



FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM

Lesson Title: What Does It Mean to Defeat Injustice, Not People? (Part One)

Recommended Grade Levels: 9-10

Recommended Pacing: 60-75 minute class

FAIR Standards and Objectives:

HM.9-12.1: I respect people's freedom to develop and enact their character because it is essential to their quality of life.

HM.9-12.2: I can explain how specific 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.

Theme(s): Character Strengths

Era(s): Current

Areas of Focus: Civil Rights, Tolerance, Forgiveness

Teacher Instructions:

Background

This lesson draws on the previous lesson (Lesson Two: The Power of Exercising Moral Courage) and continues to deepen students' understanding of varying viewpoints. In particular, this lesson will ask students to think deeply about what it means to "defeat injustice, not people."

Subsequent lessons will ask students to consider different viewpoints about the ways to defeat injustice (primarily as they encounter the different approaches of MLK and Malcolm X). Similar to previous lessons, this lesson will ask students to write in their Identity Journal as they consider and interact with these ideas. Throughout the remainder of the unit, students will explore [FAIR's Principles of Peaceful Change](#). As with previous lessons, students will continually reflect on the

ways that they can work with and learn to value people with diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives.

Materials

[Pink and Say](#) by Patricia Polacco

Clip from [Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story](#)

Opening

- Teacher prepares the movie clip from [Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story](#) on the projector and the teacher/students watch the clip together. Teacher preps the students to watch the clip by briefly giving a [bio of Bruce Lee](#).
- Following the movie clip, the teacher asks students to get out their Identity Journals and write in response to the following prompt:
 - - **Prompt #1:** Why do you think it's important for Bruce Lee to learn that Kung-Fu is more than a system of fighting? With this in mind, what is a lesson we can learn about our own lives?
 - **Prompt #2:** What does the narrator mean when he says that Bruce Lee's opponents will be more than just men? Why might this be an important lesson for someone who is learning martial arts? Do you think this is an important lesson for others to learn? Why or why not?
 - **Prompt #3:** What do you think the narrator means when he says: "If you don't conquer [fear, hatred, and anger] then a life of a hundred years is a tragedy. If you do, a life of a single day can be a triumph." Why might this thought be important to a person learning to be a martial artist? Why might this be an important lesson for today?
- Turn and talk- Teacher asks students to turn to a shoulder partner and share their chosen prompt and response.
- Whole group share- Teacher facilitates discussion to brainstorm "invisible opponents" that are not physical but may be mental, emotional, social, etc.. The teacher lists ideas on the board as students share out. Some invisible opponents students might share are: anxiety, depression, hate, anger, injustice, racism, prejudice, envy, jealousy, etc. (*It might be useful to have students copy this list down in their Identity Journals so they will be able to reference it in the future)

Guided Practice

- Teacher conducts a read aloud of the book [Pink and Say](#) by Patricia Polacco. During the read aloud, the teacher will stop reading at certain points, and ask students to respond to these questions on their own piece of paper. (*Note: You may want to prepare several slides with these questions so students will have a visual of the question once you stop and give them a few minutes to jot down their thoughts.)
 - Stop and Jot #1: Who is Sheldon? What happened to him? What can you infer about him thus far?

- Stop and Jot #2: Who rescues Sheldon and what can you infer about him? Where is Sheldon taken to? What can you infer about that place?
- Stop and Jot #3: Who is Moe Moe Bay? Why does Pinkus say: “as soon as you heal up we gotta get away from here. We are putin’ Moe Moe Bay in great danger by bein’ here.” Why is Moe Moe Bay in danger?
- Stop and Jot #4: While they sit under the willow tree, Sheldon asks Pink why he wants to go back to the war. Pink responds by saying, “Cause it’s my fight. Say, Ain’t it yours, too? If we don’t fight then who will?” What does Pink mean by this?
- Stop and Jot #5: When Pink announces that it’s time for him and Say to leave, he says: “Mother this war has to be won or this sickness that has taken this land will never stop.” What sickness is Pink talking about?
- Stop and Jot #6: What was the enduring wisdom that Moe Moe Bay taught to Say? Why was this important?
- Stop and Jot #7: How did the characters in this story exercise moral courage? How did the actions of the characters build or demolish bridges between people?

Independent and/or Group Work

- Following the read aloud, students will form groups of three to four and answer the following questions about *Pink and Say*. Each group should appoint a speaker and be ready to share their responses with the rest of the class.
 - Group Questions:
 - In the book *Pink and Say* there are some invisible opponents that Pink and Say must fight together. What are they? Why is the “war” something that Pink and Say need to fight together?
 - In what ways do the characters of *Pink and Say* demonstrate that they must fight injustice, not people? Use specific examples.
 - What connections can you make between the book *Pink and Say* and current events in our society? What are the invisible opponents that you think need to be fought? What wisdom have you received or learned that might help in this? Be as detailed as possible in your responses.
- Students share out responses to the whole class. Teacher facilitates discussion and encourages multiple thoughts/viewpoints.

Discussion and Closing

- Following students’ sharing out, the teacher will close by asking students to reflect on this prompt in their Identity Journals.
 - In today’s lesson, you encountered several people who demonstrated this principle of peaceful change: “We must fight injustice, not people.” Reflect on this principle in your Identity Journal by responding to the following questions:
 - What does it mean to fight injustice and not people? How is fighting injustice different from fighting a person? What are some

ways that you can think of to fight injustice that would be positive and inclusive for all people/humanity?

Assessment Ideas for the Lesson

- In small groups, ask students to interview teachers, parents, or community members about what they think the phrase “fight injustice, not people” means. After they interview, groups should present their findings to the class in a visual way (i.e. a piece of art, a google slides presentation, a video, etc.).
- Conduct a “graffiti wall” by asking students to silently write a response to these seven prompts on individual sticky notes. These prompts should be posted on butcher paper:
 - How does one fight injustice and not people?
 - What is an example of a person who fights/fought injustice as opposed to fighting people?
 - What stories do you know that feature a person who knows the difference between fighting injustice (an invisible opponent) and fighting people?
 - Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “If you don’t conquer [fear, hatred, and anger] then a life of a hundred years is a tragedy. If you do, a life of a single day can be a triumph.” Explain your thoughts.
 - Do you believe that you have opponents who are more than just people? Be specific as you explain your thinking.
 - Does it take moral courage to “fight injustice, not people?” Explain why you think this.
 - How can you (and others) build bridges between people of different backgrounds/races/ethnicities by choosing to “fight injustice, not people.” Give specific examples.

After students have each responded to these prompts, group students into groups of four. Have each group stand by each prompt. Then, ask students to categorize responses into categories that make the most sense to them, as a group. When each group is finished categorizing, students should share out their categories with the rest of the class.

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:

- Watch/listen to [this clip](#) of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Street Sweeper" speech. Following the clip, the teacher will facilitate a discussion with students. What is Martin Luther King, Jr. trying to accomplish when he talks about being a "street sweeper?" How does this message fit in with the idea that we need to fight injustice, not people?