



FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM

Lesson Title: Unit: FAIR's Principles of Peaceful Change; Lesson Two: The Power of Exercising Moral Courage

Recommended Grade Levels: 9-10

Recommended Pacing: 60-75 minutes

FAIR Standards and Objectives:

HM. 9-12.2: I can explain how moral and ethical truths exist across otherwise different cultures, and recognize those truths within my own culture.

HM. 9-12.4: I can explain how specific Americans, including Martin Luther King, Jr., have interpreted that American political principles should apply to humanity rather than only to people of one skin color or ethnicity.

US 9-12.15: I resist racism and intolerance because they inevitably involve forcing people into identity categories that flatten and diminish them.

FR.9-12.19: I resist as unfair forcing individuals to identify with a group or to force collective guilt upon individuals for wrongs they did not commit.

Theme(s): Character Strengths

Era(s): Civil Rights Movement

Areas of Focus: Character Strengths, Courage, Civil Rights

Lesson Objectives: I will be able to explain how exercising moral courage in the face of social challenges (such as stereotypes and prejudice) can promote peaceful change that enriches all humanity.

Teacher Instructions:

Background

This lesson draws on the previous lesson (Lesson One: Stories Can Build Bridges) and continues to deepen students' understanding of diverse ways of thinking and being in the world. In particular, this lesson will ask students to explore moral courage and its role in the lives of historical figures and (ultimately) each student's life. Similar to previous lessons, this lesson will ask students to write in their Identity Journal as they consider and interact with ideas related to moral courage. Subsequent lessons will draw on this lesson. Throughout the remainder of the unit, students will explore [FAIR's Principles of Peaceful Change](#) and they will continually reflect on the ways that having moral courage creates a society that values all people--particularly people with diverse backgrounds, thoughts, and perspectives.

Materials

"Why I Love a Country That Once Betrayed Me" by George Takei ([transcript](#) and [video](#))
"The Story of Martin Luther King Jr." by Kid President ([video](#))

Opening

- Teacher posts the bellringer on the board/projector.
 - "Courage" is [defined by Webster's Dictionary](#) as: "the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." In your Identity Journal respond to the following two questions. You have 5 minutes to respond.
 - Based on the definition of "courage," what do you think it means to have "moral courage"? Be specific in your explanation.
 - Using your definition of moral courage, tell about a time that you witnessed moral courage. The story you tell could be about you, someone you know, or a story you heard.
- Turn and talk- Teacher asks students to turn to a shoulder partner and share what they wrote.
- Whole group share-Teacher facilitates discussion about the meaning of "moral courage" and asks for students to share definitions and examples of moral courage. Teacher guides students to a definition of moral courage that speaks of people who have strength to stick to their morals in difficult and trying situations

Guided Practice

- Teacher and students watch: ["The Story of Martin Luther King Jr."](#) by Kid President. While students are watching the teacher should ask students to write examples of the ways that Martin Luther King Jr. demonstrated "moral courage" in the video.
 - Following the video, the teacher will model a list of examples of moral courage. Examples that may be included are:
 - Where people were hurting, MLK stepped in to help
 - MLK walked with people
 - MLK marched with people
 - MLK walked arm in arm with everyone
 - When MLK went to prison, he kept going
 - When people didn't like MLK, he kept going
 - MLK had a dream and he shared his dream
 - After modeling a list, the teacher will ask students to freewrite in their Identity Journals about the following prompt:

- Think back on the video we just watched. How did one person’s moral courage change the community/society he lived in? In your opinion, what is the value of demonstrating moral courage? Explain your thoughts.

Independent and/or Group Work

- Students will listen/read/watch to George Takei’s TED Talk [“Why I Love a Country That Betrayed Me”](#)
 - During the video, students record examples of moral courage, from the TED Talk, in their Identity Journal. The teacher may prompt students to create two columns for this task (see example, below):

Person/People	Example (s) of Moral Courage
George Takei’s Father	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking George to Campaign Headquarters - Explaining American Democracy as a people’s democracy

- In groups of three or four, students compare notes about the TED Talk and respond to the question: In this TED Talk, explain what way one person’s moral courage positively changed the family/community/society he or she was a part of?
- Whole Group Share: Each group nominates one person to share their thoughts about the change that occurred as a result of one person showing “moral courage.”

Discussion and Closing

- Following students’ sharing out, the teacher will close by asking students to reflect on this prompt (this could be a whole group discussion or a written exit ticket depending on time):
 - In today’s lesson you encountered several people who demonstrated moral courage in the face of adversity. As you reflect on this, respond to one or more of the following questions in your identity journal:
 - Tell about a time when you or someone you know experienced adversity and showed moral courage.
 - How can you demonstrate moral courage in your own life? What are some specific ideas you have about how you can stand strong and persevere, morally, in the challenges you face?

Assessment Ideas for the Lesson

- Ask students (individually or in small groups) to research a person or group of people who demonstrated moral courage in their lifetime. Students can use credible online resources to complete this assignment or they can interview the person/people they have chosen. When research is complete, ask students to create visual presentations that showcase their research. Have a presentation day where students share their research projects with their classmates.

Assessment Ideas for the Unit

- At the end of the unit, students will be asked to write a letter to another student that takes a clear stand in response to this question: “What is the most important way that we, as a society, can promote change?” Students will be asked to use evidence to support their stance. Evidence should ideally come from the readings/videos provided in each lesson. Thus, students’ letters should begin with something like: “The most important way we can promote peaceful change is...”

Extension Activities:

- Ask students to create a collage of “artifacts” demonstrating how and/or why they want to show moral courage in their own lives. The collage could include (but is not limited to) magazine pictures, cut out words, personal photos, QR codes linked to songs, videos etc. Following the creation of the collage, students should write a short essay explaining why they chose the artifacts they did.
- Have students create a playlist of 7-10 songs that speak to the meaning of moral courage. Each student should give their playlist a name that reflects the spirit of the songs. Following the creation of the playlist, students could write a short paragraph about each song that explains why the song (as a whole) or the lyrics (specifically) contributes to their understanding of moral courage.