

'Gandhi Peace Program' Curriculum & Lesson Plan

Lesson Subject: Promoting Peace and Non-Violence through Gandhi's Teachings in Chicago Public Schools

Grade Level(s): Grades 2 - 5

Lesson Duration: 50 Minutes

Learning Objectives:

Students will experience and acquaint themselves with Gandhi's practices of peace and non-violence through his life journey and his teachings

Methodology: The goal is to encourage young minds to learn through a holistic experience using stories, discussion, demos, creative art and simulations, thereby ensuring a truly sustainable learning.

- Narration of Gandhi's life's work interspersed with pictures and audience interactions.
- Use of creative visuals that convey & connect to the storyline.
- Proposed use of 'Gandhi props' (dhoti, Gandhi glasses, a cane) encourage the students to experience/ recreate their use through demos.
- Meditation as a simulation exercise to be able to put into practice a powerful tool that can be applied toward mental/ spiritual wellbeing.
- Discussions and 'imagery' as a tool for students to express their comprehension and application of their learnings

The Lesson Plan:

1. Story of Gandhi with visuals and props (15 mins)

The Instructor will read a story and lead the classroom on a visual tour, a "picture walk" of Gandhi's life, using pictures where appropriate/ on prompt.

The story will include his childhood, his experiences with racism and injustice, and his reasons and methods for peaceful protest. Content in this story would include:

- The Life of Gandhi – India was under the British rule for almost 200 years. And although they introduced advancements like the railroad, Indians wanted freedom from a foreign power governing them by force. Gandhi united his country through peaceful protests, eventually India won the struggle and gained Independence in 1947.
- Gandhi was born in 1869. He went to law school in England and later worked as an Attorney in South Africa. There he experienced racism and injustice that would inspire his civil rights movement. In an incident in South Africa, he was beaten, forced to leave a stage coach and thrown out of a train all because of the color of his skin. He coined the term "Satyagraha" – (force born of Truth, Love, Non-violence) is non-violent resistance movement, with massive peaceful protests and boycotts. He fought for 20 years against Britain in South Africa and then moved back to India.
- Gandhi's Methods and Reasons for Peaceful Protest – Back in India, his peaceful protests included encouraging people to stop working (in protest against the oppressive foreign rule). For example, several businesses closed, as he would encourage people to create their own rough cotton cloth (khadi) instead of buying foreign fabric (silks etc.) in a symbolic gesture to fight the British. Gandhi himself would fast for days and meditate while spinning the wheel to

make cotton. He was incarcerated many times for his actions. He openly defied the British to make salt, because Indians did not want to pay a salt tax. Gandhi and 100K followers walked 241 miles to the Arabian Sea to protest the tax on salt, the British retaliated by arresting 60k Indians. This set laid the foundation for the “Quit India” movement to force the British rulers out of India.

- Through his non-violent methods, Gandhi eventually helped India become independent in 1947. He was called Bapuji or “Father of the Nation.” He also paved the way for other inspirational leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. MLK was 19 when Gandhi was assassinated. Gandhi had a strong influence on MLK and his leadership during the American civil rights movement. He read Gandhi’s writings on non-violence and visited India in 1959 to pay tribute by visiting Gandhi’s shrine. MLK stated that “Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi in India showed it could work.” Contemporary leaders like teen activist Malala and many others have also been inspired and empowered to stand up to oppression by using Gandhi’s path of non-violence, his powerful tools to fight injustice and timeless teachings.

Part of this exercise will feature a few minutes of a demo exercise using feature ‘props’ such as a cotton dhoti, Gandhi style glasses, a cane, a khadi kurta/ jacket. These will be shown to the children as replicas of some of the things that Gandhiji would have used and to familiarize them with what Khadi looked and felt like.

2. Meditation exercise demo & practice (15 mins):

Kriya yoga (aka meditation) was Gandhi’s go-to method of peaceful practice, which the student will now learn to perform by a practice demo. This form of meditation is focused on energy of the spine. The correct posture involves sitting up on a comfortable surface, spine straight, shoulders relaxed, neck parallel to the floor and eyes closed.

Students will be taught to focus on their breathing by inhaling for 3 seconds, holding their breath for 4 seconds and exhaling for 5 seconds. They will be instructed to allow their thoughts to enter and exit their minds, visualizing clouds floating by until their thoughts become absolutely silent (enter a blank space).

A meditation instructor will guide the students through this exercise to ensure that it is performed accurately. A meditation gong/bell will be used at the beginning and end of the meditation to start/end the session.

3. Discussion, Interpretation, Presentation (15 mins):

Some of Gandhi’s famous quotes (the rest are in the workbook section):

“An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.”

“In a gentle way you can shake the world.”

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

After reviewing Gandhi’s quotes, students will:

- ⇒ Select their favorite quote from the list provided, proceed to complete the worksheet by providing an explanation of why the quote resonates with them
- ⇒ Draw/ sketch their interpretation of ‘peace’ on a sheet of paper, based on their recent experience with meditation
- ⇒ Share their work and interpretation with a classmate
- ⇒ A few volunteers will present their work/ drawings with the class

4. Closing: Positive impact through NIAM & take-aways (5 mins)

Students will learn that there are other ways Indian Americans have made a positive impact in this country.

The National Indo American Museum will be introduced to the students as a space that displays the stories of Indians and how they have helped shape the American story. An oral history/curated piece from the museum will be presented for the students to view and to encourage them to visit, experience and understand more about the culture, history, diversity, and contributions of Indian Americans.

Summary of Tasks:

- 15 Minutes – Story of Gandhi with visuals and props
- 15 Minutes – Meditation exercise demo & practice
- 15 Minutes – Discussion, interpretation and presentation
- 05 Minutes – Positive impact through the work of NIAM & take-aways

Materials:

- Curriculum printouts
- Storybook on Gandhi
- Pictures/ Posters (Gandhi's picture presentation)
- Props: Dhoti, Gandhi style glasses, cane, khadi kurta/ jacket for demo
- Worksheet for Students
- Crayons/ Sketch pens/ Pencils
- Gong/Bell for Meditation
- (Proposed) Oral History/Curated Piece from NIAM

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this course curriculum, students will be able to:

- Recognize/ use key elements of Gandhi's techniques in conflict resolution
- Define 'peace', its value and personal meaning in each of their lives
- Practice Kriya yoga (meditation) for general mental/ spiritual health and wellbeing

Your name _____

1. Read Gandhi's famous quotes about peace. Circle one that you feel has a special meaning to you.

"Be the change you wish to see in the world"

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

"We can only win over the opponent by love, never by hate."

"I believe non-violence is infinitely superior to violence."

"In a gentle way you can shake the world"

"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind."

"Return good for evil became my guiding principle."

"Silence makes no sense where it is necessary to speak."

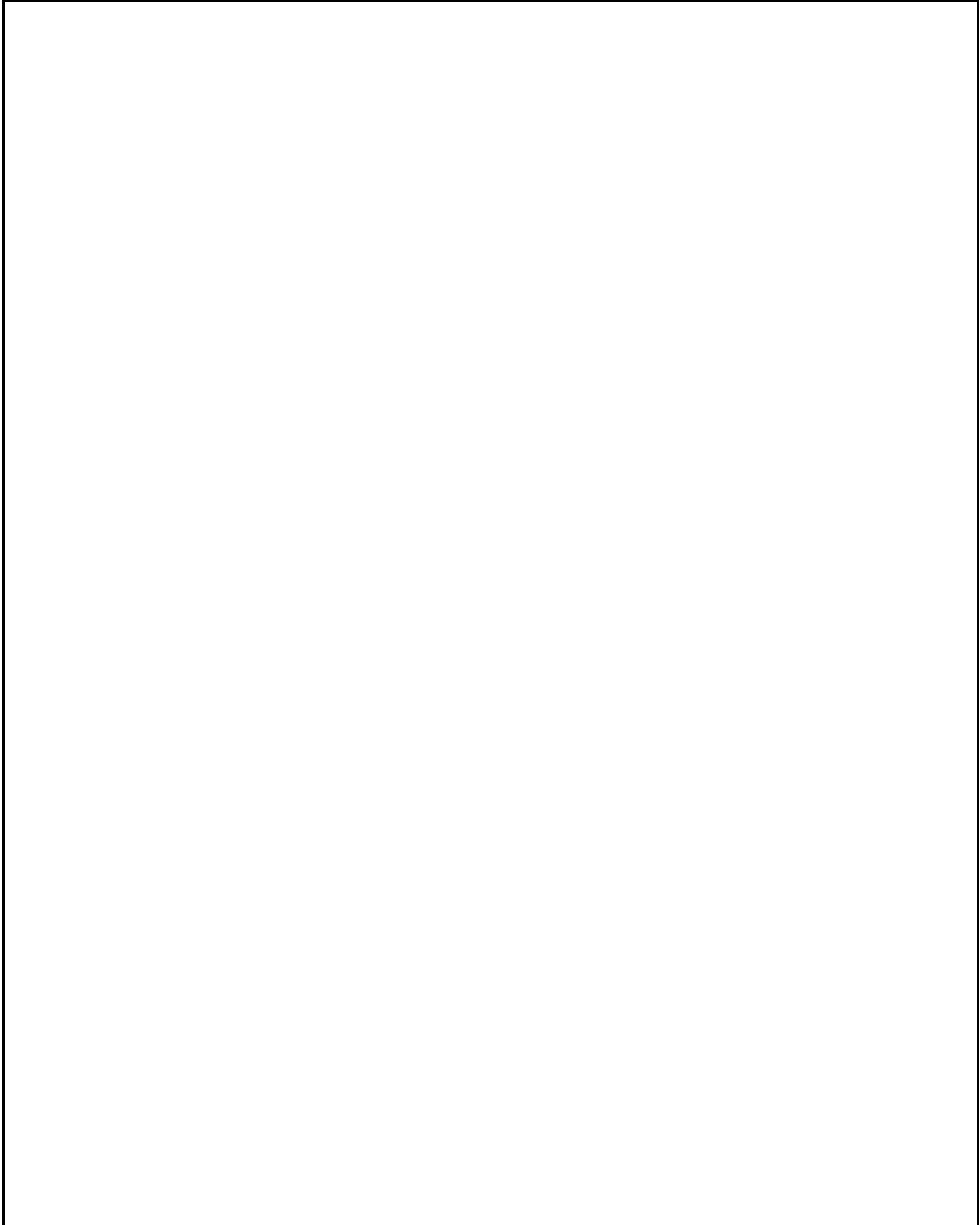
"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."



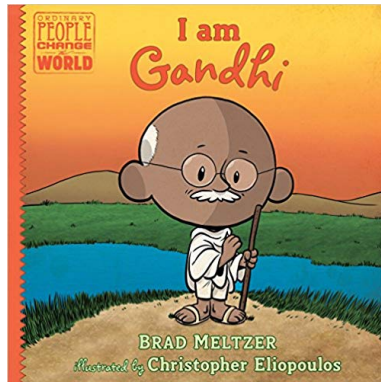
2. Explain why you chose Gandhi's quote:

3. Draw a picture of what peace looks like to you. Think about how your experience from the meditation activity made you feel.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw their interpretation of peace.

Appendix:

Story on Gandhi



"Gandhi's peaceful revolution is the focus of this picture book, part of the inspiring New York Times bestselling biography series about heroes.

As a young man in India, Gandhi saw firsthand how people were treated unfairly. Refusing to accept injustice, he came up with a brilliant way to fight back through quiet, peaceful protest. He took his methods with him from South Africa back to India, where he led a nonviolent revolution that freed his country from British rule. Through his calm, steady heroism, Gandhi changed everything for India and

inspired civil rights movements all over the world, proving that the smallest of us can be the most powerful.

This friendly, fun biography series focuses on the traits that made our heroes great—the traits that kids can aspire to in order to live heroically themselves. Each book tells the story of one of America's icons in a lively, conversational way that works well for the youngest nonfiction readers and that always includes the hero's childhood influences. At the back are an excellent timeline and photos."

References:

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