

Lesson Plans that Work

Racial Justice Lesson Plans for Young Adults

Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

| Lesson One Theme | Becoming Beloved Community Path | Scripture 1 | Scripture 2 | Way of Love Practice |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Beloved Community | Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community | Genesis 1:1-31 Focus: 1:26-27 | 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 13, 22-27 | Pray |

Prayer

O God, you made us in your image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family. Take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts. Break down the walls that separate us. Unite us in bonds of love. Work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth. We ask all this so that all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne in your good time. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*
 – Modified prayer for the Human Family Book of Common Prayer p. 815

About Beloved Community

Philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce first used the phrase “The Beloved Community.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made the term popular and gave it a deeper meaning.

“For Dr. King, The Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian goal to be confused with the rapturous image of the Peaceable Kingdom, in which lions and lambs coexist in idyllic harmony. Rather, The Beloved Community was for him a realistic, achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence.

“Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.”

- from The King Center (<https://thekingcenter.org/>)

We are called to seek and be the Beloved Community.

You are a beloved child of God. We all are. As siblings in Christ, God calls us to live in community, respect each other, and value all of our uniqueness and commonalities. Together, with our God-given gifts, we are the Beloved Community.

Racist ideas allow us to think that some people are better than others. As children of God, we see each other as unique individuals created in God's image. As humans, we are all capable of manifesting gifts and weaknesses, but no one group is better than any other.

“The only thing wrong with black people is that people think there is something wrong with black people. The only thing extraordinary about white people is that people think there's something extraordinary about white people.” – *Dr. Ibram X. Kendi*

An anti-racist country is a country where no one sees anyone or any group as more or less. That is the Beloved Community God dreams and created for us. We need to do the work of realizing that community. It takes hard work, and it's often painful. If you're white, you might feel guilt and embarrassment. You might feel as though you've done nothing wrong. If you're black or brown, you might feel pain or anger. You might feel like these issues are not such a big deal or that people make too much out of racism.

Here are a few essential things to remember:

- The Beloved Community includes everyone.
- The Beloved Community excludes no one.
- The Beloved Community includes you and me, and people who don't think they're in it.

To help us become the Beloved Community, we follow a four-fold path. Each week, we will focus on one of the four paths: Telling the Truth, Proclaiming the Dream, Practicing the Way of Love, and Repairing the Breach. We will also identify which part of our Baptismal Covenant we are called to practice as related to the four paths.

Becoming Beloved Community Four-fold path:

Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community

We have not realized the dream God dreams for us, but we can proclaim it. When we see ourselves in the dream, the dream has a chance to be realized. We want to work hard for something in which we can see ourselves thriving.

Baptismal Promise

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
I will, with God's help.

Questions

- What does Beloved Community look like?
- What will people act like in the Beloved Community?
- What won't we see in the Beloved Community?
- How do we bring healing, reconciliation, and justice to the Beloved Community?

Bible Study

Scripture 1: [Genesis 1:1-31](#)

Scripture 2: [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)

Invite the group to read together the two scriptures and then discuss. Keep in mind that having different voices reading can help people hear and understand in new ways.

Questions:

- Read Genesis 1:1-31. What words or phrases stand out to you?
- Read Genesis 1:26-27. What surprises you about these passages? Notice and comment on anything you wish to share.
- Read the two verses one more time. What do those verses say about the Beloved Community?
- Now read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. What words or phrases do you notice?
- Read verses 22-27. What surprises you about those verses? Share any observations or realizations you have.
- Read verses 22-27 one more time. What do those verses add to your understanding of what the Beloved Community is like?

Activity: Understanding the Beloved Community

| Individual Activity | Group Activity |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Visit The Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community website. Start with Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are. Begin to identify which of the fourfold paths you feel called to right now. Read the activities, and choose one to start today.</p> <p>Links: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/beloved-community/</p> <p>https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/bbc_where_you_are.pdf</p> | <p>Read Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are. Identify which of the fourfold paths your group feels called to right now. Or, divide the paths among your group. Don't be afraid - begin! You're not alone.</p> |

Way of Love Practice

Pray <https://episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/practice/pray>

Dwell intentionally with God each day

Pray that God gives you the courage to do the work of racial reconciliation and justice. Make that your prayer this week. Use the opening prayer, closing prayer, or write your own.

Prayer

God, give us the vision to dream the Beloved Community and the strength to make it real. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Written by Miriam McKenney

Published by the Department of Faith Formation of The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2021 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

All rights reserved.