

Lesson Plan: Love and Faith



based on a photo by Danny Lyon

SNCC activists singing in protest.

Drawing by Evan Bissell based on photograph by Danny Lyon.

Introduction

In partnership with **Beacon Press**, we've created a series of six lessons as a companion to *A Time to Break Silence: The Essential Works of Martin Luther King, Jr., for Students*. This lesson, Love and Faith, introduces students to the music and poetry of the modern African American Freedom Struggle and challenges them to create their own creative works.

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Subject: Art, English Language, U.S. History

Grades: 6-8, 9-12

Essential Question

King often spoke of the inherent role of love and faith within the movement for justice. Why did King believe love was at the center of the struggle for justice?

Lesson Activities

[Activity One: Poetry and Photography Gallery Walk](#)

[Activity Two: "Love"](#)

[Activity Three: American Poets](#)

Activity One: Poetry and Photography Gallery Wall



Drawing by Evan Bissell for Freedom's Ring

Instructions

1. Introduce students to **Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech** if you have not done so already. Using the index, ask students to choose the theme "**Love & Faith.**" Within this theme, ask students to explore "**A Baptist Preacher**" and "**Army of Love.**" Lead a discussion about the role of love and faith in the African American Freedom Struggle.
2. Next, ask students to read the "Love and Faith" chapter in ***A Time to Break Silence: The Essential Works of Martin Luther King, Jr., for Students.*** Ask students to choose three to six sentences that resonate with their life experiences.
3. Instruct students to break their chosen quote into phrases and then write each phrase on a strip of paper. Their writing should be large enough and clear enough so that it can be viewed from a few feet away. Put all phrases together on a large table.
4. Ask each student to choose a photo from the African American Freedom Struggle. Suggested sources for photos are listed in the materials section. Each student will then print or photo copy their photo and write a brief placard. The placard should include the photographer's name, title of photo, year, and a few sentences to describe the context.

5. Return to the strips of paper with quotes and ask students to choose four to five phrases to connect with their photo. Students will place their photo, phrases and placards together on a classroom wall. The phrases should be arranged in a way that creates a short poem directly underneath the photo and placard.
6. Invite students to do a gallery walk and listen to **Soundtrack for a Revolution**.

Materials

- [*Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech*](#)
- [*This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*](#), edited by Leslie G. Kelen
- **Soundtrack for a Revolution**, a documentary film and soundtrack by Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman

Activity Two: "Love"



During his 30 April 1967 sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, King urges America to repent and abandon what he calls its "tragic, reckless adventure in Vietnam."

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Instructions

1. How do you define love? How do others define love? Ask students to seek out and bring to class poetry, literature, or quotes by famous individuals about the definition of love. Lead a discussion and create a class definition of love. Add your class definitions of love to the gallery walk.

2. Read the information and watch the interviews on *Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech* on the themes of "Love and Faith" and "Tactics of the Movement."
3. Read King's sermon "Loving Your Enemies." How does King define love in "Loving Your Enemies?" How has his Christian faith contributed to his understanding?
4. Lead a class discussion. Is it possible for you to forgive a person who hates you or has caused you harm? Is it possible for you to love a person or group of people who have caused harm to others? What does it take to end a cycle of hate?

Materials

- *Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech*
- "Love and Faith"
- "Tactics of the Movement"
- "Loving Your Enemies"

Activity Three: American Poets

Instructions

1. Lead the class in a study of African American poets, such as Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, and Zora Neale Hurston. Identify and discuss literary elements used by these poets.
2. Return to King's words from the selections in the chapter on "Love and Faith" in *A Time to Break Silence: The Essential Works of Martin Luther King, Jr., for Students* and *Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech* theme of "Love and Faith." Think about the literary devices utilized by King. Ask students to find examples of metaphor, simile, descriptive language and biblical references.
3. Ask students to add poetry to the gallery wall from poets studied in class.

Materials

- *Freedom's Ring: King's "I Have a Dream" Speech*
- "Love and Faith"