-in the boxes below.

**Time period**:

**Important Places**:

**Important Ideas**:

**Important Events**: