

WS23 MIDDLE SCHOOL Lesson Plan

April Ballard, M.Ed, BS



Curriculum Design by April Duckworth, M.ED

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) Grade Level: 7th & 8th Grade

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 where 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:

- To understand the purpose of writing music to share a message
- To understand writing using metaphors
- To understand the historical aspects of the civil rights movement

Standards:

English/Language Art Standards

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words

Music Standards

- **Understanding the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts**
 1. Describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music

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

Materials List:

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