STORIES OF ACTIVISM — HOW ONE VOICE CAN CHANGE A COMMUNITY (AND BRIDGE THE WORLD)

SUMMARY:

The full collection of Racial Literacy Grade 3 lessons feature different stories from around the world, focusing on voices of people who have felt different, "othered," discriminated against, and/or persecuted and the various ways such people — both "everyday" heroes and famous figures — have responded to their situations. By reading these stories, students will unpack concepts of agency, individual and collective empowerment, as well as personally relevant and applicable ideas like fairness, courage, and friendship. Using a micro to macro progression, classroom dialogue will move into more sophisticated, mature topics such as discrimination — including racism and racial segregation — and a brief introduction to the institution of slavery. Students will also explore the counter concept of cultivating acceptance and the importance of building/bridging diverse communities. Ultimately, through an exploration of a multitude of voices, students will understand and analyze the power of an action and/or voice, both "big and small," and how we can be agents of communal, social, political, and environmental change. By the end, students will comprehend the rippling effect of acts of kindness, and that when we work together, we are stronger. We encourage teachers to read carefully through all lessons, before launching the unit, to best understand the overarching objectives and to increase comfort with the scope and theme of topics.

GRADE 3 LESSONS BY TOPIC:

1. The Importance of Kindness and Acceptance
2. Discrimination and The Power of Exclusion/Inclusion: An Introduction to U.S. Slavery
3. Living a Life Centered on Peace and Service: An Introduction to Gandhi
4. The Ripple Effect: The Civil Rights Movement of the United States
5. The Ripple Effect: Civil Rights and The United Farm Workers
6. How One (Young) Voice Can Bridge Many: Malala, Warrior with Words
7. "Disability" is Not Inability
8. Seeds of Change: The Rippling Effect of Acts of Kindness

LESSON 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF KINDNESS & ACCEPTANCE

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: 45 minutes
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Community

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the importance of being kind.
- To distinguish niceness from kindness.
- To learn about and discuss ways to show kindness to others.
- To build a community based on acceptance, starting with the self.

MATERIALS

- *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson and E.B. Lewis.
- Chart paper (or whiteboard) and Post-it notes.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- A conversation about fairness, friendship, and the importance of small acts of kindness will launch this unit.

VOCABULARY

- Review or introduce terms from the text, such as: brilliant, tattered, thawed, kindness, rippled. Consider introducing and explaining the verb and noun: advocate.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- In the book, *Each Kindness*, Maya wants to be friends with Chloe, but Chloe rejects the friendship in an unkind way. By the time Maya considers being Chloe's friend, it's too late, as Maya stops coming to school. When Chloe learns about the power of small acts of kindness, she realizes that not being friends with Maya was a lost opportunity. A tender story, *Each Kindness* helps facilitate a dialogue that centers around kindness, agency, and how one person's actions — through a rippling effect — can impact many, both for bad and for good. In short, it is essentially up to us to realize and intentionally foster the impact of our behavior.

OPENING

- Begin by introducing *Each Kindness*. Read the title and show the cover. Have students read this before? For those who haven't, what do they think this book might be about? Ask students to pay attention to actions, or lack of actions, taken by the characters in the story.

READ ALOUD AND DISCUSSION

- Read *Each Kindness* to the class. Make sure to show illustrations while reading, or after each page. After reading the story, ask for reasons as to why Chloe may have rejected Maya. This conversation should sensitively approach the characters, as socio-economic issues and concepts of teasing and peer pressure will likely arise (if not, ask guiding questions to get there). Ask students how they can guess what Maya may be feeling, based on body language, eye contact or lack of eye contact, etc. Have students reflect on a time when they felt new, or wanted to be invited into a group or activity. How did they feel? What, or who, helped them in such moments? Ensure that the idea of kindness is unpacked. Why is it important to be kind? What is lost when we are unkind? What are the benefits and opportunities that arise from kindness? Encourage students to think and speak deeply and honestly about such topics.
- If there is time for another discussion topic, consider dissecting terminology. There are words like unkind and kind, but what is the difference between being nice and kind. What is more active? What has a bigger impact? List ways we can be kind to others and begin to show acceptance for others. When revisiting the book, point out what kind of personality or special traits we think Maya may possess — kindness, playfulness, etc — and what the girls in the class focused on instead (i.e. outward appearance). Even though they were focused on physical, outward differences, the other students in the book barely looked at her, or made eye contact with Maya. They also spoke negatively about her with one another. Why did they follow Chloe's lead? What could the other students have done instead, especially in order to be more kind? Discuss ways to combat unfriendly behavior and ways to be kind to one's self, family, friends, school, community, and the larger world.

ACTIVITY AND CLOSING

- For a class activity, consider writing each term — self, family, friends, school, community, world — in concentric circles, with self in the center, expanding to include the other terms in outer rings. When students return to their seats, distribute Post-it notes for them to jot down ways they can be kind to themselves and others, sticking their ideas onto the chart indicating who the kind act impacts. Revisit examples from the story and/or brainstorm more examples as a class, such as giving hugs to loved ones, providing compliments to classmates, participating in food drives, picking up litter on the beach or in a park, etc.
- To introduce vocabulary, underscore the importance of being an advocate for someone (advocate as a noun) or choosing to advocate on someone else's behalf (advocate as a verb). Each of these acts may intend to benefit someone or a larger community.
- To close, lead a discussion so students realize that all of the actions have "yourself" at the core. In short, being kind to others is important, but at the core, being kind to yourself is the first place to start, as everything exudes from the center outward. If desired, ask students to write a brief reflection on the importance of kindness.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- An additional activity may involve students practicing the circle of kindness that the teacher in the book introduced. Ask students to drop a stone in a pool of water for a kind act they committed in the week, to demonstrate that the impact we have on others is a continuing ripple. (This theme of a "rippling effect" will continue to echo in upcoming lessons in the collective Racial Literacy Unit for Grade 3.) Beyond sharing kind acts, students may say something kind about themselves, such as "I like the way I __," or "I am proud of my ability to __." Thank each student after sharing. In addition to stones, teachers may use food coloring, having students drop a particular color into a vase, or jar of water, to visibly see or measure the symbolic, irreversible "impact" each act or statement has on the larger community.

LESSON 2

DISCRIMINATION AND THE POWER OF EXCLUSION/INCLUSION: AN INTRODUCTION TO U.S. SLAVERY

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: Three parts, time varies for each
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To briefly introduce the idea of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- To understand that despite systemic efforts of dehumanization, enslaved people were/are humans with dreams and desires, like anyone else.
- To discuss social and racial segregation and integration.
- To speak about exclusive actions and inclusive actions.
- To learn about and discuss ways to show inclusivity.
- To explore the power of inclusion.

MATERIALS

- For Part 1, we recommend reading a portion of *The Kidnapped Prince: The Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano, adapted by Ann Cameron. Please only read Chapter One, "My Home," with students at this time.
- For Part 2, we recommend the picture book, *Freedom in Congo Square* by Carole Boston Weatherford and R. Gregory Christie.
- For Part 3, we we recommend the picture book, *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson and E.B. Lewis.
- To receive additional guidance on how to discuss the topics of slavery and racism, consider reading, "It's Not So Black and White: Discussing Race and Racism in the Classroom," by psychologist and educator Beverly Tatum. Available here: https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/its-not-so-black-and-white/
- To enhance teacher understanding (for the viewing of educators only, as it's not suitable or appropriate for all third graders), consider reading the information and watching the TED-Ed video titled, "The Atlantic Slave Trade: What Too Few Textbooks Told You," by Anthony Hazard. Available here: https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-atlantic-slave-trade-what-your-textbook-never-told-you-anthony-hazard

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Racial segregation is an undeniable foundation of U.S. history. For centuries, due to the ills of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, large portions of U.S. society were unfortunately divided and subjugated along racial and class-based lines. Through centuries of social and political advocacy, people slowly gained more rights, pushing for a more integrated, egalitarian society.
- The focus of this lesson is three-fold: 1) To remind students that Africa was home to beautiful, diverse people and cultures at the time of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 2) That the Transatlantic Slave Trade (and the U.S. legal system) led to the development of an unfair, segregated society based on racial discrimination and 3) Despite racial segregation, some people wanted to be friends and/or allies. Hopefully, by learning about such discrimination, we can make a more fair community and larger society.

- While it is important for third grade students to understand ideas and terms like prejudice and discrimination — including racial discrimination — it may not be appropriate to expose younger students to the more grotesque and violent details of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In this lesson, they will be introduced to the basic idea of the slave trade, and how it was an unfair system of racial discrimination. Beginning in Grade 5 and 6, students will unpack more nuanced elements, including the more violent and economic forces/excuses of the institution of slavery.

VOCABULARY

- Vocabulary to consider: prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, segregation, integration, racism, exclusion, inclusion, etc. Example definitions of many terms are defined below. While introducing and reviewing terms is helpful, do not bombard students with the need to memorize every detail. Rather, the goal is to expose students to the reality that unfairness exists, and that unfairness has gone beyond an individual level, as U.S. society has historically created unfair laws and practices based on race (and other forms of social identity).
- Because racial segregation and integration is discussed, consider reviewing the concept of ethnicity and/or race. While race has no biological truth, it does have a strong social reality. Yet, not everyone uses the same ethnic or racial terms to describe themselves. For this lesson, terms like "white" and "black" will be used when describing racial discrimination and the institution of slavery.
- Consider the following term, as defined by *Britannica Kids*:
  - **Prejudice:** "Unfriendly feelings directed against an individual, a group, or a race; or a dislike of [someone] without good reason."
- Consider the following terms, as defined by historian and educator Ronald Takaki, in *A Different Mirror for Young People*:
  - **Stereotype:** "An idea or image of what a particular kind of person is like, based on opinions or feelings, not necessarily on facts or experience."
  - **Discrimination:** "Unequal or unfair treatment of individuals or whole groups based on features such as race, gender, ethnic origin, or religion; treatment based on prejudice."
  - **Ethnicity:** "Quality of belonging to an ethnic group, a population that shares the same national, racial, cultural, or tribal background."
  - **Segregation:** "Separation; in American history, usually refers to the separation of races under law."
  - **Integration:** "Mixing together; in American history, usually refers to the end of laws that separated, or segregated, people by race; integration was brought about by the Civil Rights Movement and laws of the mid-twentieth century."
- Consider the following term, as defined by historian and educator Howard Zinn, in *A Young People's History of the United States*:
  - **Racism:** "The belief that racial differences make some people better or worse than others; also, treating people differently because of race."
  - Also, please note that for these lessons, we recommend using the term "**enslaved people**" as opposed to slaves, in an effort to underscore the humanity and dignity of those who suffered in an unfair, racist institution.

Lesson Procedure

This lesson is divided into three parts.

PART 1: OLAUDAH EQUIANO'S HOME OF BENIN (60+ MINUTES)

BACKGROUND

- Before we introduce the Transatlantic Slave Trade, we will introduce the story of Olaudah Equiano, a young boy — a prince in his kingdom of Benin — who was kidnapped and forcibly dragged into slavery. By reading the opening of his adapted autobiography, students will gain an understanding of Africa as a place with rich culture. Originally published in 1780, Olaudah's autobiography was a bestseller in its time.
- In Part 2, we then read the picture book *Freedom in Congo Square* to introduce the concept of slavery in the United States as an unfair system, or institution, based on racial discrimination. These brief introductions are made so students have a foundation of understanding and to better realize (in subsequent lessons) why the work of the Civil Rights era was both needed and was so influential and inspiring.

OPENING

- Tell students that you want to read them a story. We recommend that you do not share too much about Olaudah's life ahead of time. Consider telling your students that this story is about a young boy who was taken from his home. Encourage students to pay attention to the beauty of Olaudah's homeland.

READ ALOUD AND DISCUSSION

- Read the first chapter of *The Kidnapped Prince: The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, titled "My Home."
- When done reading, ask students: Where was Olaudah's home? What details do you remember? Do you think Olaudah was proud of his home, Benin? Why? Highlight some of the colorful, sensory details he shared. What do you think happened to Olaudah? He does not mention them much, but when he does, how does Olaudah speak about Europeans? Why may he have a negative point of view?
- Remind students of the story they read in the previous lesson, *Each Kindness*. Remember how the acts of individuals can have a large, rippling effect? When we are mean to others, or treat them unfairly, it can have long-lasting effects. Unfortunately, throughout the history of this country, there were large groups of people — people with legal and/or social power — that treated other people unfairly. Sometimes it was based on race or ethnicity, such as our skin color (as well as hair textures, facial features, etc.). Sometimes it was based on gender, or what language we spoke or didn't speak. Mostly, it was based on identity, or things we cannot control or change.
- The story we read is about Olaudah, and how at the age of 11, he was kidnapped and thrown into the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which was an unfair system based on racial discrimination. At that time, some Europeans enslaved people to do hard work for them, such as growing tobacco, and later cotton. At first, they relied on both white indentured servants from Europe and enslaved people from Africa. Eventually, they turned it into a racist system, over time, enslaving millions of Africans, or black Americans with African ancestry. Sadly, this torture lasted for centuries. It influenced some people to have unnatural feelings of hatred toward other people, based on physical or racial differences. It happened, but it doesn't mean it's fair or okay.
- Tell students that we want to honor the life of Olaudah. In order to do that, we're going to focus our attention on what his home was like.

ACTIVITY AND CLOSING

- As an activity, we recommend that students take the text from the opening chapter, "My Home," (either a portion of the text or the text in its entirety) and repurpose it to create found poetry. As described by Poets.org, found poems: "take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. The literary equivalent of a collage, found poetry is often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems." To avoid plagiaristic behavior, encourage students to limit how many words they take at a time, such as no more than six or so. Review poetic devices that may be helpful when creating a found poem about Olaudah's home, such as repetition, sensory details, etc.
- If needed, give students additional time. When finished, they may share their work with the class. Consider adding illustration with collage, such as by using patches of colors or patterns to create a border, or frame, for student poems. For this activity, we recommend that any accompanying illustrations do not feature people, especially people who appear to be enslaved.

PART 2: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SLAVERY (45 MINUTES)

BACKGROUND

- This lesson will review the basic concept of the institution of slavery in the U.S., which created racial segregation.
- As mentioned in Part 1, this brief introduction is made so students have a foundation to better understand why the work of the Civil Rights Movement was so influential and inspiring.

OPENING

- Remind students of Olaudah's story, and that Africa — a continent, not a country — was home to beautiful, diverse people and cultures at the time of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Unfortunately, some people have prejudice and choose to ignore other people's humanity sometimes. When a society acts on such prejudice, they are unfairly practicing forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, or treating people unfairly or inhumanely based on something like their race or skin color.
- For a long time throughout the history of the United States, some people, who were mostly white, or of European descent, enslaved other people, who were mostly black, or African, or had ancestors from Africa. We're going to read a book about this, titled *Freedom in Congo Square.*

READ ALOUD

- While reading the book, have students pay attention to elements of humanity. Even though some people were enslaved, they were still people. They had desires and dreams.
- Point out that the people in this book, though enslaved, were able to hold on to elements of culture, such as language and music. Consider the strength and courage it took for people of such circumstance — enduring a life of servitude, hard work, and even violence — to hold on to dreams, or moments of freedom. That is truly inspiring.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- After reading, ask students about the importance of Congo Square. Why was it so important to people who were enslaved? What could it represent? How was the institution of slavery unfair? How did it attempt to strip away some people's humanity? What are ways enslaved people resisted this?
- Since this is a sensitive topic, we recommend ending the discussion by telling students that you will distribute strips of paper, such as index cards. On it, they can write about any feelings or questions they may have at this time. Tell them that you will be the only person to read what they write. Use this as an in-take moment, and plan future lessons and/or future conversations with students accordingly.

PART 3: RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND THE POWER OF INCLUSION (45 MINUTES)

BACKGROUND

- To highlight an example of people who yearned for integration, the picture book, *The Other Side*, will be read. This story features two girls — one black and one white — physically, racially, and socially divided by a fence. Both of them are told not to cross it, but through a small act of kindness (and defiance) they sit on the fence, embarking on a new friendship.

OPENING

- Introduce the basic concept of systematic racism, such as by saying: After the end of legal enslavement and the Civil War, parts of U.S. society were legally separated for people of different racial backgrounds — providing unequal, separated public spaces for "black people," compared to "white people." (These are quoted as definitions of what constitutes "black" and "white" change over time and by region or state.) It was an unfair, yet unfortunately common practice in many parts of the U.S., which didn't really improve until the Civil Rights Movement (which we will review in Lesson 4).
- Show students the cover of the book, *The Other Side*. Before reading it, ask students what they think it may be about. Point out the title and the picture on the cover which includes a fence in the background. What are fences used for?

READ ALOUD

- While reading the book, have students pay attention to the characters' affect and actions.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- After reading, ask the students how the characters felt throughout the story — Were they sad? Curious? Confused? Courageous? Discuss why. Include words like segregation and integration into the conversation, as well as exclusion and inclusion. Why weren't the girls allowed to play with each other? Was it their idea, or did it come from somewhere, or someone, else?
- After reviewing necessary background information, continue asking questions, such as: How did the girls in the story temporarily overcome their separation? In the book, the two girls sit on the same fence, they invite each other to play, etc. What are small ways we can overcome obstacles or barriers in our own lives? How can we reach out to others who seem different from us? What are actions we can take to make friends, or show someone that we accept them? What are some boundaries and rules that make sense in our lives? Which ones don't?
- Another exercise may ask students to think about the title of the book, *The Other Side.* What does it mean? Is it important to consider the other side? What can be gained from considering the other side, what can be lost if we only see one side?
- As a final activity, consider distributing cards to each student again, such as exit slips, so they can privately write down a thought or question they may have. Tell students you will be the only one to read the cards. When they're ready, collect the cards. As before, use the information to inform how you conduct future lessons.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

After reviewing the idea of racial segregation, consider reading about additional actions that led to social change, such as the contributions of Ruby Bridges and Sylvia Mendez. Read the following books as a class or in small groups and have students present ideas:

- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles is about a young, brave girl who served as the symbolic figure and face of the fight to integrate schools in the South. After a court order, Ruby, a black student, is forced to attend an all-white school, confronting angry racist mobs who were against racial integration. Only six years old, Ruby Bridges' story epitomizes courage and hope. (If faculty is interested, they may learn more about current forms of racial segregation. More than sixty years after what happened to Ruby Bridges, has the United States become more integrated or even more segregated? For a study of law, consider reviewing the Supreme Court decision, which opened the doors to desegregating the schools, Brown vs Board of Education.)
- *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh tells a similar, perhaps less known tale, to that of Ruby Bridges, yet it happened a decade earlier. Sylvia Mendez, an American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage, was denied enrollment at an all-white, or "whites only" school. As a result, Sylvia's parents took legal action and organized the "Hispanic" (or Latinx) community, filing a lawsuit, which ended the age of legal segregation in California schools. This story makes for a great companion text, or standalone book to read as a source of inspiration, and to underscore the power of exercising one's agency.
- *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down* by Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney retells the powerful story of four college students whose act of civil disobedience helped spur momentum for the Civil Rights Movement. Inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for nonviolent protest, these young people courageously staged a sit-in at a "whites only" lunch counter. Andrea Pinkney's crisp writing and Brian Pinkney's lively drawings make for a powerful read centered in the midst of the Civil Rights era. Read it with students to enhance exposure and spark inspiration.

LESSON 3

LIVING A LIFE CENTERED ON PEACE AND SERVICE: AN INTRODUCTION TO GANDHI

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: 45-60+ minutes (teacher may extend)
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance global and cultural awareness.
- To continue to learn about ways to show kindness to others.
- To realize the power of peace and acceptance.
- To understand the difference between wants and needs (i.e. civil rights).
- To become familiar with stories of people who made a positive impact on the world through advocacy and non-violent tactics.
- To understand the guiding principles of peaceful movements (i.e. civil disobedience).
- To explore the power of sharing one's voice for communal empowerment, growth, and for overcoming racial — and other forms of — prejudice.
- To understand the social ills of legal racial (and religious) segregation.
- To explore the importance of bridging cross-cultural communities.

MATERIALS

- Recommended books: *Grandfather Gandhi* by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus; or *Be the Change: A Grandfather Gandhi Story* also by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus.
- Article and video, "Mahatma Gandhi," on History.com. Available here: https://www.history.com/topics/india/mahatma-gandhi
- For teacher-use only, consider the article and video, "Gandhi – Mini Biography," on Biography.com. Available here: https://www.biography.com/video/gandhi-mini-biography-469938755902
- Chart paper, Post-it notes and/or writing materials for students.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Building upon the ideas of kindness and taking action, students will begin unpacking historical moments and movements of activism that changed the world, starting with the famous, inspiring life of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi.
- To expand global awareness, review different parts of the world (i.e. using a globe, paper maps, Google Earth) with students either during this lesson or previous lessons. Include India and South Africa, as well as Great Britain.
- Ahead of the lesson, the teacher should be familiar with historical concepts and events, such as British colonialism (especially how it impacted India and South Africa), apartheid in South Africa, the Salt March of 1930, Partition of India (the controversial splitting of India and creation of Pakistan along religious lines, which displaced 14 million people, created a refugee crisis, eruptions of violence, fragmented families, etc.).

VOCABULARY

- For this lesson, consider the following terms: satyagraha (satya is "truth," graha is "holding firmly to"), civil disobedience, apartheid, legal segregation, colonialism, racism, non-violence, resistance, civil rights. Consider reviewing these terms with students, or working together to make digestible definitions for third graders.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Before teaching this lesson, the teacher should be familiar with the life and contributions of Gandhi. Beyond the suggested picture books, consider reading a biography about Gandhi, or articles, such as those mentioned above. Additionally, consider viewing the videos about Gandhi's life, such as the brief bio-doc available on Biography.com (this is recommended for teacher-use only, as it includes graphic photos used to illustrate the violence of the era). Another brief video is available on History.com (which may be suitable for Grade 3 students; of course, the teacher should always pre-screen). Links are available in the Materials section above.
- Read both picture books (co-authored by Gandhi's grandson) to see which one fits best for your intended goals and comfort level: *Grandfather Gandhi* by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus; and *Be the Change: A Grandfather Gandhi Story* by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus. Pick one text to use for this lesson. If desired, the other text may also be read at a later time.

OPENING

- To launch the conversation of fighting for civil rights, or basic human rights, review the concept of needs and wants, focusing mostly on needs. List some of these needs on the board. Bridge the conversation to include rights. What are basic rights that all people deserve? Access to food? Education (school)? Health care (medicine)? Have there been times in history or recently when people were denied basic rights? What happened? Have there been people who fought for civil rights? Can you name them?
- Segue conversation to include the lifework of Mahatma Gandhi, who famously inspired the strategy of Bayard Rustin and Martin Luther King, Jr., and other activists in the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s. Summarize key elements of Gandhi's biography, such as how he: was born in India and moved to South Africa; practiced law in South Africa, where he faced racial discrimination (as South Africa had a system of apartheid, or legal racial segregation); became inspired to make change; eventually moved back to India, where he led movements of civil disobedience based on non-violent resistance (such as the Salt March of 1930, to protest unjust British laws in the era of colonialism, or the time of "British rule" in India); and practiced numerous non-violent political tactics like boycotts, fasting, and protests (which also led to time in prison). Gandhi's efforts eventually helped gain India's independence from the British empire in 1947. (Sadly, Gandhi was assassinated within the next year. Why would someone kill him?)

READ ALOUD AND DISCUSSION

- Depending on how the teacher presents the life of Gandhi (as it can range from 5-10 minutes to 30 minutes or longer) consider breaking this lesson into two class periods. If the introduction to Gandhi's life is lengthy, consider having students write a brief reflection to capture what they learned and continue with the lesson the following day. If the introduction to Gandhi was brief, move into reading one of the picture books within the same class period.
- Before reading either *Grandfather Gandhi* or *Be the Change: A Grandfather Gandhi Story*, show students the cover and read the title. Ask students what they think the story will be about. Tell students that we're going to learn more about Gandhi's life, but this time, through the eyes of his grandson, Arun. Ask students to imagine what it'd be like to be the grandchild of a global hero, or iconic human symbol of peace. Would that be easy? Would it provide opportunities? Challenges? How could Arun's life and/or the relationship of a boy and his grandfather be similar to a relationship in your own life? Is there anyone in your family, or life, that you look up to?
- Read the chosen book to class, make sure to show illustrations while reading, or after reading each page. As a quick summary, *Grandfather Gandhi* touches upon the idea of anger being like electricity, or lightning — striking at whim. But, as the story suggests, anger can also be transformed and used differently, like a lamp shining light. If used well, anger can illuminate. *Be the Change* focuses on the importance of not living a wasteful life and how wastefulness impacts the lives of others, and can even lead to violence. Within this text is a powerful message of living a life centered on service and peace.
- Ask students to summarize the message of the book. What was Arun trying to say about his grandfather? How did he characterize him? What was Gandhi trying to say about life and how to live it?

ACTIVITY AND CLOSING

- If students read *Grandfather Gandhi*, ask students to reflect on the concept of emotions, and the ways we direct our feelings. If students are angry, or filled with sadness, what can they do with that feeling? Conversely, if they are happy, or filled with joy, what can they do to spread that feeling? Post ideas on the board. Have students write a brief reflection or create a mantra they can tell themselves to redirect negative feelings and/or to cultivate more positive feelings.
- If students read, *Be the Change*, ask them to reflect on the ways they can be less wasteful. As a class, students may brainstorm ways to conserve materials and protect the environment. Consider creating a flowchart to show how wastefulness can lead to violent behavior (as they did in the book, with the "tree" of violence), and/or how harnessing our feelings toward illuminating experiences, instead of threatening experiences, creates a more peaceful, productive, and powerful community.
- Ask students about ways they can translate the message of these books into the classroom community. How can they be more mindful with their emotions? More mindful when it comes to the environment? More mindful with how they treat others?

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To enhance students' understanding of history, create a timeline of Gandhi's life, including big concepts like colonialism, apartheid, religion, civil disobedience, etc.

LESSON 4

THE RIPPLE EFFECT: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: Two to three class periods
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance cultural and historical awareness.
- To become familiar with stories of people who made a positive impact on the world through advocacy and non-violent tactics.
- To understand the guiding principles of peaceful civil rights movements, such as civil disobedience.
- To explore the power of sharing one's voice for communal empowerment, growth, and for overcoming racial (and other forms of) prejudice.
- To understand the social ills of legal racial segregation and economic inequality.
- To explore the idea that when we work together, we are stronger.
- To discuss differences and recognize similarities.

MATERIALS

- Recommended books: *I Have a Dream* by Dr. Martin Luther King and Kadir Nelson; *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* by David Adler and Robert Casilla or *Who Was Rosa Parks?* By Yona Zeldis McDonough; *No Easy Answers: Bayard Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement* by Calvin Craig Miller.
- Visual references for Civil Rights leaders.
- Note-taking materials for students.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did Gandhi's life and political contributions create a rippling effect, felt across the globe? What is nonviolent, civil disobedience?
- Who were the various leaders of the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s? How did they work together to create change? Whose stories have endured? Whose stories need more attention? How does working together make us stronger?

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing relevant terms, such as: racism, segregation, civil rights, marches, economic, inequality, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Inspired by the life and actions of people like Gandhi (as well as the impact of World War II), activists in the United States wanted to create social change to ensure that more citizens had more equal rights. As a society, we can name a handful of these people, of which many consider heroes, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. In addition to these more famous stories, there were others who joined the struggle, making an immeasurable impact on the waves of human progress in the United States. Over the next few class periods, we'll take time to explore the lives and contributions of those who committed themselves to the Civil Rights Movement of the United States.
- Below are summaries about the highlighted Civil Rights leaders. We encourage teachers to do additional research and/or reading of their own in order to best understand the impact of the Civil Rights organizers and to enhance confidence for this topic:
  - **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** – Dr. King is arguably the most famous figure to emerge from the Civil Rights Movement, which aimed to create a more equal living status for black people (and largely people of color) in the United States. Inspired by the life and work of Gandhi, King's philosophy centered on nonviolent, civil disobedience. A powerful orator, King had a way with words, such as the brilliant "I Have a Dream Speech," which is featured in the suggested picture book text. In addition to reading this book, consider viewing a clip of the speech, as his voice captures a spirit that is at once timeless and otherworldly. Why would Dr. King be chosen as the visible leader? Discuss possible reasons.
  - **Rosa Parks** – The more popular version of Rosa Parks' story centers on the idea of a feeble, older woman who went shopping and was too tired to give up her seat on the bus. In reality, Rosa Parks was an active, committed member of the Civil Rights Movement, who risked her safety and freedom when she intentionally rode the buses in Alabama, waiting for the moment to show the U.S. and the rest of the world how unjust, unfair, and prevalent systemic racism was in the U.S. A tribute to her work, the suggested books help restore Parks' image as one of the most important figures of the Civil Rights Movement. Why has the story of Rosa Parks as a victim, rather than a fighter, endured? Discuss possible reasons.
  - **Bayard Rustin** – Inspired by Gandhi's message, Bayard Rustin introduced the philosophy of nonviolent, civil disobedience to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Even though he was instrumental in planning the famous March on Washington, Bayard Rustin rarely, if ever, receives credit for his numerous contributions to Civil Rights, which includes people of color and the LGBTQ+ community. As an outspoken, openly gay man, Rustin was not publicly embraced by the movement. However, would the movement have been as powerful without him? Why were his contributions hidden? Discuss possible reasons. To better understand Bayard Rustin's contributions, teachers should consider reading the PBS article, written by Henry Louis Gates, which details his early life and political career. Available here: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/100-amazing-facts/who-designed-the-march-on-washington/

OPENING

- Reintroduce the topic of civil rights, or basic human rights, tie into the teachings of Gandhi. What did Gandhi fight for? How did he accomplish this? (This should be a review for students.) Ask students to share what they know of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Consider creating a K-W-L chart.
- Students may mention Dr. King, and perhaps Rosa Parks. Ask students if they have heard of the other figures: list the names that were not shared (consider printing pics of each leader to tape to the board, or projecting jpegs onto a Smart Board).
- To provide more context, explain to students that people were fighting for basic civil rights. For example, at this time, there was rampant racial discrimination. Some workers were getting paid incredibly unfair wages, many of whom were people of color. Marches and protests were planned to bring attention to "racism and economic deprivation," such as the famous March on Washington. An outline of its goals, can be found in the "Final Plans for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom document, also available online: http://www.crmvet.org/docs/moworg2.pdf

BOOK GROUPS AND DISCUSSION

- Tell students they will work in small groups to learn more about each of these civil rights leaders. How students are divided is up to the teacher. Consider giving students multiple periods to read through all of the stories (taking notes along the way). If less time is available, consider dividing the students into three groups, each reading about the life of one leader. If not every student reads every story, there should be dedicated time for student groups to present their findings to the whole group, so every child can hear, at the very least, a summarized version of each leader's life and political contributions.

CLOSING

- Reexamine the lives of adults who championed for the rights of others. How were their stories different? What did their stories have in common? Were they stronger when they worked together? Ask students about civil rights that are important to them today. If given the chance, what would they advocate for? Why? Consider having students engage in open discussion and/or write a brief response, which they may share out loud, display in the classroom, or post on a password-protected blog.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To expand the representation of voices in the Civil Rights Movement, both in the United States, or in other parts of the world, consider including the contributions of: Yuri Kochiyama, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Nelson Mandela, etc.
- For a young person's perspective of the Civil Rights Movement, consider reading *Child of the Civil Rights Movement*, by Paula Young Shelton and Raul Colon.

LESSON 5

THE RIPPLE EFFECT: CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE UNITED FARM WORKERS

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: Two to three class periods
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance cultural and historical awareness.
- To become familiar with stories of people who made a positive impact on the world through advocacy and non-violent tactics.
- To understand the guiding principles of peaceful civil rights movements, such as civil disobedience.
- To explore the power of sharing one's voice for communal empowerment, growth, and for overcoming racial — and other forms of — prejudice.
- To understand the social ills of legal racial segregation and economic inequality.
- To explore the idea that when we work together, we are stronger.
- To discuss differences and recognize similarities.

MATERIALS

- Recommended books and articles: *Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers* by Sarah Warren; *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull and Yuyi Morales; *Journey for Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong* by Dawn Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta.
- For teacher understanding, consider reading the NPR article and listening to the audio report, "Grapes of Wrath: The Forgotten Filipinos Who Led a Farmworker Revolution."

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did Gandhi's life and political contributions create a rippling effect, felt across the globe? What is nonviolent, civil disobedience? How did it impact the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s?
- Who were the people who fought for farm workers' rights? How did they work together to create change? Whose stories have endured? Whose stories need more attention? How does working together make us stronger?

VOCABULARY

- As recommended in the previous lesson, consider reviewing relevant terms, such as: racism, segregation, civil rights, marches, strikes, economic, inequality, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Inspired by the life and actions of people like Gandhi (as well as the impact of World War II), activists in the United States wanted to create social change to ensure that more citizens had more equal rights. As a society, we can name a handful of these people, of which many consider heroes, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. In addition to these more famous stories, there were others who joined the struggle, making an immeasurable impact on the waves of human progress in the United States. Over the next few class periods, we'll take time to explore the lives and contributions of those who committed themselves to advocating for civil rights.
- Below are summaries about some of the leaders who worked to improve the lives and working conditions of farm workers in California. We encourage teachers to do additional research and/or reading of their own in order to best understand the impact of these leaders and to enhance confidence for this topic:
    - **Dolores Huerta** – Beginning her career as an empathetic teacher, Dolores Huerta learned about the hardships of migrant farm workers, including their alarmingly low pay and unsafe working conditions. Deciding to take a stand, Dolores Huerta, alongside Cesar Chavez, helped organize a movement that fought for workers' rights. As the only woman in her organization, Huerta had to learn to navigate many obstacles, while keeping her focus on improving the lives of her community. Why is Dolores Huerta a lesser known historical figure? Discuss possible reasons.
    - **Cesar Chavez** – Cesar Chavez helped lead a 340-mile peaceful protest through California, to gain attention to the needs and struggle for basic rights of migrant farmworkers in central California. A shy boy, Chavez eventually learned the power of speaking up, and with the help of Dolores Huerta, organized a movement that caught the country's attention. Why did Cesar Chavez become the face of the movement and not Dolores Huerta? Discuss possible reasons.
    - **Larry Itliong** – Before the actions taken by Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, Filipino farmworkers were the first to strike, bringing public attention to the unsafe, unfair conditions of farmwork in the agricultural belt of California, though many historical accounts often erase their contributions. Led by the charismatic, seasoned labor leader, Larry Itliong, the Filipino workers striked, and with permission, the Mexican workers (led by Huerta and Chavez) eventually joined the struggle. Why were the Filipino workers' contributions "forgotten" or overshadowed? Discuss possible reasons.

OPENING

- Revisit the topic of civil rights, or basic human rights, tie into the teachings of Gandhi and the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. How did Gandhi's work influence the movement in the U.S.? Besides leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Bayard Rustin, other leaders were influenced to advocate for basic rights. Ask students if they have heard of the United Farm Workers. If so, what do they know about them? Consider creating a K-W-L chart.
- To provide more context, explain to students a brief history of the annexation of Mexico. In the mid-1800s, through a violent campaign, the U.S. incorporated land that used to be part of Mexico. As a result of unfair, illegal activity that broke the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, many Mexicans went from being landowners to laborers. Over time, the majority of people who worked in the agricultural fields in California were Mexican and Filipino. The working conditions on these farms were often harsh, unsanitary, and dangerous. Leaders emerged, who worked to fight for basic rights for agricultural workers, such as more sanitary conditions and a more fair wage. Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez formed the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and Larry Itliong formed the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). With common goals and methods, the two organizations joined forces, creating The United Farm Workers labor union.
- By reading various texts, we will learn more about the leaders of this movement, including: Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez, and Larry Itliong.

BOOK GROUPS AND DISCUSSION

- Tell students they will work in small groups to learn more about each of these civil rights leaders. How students are divided is up to the teacher. Consider giving students multiple periods to read through all of the stories (taking notes along the way). If less time is available, consider dividing the students into three groups, each reading about the life of one leader. If not every student reads every story, there should be dedicated time for student groups to present their findings to the whole group, so every child can hear, at the very least, a summarized version of each leader's life and political contributions.

CLOSING

- Reexamine the lives of adults who championed for the rights of others. How were their stories different? What did their stories have in common? Were they stronger when they worked together? Ask students about civil rights that are important to them today. If given the chance, what would they advocate for? Why? Consider having students engage in open discussion and/or write a brief response, of which they may share out loud, display in the classroom, or post on a password-protected blog.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For another activity, have students consider how timing impacts these movements. Part of the reason the Civil RIghts Movement was successful, for example, was because television was used as a tool for change. How may the internet and/or other forms of technology impact these movements of social change if they were to happen today? Additionally, what sort of movements may be happening now? For ideas, consider the article, "6 Ways Technology Is Breaking Barriers to Social Change," written by Abe Grindle for Fast Company. Available here: https://www.fastcompany.com/3043761/6-ways-technology-is-breaking-barriers-to-social-change

LESSON 6

HOW ONE (YOUNG) VOICE CAN BRIDGE MANY: MALALA, WARRIOR WITH WORDS

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: 45 minutes
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance global and cultural awareness.
- To become familiar with stories of people who made a positive impact on the world through advocacy and non-violent tactics.
- To understand the guiding principles of peaceful movements (i.e. civil disobedience).
- To explore the power of sharing one's voice for communal empowerment, growth, and for overcoming racial (and other forms of) prejudice.
- To explore the importance of bridging cross-cultural communities.
- To understand the power of the written word.
- To explore the importance of racial representation in the media (extension activity).

MATERIALS

- *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words* by Karen Leggett Abouraya.
- Chart paper, Post-it notes and/or writing materials for students.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- We are often familiar with the stories of adults who have championed for equal rights. But what about children? What sort of impact can the youth make? What is the power of the written word, including the internet and social media? What tools do we have now, as young people, to be sources of positive social change, for the self and for the larger community?

VOCABULARY

- Review or introduce terms: religious extremists (Taliban), militant, rebels, advocate (as a noun and verb), endurance, resistance, courageous, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Named after a woman whose brave poetry helped save her village a century ago, Malala Yousafzai used to fill a notebook with words of her own. As a young girl, Malala attended school, but after a rebel group invaded her village, they banned girls from receiving an education. Malala spoke out, writing a blog that caught attention, and was shot by the rebels in an effort to silence her. Bold and courageous, Malala turned her tragedy into a powerful story of endurance and strength, highlighting the power of the written and spoken word, as well as the undeniable strength of an individual person and spirit. Now, Malala is an advocate for the lives of children, calling for more equal access to education for young people and girls around the world. This picture book serves as a great introduction to the life of Malala, and the idea that children also have a voice.

OPENING

- Before reading, ask students if they have heard about Malala Yousafzai. Based on the cover and title of the book, ask students what they think the story, or her life, is about. What do they think of when they hear the word "warrior"? How can someone be a "Warrior with Words"?
- To expand global awareness, consider reviewing her country or region of origin (i.e. using a globe, paper maps, Google Earth) with students either during this lesson or in a lesson beforehand. Point out Pakistan, as well as India and Afghanistan, and neighboring countries. Briefly describe the inhumane, brutal practices of the Taliban. An explanation is included in the back of the recommended book, *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words*. Read from the text, or provide an oral summary. An explanation may sound something like: "The Taliban is a group of religious extremists who, with violence, force strict, unfair rules. They do not believe that everyone, especially women and girls, deserve equal rights. Not everyone in this region of the world believes this, nor do all Muslims. The Tablian is a select group." Living in Pakistan, Malala did not think this treatment was fair. Here is her story.

READ ALOUD AND DISCUSSION

- Read *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words* to the class. Make sure to show illustrations while reading, or after reading each page. Read the story with sensitivity and warn students about upcoming moments of violence in the text. After reading the book and introducing students to Malala's life story and work, discuss the importance of writing. Can writing and sharing one's voice make an impact? Revisit the title of the book, specifically, *Warrior with Words*. Is Malala a warrior? How? Have a class discussion.

ACTIVITY AND CLOSING

- For a class activity, consider having students write a brief reflection in response to one of the powerful statements from the text, such as: 1) Our words can change the world; 2) Peaceful words have power over violence; or 3) Education is our basic right. Do they agree or disagree? Why? Explain.
- For another activity, encourage students to consider their own identity and passion. They may take 5-10 minutes to write down everything they know and/or want to know more about in this world. What are they willing to advocate for? What are they passionate about? To turn this activity into a more tangible example of activism, students can research outlets to write to — to share their opinion, to voice their concern, to make recommendations, etc. For example, if they are passionate about recycling, they may establish a recycling club on campus (taking paper waste and turning it into notebooks students can use). Or they can write articles for a class blog. They can pen persuasive letters and submit them for publication in student magazines. In short, their writing should aim to take action or share a vision, as Malala's did. Another example of the power of the written word is referenced below, as an extension activity.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- As an extension suggestion, consider an additional lesson. To illustrate the power of "speaking up," discuss the example of Charles Schultz adding a character of color to his famous *Peanuts* comic strip. At the start of 1968, the *Peanuts* characters were all white. With Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s recent assassination on her mind, Harriet Glickman, a teacher, wrote to Charles Schultz, asking him to consider including a black character in his strip. Afraid a black character may come off as condescending, Schultz wrote Harriet Glickman, explaining his desire to be inclusive, but also his great fear of offending others if he did not "do it right." After receiving advice and character suggestions from a pool of people (mostly people of color), Charles Schultz eventually added a black character, Franklin Armstrong, to the *Peanuts* comic strip. While Franklin did not have the nuanced development of other *Peanuts* characters, his arrival indicated movement toward equality on July 29, 1968, which, as we know, was still a time pervaded by social and racial segregation and inequality. Consider having students thumb through *Peanuts* comics before and after the arrival of Franklin. As a class, think about and discuss the importance of diversity and representation. For guidance, read the NPR article and audio report, "How Franklin, the Black '*Peanuts*' Character, Was Born." Available here: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/11/06/454930010/how-franklin-the-black-peanuts-character-was-born
- For another activity, consider learning more about Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teen who is advocating for climate change. Consider reading the article, "16-Year-Old Environmental Activist Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize," from *Daily Beast*, and watching the video, "Swedish Teen Greta Thunberg Skips School for Climate Protest." Links below:
  - https://www.thedailybeast.com/greta-thunberg-16-year-old-environmental-activist-nominated-for-nobel-peace-prize
  - https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-45439003/swedish-teen-greta-thunberg-skips-school-for-climate-protest

LESSON 7
"DISABILITY" IS NOT INABILITY

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: 30-45 minutes
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies

Background

OBJECTIVES
- To discuss differences in physical abilities.
- To understand that physical disabilities does not necessarily indicate inability.
- To be inspired by the story of a real life person who advocated for disability rights.

MATERIALS
- *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah* by Laurie Ann Thompson and Sean Qualls.

ESSENTIAL IDEA
- Sometimes people focus on what they do not have. In contrast, other people make use of what they do have. In this lesson, students will read a biographical picture book about the life of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, and how he overcame obstacles to show the world that "disability is not inability."

VOCABULARY
- Consider reviewing terms like able-bodiedness and physical (dis)ability.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND
- Determined to live a joyous, adventurous life, Emmanuel Ofosu lived a mobile lifestyle, even though he was born with a leg that did not function well (because it was not fully developed, he could not walk or run on it). Living in Ghana, West Africa, Emmanuel hopped two miles to school, played soccer, and even became a cyclist. To spread the powerful message that "disability is not inability," Emmanuel made an epic four hundred-mile journey across Ghana on his bicycle. His inspiring work to raise ability awareness continues today. Read this book to share this inspiring story to students and to expand the classroom curriculum to include a story of physical (dis)ability — continuing the dialogue of how we are all different, yet similar.

OPENING
- Begin by introducing the book, *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah*. Read the title and show the cover. Have students read this before? For those who haven't, what do they think the book might be about?

READ ALOUD
- Read *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah* to the class. Make sure to show illustrations while reading, or after each page. After reading the story, ask students to share an idea from the text. What stood out to them? Was there anything about Emmanuel's life that made an impression on them? Why?

ACTIVITY AND CLOSING

- Imagine they had to write a summary about his life for a newspaper article. What would the headline be to describe his life? What words would they use to describe him? Distribute index cards or Post-it notes for students to write their headline. Together, as a class, share ideas.
- If time allows, consider having students write a nonfiction summary of his life, in the manner of a newspaper article. For another activity, students may research a young person who they think is brave.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For another story of a young person with courage, consider reading *Brave Girl: Clara Lemlich and the Shirtwaist Makers* by Michelle Markel to learn more about the young girl who fought for immigrant rights in the 1900s. This recommended picture book features the true story of Clara Lemlich, who immigrated to the United States at a young age and led the largest strike of women workers in American history. This story also reviews the arduous labor required of immigrants in the 1900s, and the ongoing fight for equality and justice. Another extension activity may include a discussion of child labor, immigrants to Ellis Island (which is explored in Grade 5), and/or how the introduction of some laws improved the situation for some young workers, such as the compulsory education acts, which required children to attend school.

LESSON 8

SEEDS OF CHANGE: THE RIPPLING EFFECT OF ACTS OF KINDNESS

Grade: 3 | Suggested Time: 45 minutes
Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss the importance of helping others.
- To understand that we are stronger when we work together.
- To understand the rippling effect of an act of kindness.
- To explore the importance of environmentalism.
- To be inspired by the story of a real life person who helped improve the lives of others and helped to improve the environment.

MATERIALS

- For this lesson, we recommend using the picture book *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya* by Donna Jo Napoli and Kadir Nelson.
- If desired, a teacher may also read *Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gift to the World* by Jen Cullerton Johnson and Sonia Lynn Sadler.
- "I Will Be a Hummingbird," Video of Wangari Maathai for *Dirt! The Movie*. Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Known as Mama Miti, or the "mother of trees," Wangari Maathai's acts of kindness and wisdom spread the gift of food, health, longevity, and environmentalism across her home of Kenya. This lesson will aim to honor the life and contributions of Maathai. Discussions will focus on Mama Miti's acts, and also center on steps students can take to have a positive impact on their local worlds, such as their neighborhood and schools, including their very own classroom.

VOCABULARY

- In the recommended picture book, various names for trees are introduced, including: mubiru muiru, mukinduri, muheregendi, muthakwa wa athi, mukawa, muluhakuha, murigono, muhuti, muigoya, muringa, mukuyu, and miinu. A glossary for additional terms is included in the back of the book. Also consider reviewing the phrase repeated throughout the text, "Thayu nyumba — peace, my people."

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Known as "Mama Miti," Wangari Maathai is the founder of the Green Belt Movement, an African grassroots organization that works to restore the environment by combating deforestation, degradation, and soil erosion. Because of her work, more than 30 millions trees have been planted in Kenya! The first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai has shown us that we can positively change the world, one seed, one tree, and one person at a time. The recommended picture books provide great opportunities to explore this awe-inspiring life story.

OPENING

- Ask students about ways we can take care of the planet. What are natural things we need in order to live? Guide students to realize the function and impact of trees. Trees provide pleasurable things like shade. They also can provide food, oxygen, wood, etc. Ask them if they've heard about the life of Wangari Maathai, or Mama Miti. If not, tell them that they're going to learn about how one woman and her seeds changed her country, one tree at a time.

READ ALOUD AND DISCUSSION

- Show students the cover of the picture book, *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya*. When reading, ask students to note the words and the beautiful illustrations.
- The text states: "Wangari changed a country, tree by tree. She taught her people the ancient wisdom of peace with nature. And now she is teaching the rest of the world."
- What actions did Wangari Maathai take to help others? What was the rippling effect of her actions? In other words, how did her acts of kindness continue to endure beyond the initial gift or offering? How did she change her home country of Kenya? How is she teaching the rest of the world? What lessons can we learn from Wangari Maathai?

DISCUSSION AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

- Show the class the video of Wangari Maathai, "I Will Be a Hummingbird," made for *Dirt! The Movie*. Link in Materials Section of lesson. In the video, Maathai shares the folktale of a hummingbird who worked to overcome the impossible, sharing the inspiring phrase, "I will be a hummingbird, I will do the best that I can." (Watch the video for inspiration!)
- Ask students: What are some actions we can take in our own lives to make change (starting on a smaller scale)? Encourage students to question or investigate ways they can impact the future and their surrounding environment, and dialogue that includes ways to make a positive impact for the environment at school and/or the local community. Give students time to think about what matters to them.
- Consider providing each student with a paper seed cut-out to write an idea of how they can contribute to either their classroom, school, or community. They may "plant" their seed in a box with the rest of class. Consider placing the seeds at the root of a paper "tree" displayed on a classroom wall (leaves could be made out of the shape of students' hands.) This wall could serve as a reminder of commitments, such as proposed acts of kindness towards others.
- If desired, carry out another community exercise. For instance, if a classroom has access to outdoor space and land, consider planting trees or flowers. If relegated to indoor spaces, planting something near a windowsill, such as tulips, or taking care of air plants or succulents may be a nice reminder of Maathai life's work. Also, consider engaging with a fundraising activity to donate to tree adoption organizations.
- Finally, to come full circle with this unit, consider having students gather in a circle to make their pledges. Similar to Lesson 1, students can form a circle of kindness, dropping a small stone or seed into a pool of water, or soil, for a kind act they plan on committing for the classroom, school, environment, etc. Thank each student after sharing and remind them of two big ideas: 1) When we work together we are stronger and 2) Our acts of kindness have a rippling effect. We have power in influencing what kind of impact we have on this world.

Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For more stories about people who have made a positive impact in the world, consider the following: *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World* by Chelsea Clinton; or *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* by Vashti Harrison.
- For a story of positive change from an indigenous community in Guatemala, consider reviewing the life of Rigoberta Menchu, a famous politician and human rights activist who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for her work restoring rights to indigenous communities, and starting a wave of feminism in Guatemala, which was plagued, at the time, by war. Similar to Gandhi, Malala, and Miti's successes, Rigoberta Menchu's story and courage traversed the globe.