Title of Lesson: Achieving Belonging for All
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<th>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</th>
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<td>5th/6th Writing, Social Science</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
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Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:
- Students will explore, through group discussion and written responses, the concept of belonging, looking critically at exclusion, discrimination and fairness, and determine methods of creating equanimity and belonging for all.
- Students will explore non-violent ways of creating justice and belonging for those who are disenfranchised. Students will study and utilize methods of non-violent action (e.g. dialogue, building empathy, acting with compassion, and writing to communicate a cause) to create social change and belonging for all people.
- Students will examine an experience of Mohandas Gandhi when, as a new person working in South Africa, he faced discrimination and had to decide how to respond. After serious contemplation, he chose nonviolent methods to fight oppression and create belonging for not only him but for others.
- Students will gain a deeper sense of responsibility to their own community as they study the ways in which Gandhi acted selflessly to ensure fair treatment for Indians in South Africa.

Lesson Abstract:
The purpose of this lesson is to teach 30 5th/6th grade students strategies for achieving a sense of belonging and working for the belonging and equality of all people. Students will judge non-violent action as the best personal methods for achieving positive social change. Using cooperative learning students will create strategies for dealing with unfair treatment, discrimination and oppression.

Lesson Content:
This lesson will focus on facing injustice one may encounter when coming into a new situation and not being treated with respect and equality. Guiding questions: What can you do when you feel you are being treated unfairly? When someone you perceive to be different is being treated unfairly, what do you do? Do you mind your own business because it has nothing to do with you, remain silent in fear that you could be the next target if you align yourself with an “outsider”, or do you decide to befriend and help that person? What strategies can you use to improve your community by ensuring all people belong with equality and dignity?

A story from Gandhi’s life
Because he had a difficult time finding work in his own country, Gandhi accepted a job in South Africa. He had to leave the community he knew for employment to gain a better life for himself and his family. In 1893, at 24 years old, Gandhi came to South Africa to work as a lawyer. He had no idea about the oppressive conditions Indian people lived with in South Africa. Before he was able to get a sense of how people were unequally treated he faced discrimination first hand.
For his work Gandhi had to travel from Durban to Pretoria. He boarded a train with a first-class ticket and took a seat in a first class compartment. During the journey a white man came into the compartment looked at Gandhi, left the compartment, and returned with two railway officials. The officials told Gandhi he had to ride in the baggage car. Gandhi was shocked and tried to explain that he should stay because he had purchased a first class ticket. The officials, not caring about Gandhi’s distress, told him that “Coolies”, a derogatory name for Indians, have to ride in third class. Gandhi felt humiliated and refused to move. The train officials brought in a policeman who threw him and his suitcases off the train. Because he would not re-board the train to ride the baggage car, he spent the night on the train platform in the cold. He sat through the night shivering in misery thinking about his options: he could act violently against a railway official, he could accept riding in third class, he could go home to India, or he could stand up against oppression and discrimination using non-violence.

Several years later, when asked about the most creative experience of his life, Gandhi said it was the train incident in South Africa.

“The train steamed away leaving me shivering in cold. Now the creative experience comes there. I was afraid for my very life. I entered the dark waiting room. There was a white man in the room. I was afraid of him. What was my duty; I asked my self. Should I go back to India, or should I go forward? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that day." (Fischer, p. 21)

This experience inspired Gandhi’s problem solving for the rest of his life. He thought long and hard putting a lot of creative energy in determining the best solution. His problem solving that night led him to many non-violent actions fighting to change anti-Asiatic laws in South Africa. He immediately wrote a persuasive letter to the train company protesting their unfair treatment of people of color. He wrote numerous letters to editors of newspapers about discrimination and oppression Indian people faced. Gandhi went from town to town meeting and making friends with Indians of every religion, creed, color, and social class. From these friendships he created a coalition, the Natal Indian Congress to create a space for diverse people to come together, dialogue and plan the best ways to win freedom.

By listening to the experiences of many different people Gandhi learned of the hardships the anti-Asian laws inflicted on the people. People from India faced segregation and had to pay taxes no one else had to pay, simply for being Indian. Poor Indians were often indentured servants subject to unfair contracts, deprived of food, water, and rest, and sometimes beaten by their masters. Gandhi worked as a lawyer to free indentured Indians from cruel masters. Gandhi also decided to fight the tax on Indian people. He declared he would go to jail or even die before obeying an anti-Asian law. He went to jail many times for breaking unjust laws. Thousands of Indians joined him in this civil disobedience campaign. Gandhi organized strikes on the coalfields and sugar plantations and led a march of Indians from Natal to the Transvaal to protest. Gandhi led a peaceful revolution. Gandhi spent 21 years working for the rights of Indians in South Africa, from1893-1914. He was patient and never gave up. When ever he saw injustice he acted. Because of his work, in 1914, the anti-Asiatic laws were struck down. Gandhi was then able to return home to India and work against injustice and inequality in his home country.
California State Content Standards:
- 5th Grade History/ Social Science 5.7.5 The meaning of the American creed that calls on citizens to safeguard the liberty of individual Americans with a unified nation, to respect the rule of law, and to preserve the Constitution.
- 6th Grade Language Arts: Writing Strategies 1.1 Organization and Focus: Choose the form of writing that best suits the intended purpose.
- 6th Grade Language Arts: Writing Strategies 1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast; organization into categories; and arrangement by spatial order, order of importance, or climatic order.

Guiding Questions:
1. What can you do when you feel you are being treated unfairly?
2. When someone you perceive to be different is being treated unfairly, what do you do?
3. How does Gandhi deal with discrimination and oppression?
4. What does Gandhi do to work towards a society where everyone belongs? List specific examples.
5. What is non-violent action?
6. How is non-violent action effective? (Why does non violence work?)

Materials Needed:
- Windows moviemaker digital story
- Film: “Making of the Mahatma”
- Poster paper and blue and red markers
- Gandhi an Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth
- Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World by Louise Fischer

Lesson Context:
This will be the 5th lesson in a unit entitled “Where I Belong”. Throughout the unit we will be examining concepts of belonging: identity, how to achieve belonging in new situations, how to help others find equality and belonging, and how to use non-violence to achieve personal and group equality to create the deepest sense of belonging: when all people are valued, respected, and exist in equanimity.

Teaching Activities:

Into Activities: In groups of 3-5 students will discuss the first two guiding questions and record their answers, in blue marker, on poster paper. (15 min.) Students will do a gallery walk to read the posters. (3 minutes). Whole class discussion of issues raised in small groups.

View digital story. (5 min)

Direct Instruction: Students view the first 10 minutes of the film about Gandhi’s experience in South Africa. Teacher shares the story from Gandhi’s life when he faces discrimination and then uses non-violent action to improve conditions for all Indians.

Independent Practice: Students journal write about Gandhi’s experiences by responding to
Group Activity: In the original small groups, students discuss their original posters and add new ideas with a red marker. Students post their work and do another gallery walk. Whole class discusses newly learned ideas and concepts. Project: Students work in small groups to create a brochure listing non-violent strategies to achieve a community where all people belong.

Assessment/ Evaluation:
The teacher will make prior assessments of into activity group work and discussions to guide direct instruction. Teacher will make formative informal assessments during the independent practice and further group work and discussions. Summative assessment will be made of the brochures.

Extension Activities/ Enrichment
Students may write role playing scenarios involving 2-4 characters illustrating the use of non-violent action to promote belonging.

Bibliography:

_The Making of the Mahatma_. Shyam Benegal, 1996.
