

WS23 HIGH SCHOOL Lesson Plan

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Title: The Statue

Subject: Injustice, Racism, the Importance of Community and Creating Change

Length of Lesson: Three Class Periods (May vary depending on class times)

High school

Introduction: The song, “The Statue”, written and performed by Michael Johnathon, shares an incredibly important message. The video expands even further on this message and delivers in a very powerful way, the fact that racial injustice still exists in our world today. It is very important that we begin to teach love and acceptance of all. Michael is doing just that with this powerful song. It is our hope that youth will consider these words and what they view in the video, and begin to take steps to create positive change in their environments. This set of lessons is designed specifically to share the message and importance of treating all with compassion.

The STATUE is NOT a song about literal statues ... it is about the symbols of racial violence, injustice and the political divide remaining between people and races, black and white, conservative and liberal in America. It is a lyrical condemnation of prejudice and racism and the hurt it causes. The point is simple: unless you solve the reason the statues were put up in the first place, bringing them down will accomplish nothing.

The video opens with the words of Abraham Lincoln who set the template for the new America, the new society ... and ends with the words of Martin Luther King Jr who shows that we really haven't achieved that goal of peace between communities. The video uses bold imagery to show the foolishness and injury of racism. The confederate flag, a symbol of hurt to many, is used as a tool of comfort, there-by removing its power as a symbol of hurt.

The film is about a confederate woman protecting a black child at the height of a Civil War battle. The child is injured and as the woman runs out of the 1862 cabin she enters 2019 to see the issues that injured the child are STILL being fought with violence. Nothing has been learned and instead of helping, people take pictures with their cell phones. In the end she lays the lifeless body of the child at the feet of the statue as a statement against the violence and hurt she sees.

THE FOUNDATION OF RACISM:

“If you can convince the lowest white man he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice you’re picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he’ll empty his pockets for you.” As explained by President Lyndon B. Johnson during an interview with reporter Bill Moyers

"You hung your soul from the limb of a tree ..." conjures up the hatred between the races, but it is NOT about hanging slaves. It is what the white race did to THEMSELVES by those acts of violence. They may have hung a black man's body ... but they actually hung their own souls, their own consciences from the limb of those same trees.

"You might pull it down but the rope remains around the neck of Robert E. Lee ..." makes the poetic point that pulling down a statue does not remove the REASON it's there. We learned in Charlottesville VA that a piece of rock, a carved image of marble, is not as important as the anger and emotion it represents.

Objectives:

National Social Studies Standards

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies

National English/Language Arts Standards

- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**
 1. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
 - 2.
- **Range of Writing**
 1. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences

National Music Standards

- Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- Evaluating music and music performances
- Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
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Technology Standards

- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of computers and applications as well as an understanding of the concepts underlying hardware, software and connectivity
- Create presentations for a variety of audiences and purposes with use of appropriate transitions and animations to add interest
- Comply with the district's Acceptable Use Policy related to ethical use, cyberbullying, privacy, plagiarism, spam, viruses, hacking, and file sharing
- Make strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding

Materials List:

- Video Viewing Access to view clip of Austin City Limits
- Computer Access

Activity 1: Begin by watching video of "The Statue". The video is quite powerful and the goal is to share the message of how important it is to tear down wall of hatred and end racism and violence. After watching the video, have students first write down their own thoughts in a journal format. Then, once students have had time to write their thoughts.

Introduce three prominent figures that have lead the world in decreasing hate and leading civil rights movements. Suggested figures include: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Abraham Lincoln. Questions to include to prompt the student's critical thinking: 1.) What are the symbols of racism and hate you see in the video?

2.) What is significant about using the rebel flag as a source of comfort and laying the child at the feet of a statue?

Activity 2:

- For this activity, students will research one of the following civil rights leaders: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Abraham Lincoln. Students will design a digital poster to demonstrate their key achievements and accomplishments.
- The tool to design the poster is: [Posterini](#)
- Through research of their chosen civil rights leader, students will design a poster that highlights their message, achievements and accomplishments.
- The poster should be artistic and also include accurate information that relates to the historical figure, which require students to look up related information.

Poster Design for Students:

Historical Figure/Civil Rights Leader: _____

Description of Their Life, Message and

Achievements: _____

Artistic Design: _____

Presentation: _____

Sources: _____

Poster should include the following:

- **Description of Historical Figure/Civil Rights Leader**
- **Factual information**
- **Increase the audience's understanding**
- **Well-organized presentation**
- **Clear Information**
- **All sources and images are accurately documented and referenced**

Reserve computer lab time so that students can work on their digital poster design.

Provide examples to students.

Activity 3: (optional) Students will share their posters in small groups. This will give students the opportunity to work on presentation skills, while also learning from their peers.