Lesson Plan

Adapt this one-period lesson plan for any grade level and follow it with a simple and powerful service project on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The reflection brings learning and service impact together.

Anticipatory Set: (10 minutes)
Write this quote on the board: “We only fear what we do not understand” -Author Andrew Smith
Questions for discussion:

- What are some things we fear? (war, people we don’t know, spiders, failure, bullies)
- What is an example of reducing fear by increasing our knowledge? (ex., I was afraid of water, so I learned the skills and practiced swimming.)
- What is the difference and relationship between fear and hate?

Part One: (10 minutes) Discuss the concept of being open to people who are different from us.
1. Share a personal example of when a first impression changed with experience or when you got to know something or someone.
2. Discuss how a frightening incident may cause us to fear or hate people or groups of people.
3. Help students to make the connection that first impressions and fear come from limited experience or lack of knowledge. When we personally know more about something or a group of people, it’s difficult to feel fear or hate.

Variation for older students: Revisit the original quote and challenge students to write a new inspirational statement (bumper sticker or button slogan) that says the same thing in their own clever words.
Examples: “The more you know, the less you fear” or “knowledge = love”

Variation for younger students: Brainstorm ideas of Random Acts of Kindness kids can do to bring a smile to someone’s face. Go to the website https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/ for ideas.

Part Two: (5 minutes) Give students time in small groups to read aloud and discuss the meaning of the following quotes of Martin Luther King, Jr.

| “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” | “I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” | “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.” |
| “Life's most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” | “The time is always right to do what is right.” |
| “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” | “Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.” |

Part Three: (15 minutes) Tell the class that two students from Purdue University took the above quotes to heart and experimented with the impact of giving compliments and sharing kindness. Watch two videos and be ready to talk about the impact of kind words on a community.

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Have student groups look at the King quotes above again and identify words from the quotes that are reflected in the project of the Compliment Guys. Discuss the following questions in small groups or the whole group:

1. What words from the quotes were reflected in the project?
2. What was the impact of their service project?
3. What similar project could you do to share the message of Dr. King and open the hearts and minds in your community?

Service Project for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

This service project may be started in class and completed on Monday, January 16, either with the class or, if your school has the day off, students may complete it with friends and family.

Project Overview: Student teams bring a decorated poster into a public area, and use words, love, and light to unite people in the community.

Ask the students to replicate the Compliments Guys project in their school or in their community.

Procedure:

- Provide poster board and markers. The students design a poster to spark kindness and connections with diverse people in their community. They may make a poster that offers free compliments or contains an inspirational quote. Encourage ideas that reflect their community.
- Together they brainstorm ideas for things to say and do while they hold the poster.
- Discuss and plan what locations in the community will be good for this kindness experiment.
- Decide how they will capture the impact of their experiment. Suggestions: pictures, video, counts of people, interviews, a narrative of people’s reactions, or a blog.
- Talk through all of the elements and be sure students are prepared to carry out their plan on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day whether you have school or not.
- On Monday, January 16, 2017, students take their posters out and implement their plan.

Reflection:

Follow the project with a brief reflection on January 17, 2017.

1. Discuss the impact of their project as partners, small groups, or whole class.
2. Students write a paragraph reflection connecting their project to the messages in one or more of the quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr.
3. They compile the pictures, data, and narrative into a form to share. Give them a place to share their reflection.
4. Share the reflections with Learning to Give and a national audience. The TeachOne initiative connects teachers across the country with others who completed this project.

Follow-up: Discuss what they’d like to do next to continue growing love and driving away hate in their community.