



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO ON BEING HUMAN DRAMA

This lesson's Big Ideas:

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- Part of being human is having a racial identity. When we say 'race' we mean many things, including skin color, hair and eye color and place of origin.
- While race is biologically an illusion, it has become 'real' as a social construct, and so forms a great part of our individual and shared human identity.
- Prejudice has its base in categorical thinking. Assumptions that we make about individuals based on a category into which we think they fit are often false and sometimes hurtful.
- Racism is a result of systematic combinations of racial prejudice and power.
- Unitarian-Universalism's first principle is that *all people have inherent worth and dignity*. Therefore, we commit ourselves to the struggle against hurtful prejudices in ourselves and racism in our world.

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.

- Charlotte Brontë

I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream ~ a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man's skin determines the content of his character; a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the dream of a country where every man will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality.

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

- Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero

Lesson Materials

- Situation cards for role playing (attached)
- Puppets (multicultural, mixed gender)
- Puppet stage
- Basket of colored slips of construction paper for drawing random teams.

YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 2-3 minutes

Take a moment to ‘check in’ using the Mirror Game. Everyone takes a turn making a really exaggerated face (gestures can be included, too) that expresses how they’re feeling this morning. The whole group mirrors each reflection. This should happen silently, taking turns until everyone has had a chance to check in.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE ROLE PLAYING: SPEAKING OUT IN FAITH

🕒 The entire session

- This activity gives kids a chance to do some impromptu acting in a series of role-play situations.
- Each of the situations has to do with prejudice, racism and speaking and acting out of a commitment to every person’s inherent worth and dignity.
- If the Journey Guide believes that the class can handle choosing their own groups, feel free to let them self-select. Each skit card indicates how many roles there are in the situation. If your class needs to have their groups assigned randomly, here’s a good way to do it:
Each child has a turn being the leader and drawing the first slip of colored paper from the basket. Everyone then draws a slip for themselves; if theirs is the same as the leader’s, they’ll act in this role-play. Keep passing around the basket until you have as many players as needed. Put slips back in the basket for the next round.
- We’ll role play these skits using puppets. Puppets allow kids to assume personae of different races and genders and encourages them to pretend beyond their own experiences and emotions.
- If any of the role-play situations is so good that they want to share it, encourage them to rehearse it and perform it for parents or pre-school visitors.

Wondering Together

After each skit, take a moment to process what happened.

- What was the best moment in that skit?
- Why did this character act that way? Say those words?
- How realistic was the situation and your puppets’ responses?
- How else might it have ended?
- Do you think you could act that way in real life? Why or why not?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words or something similarly hopeful from your own heart. Invite the kids to echo you every phrase or so:

We promise to see the rainbow of beauty in every human face.

We promise to honor every person's inherent worth and dignity.

We promise to work to weed out the prejudice in our own hearts and minds.

We promise to work to make the world more safe and fair for all.

We promise to see the rainbow of beauty in every human face.

A group of older students are putting on a play and our UU kid goes to the tryouts one day after school. A boy named Miguel shows up for the tryouts, too. Miguel is bilingual; his family moved to the U.S. from Honduras last year. He can read and speak English pretty well but he still has trouble pronouncing difficult English words and he speaks with an accent. Our UU kid overhears some of the kids who are organizing the play tell Miguel that only people who can speak English can try out for the play.

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: 2 play organizers, Miguel, and a UU kid

The class is having a bake sale to raise money for a trip. Most kids have brought in cookies, cupcakes and brownies. Nikhil has brought rasgulla, Indian sweet dumplings, that his grandmother made. Our UU kid overhears some kids say – loud enough for Nikhil to hear – “Yuck! Those look gross! Whose going to buy stuff from another planet!?”

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: 2 bake sale kids, Nikhil and a UU kid

In the hallway, a new girl is at her locker. Her name is Sadiqa and she is Muslim. Some of the other kids in the hall walk up to her and ask why she’s wearing “that stupid T-shirt on her head” and ask if she got a really bad haircut and wants to hide it. Our UU kid is standing at a locker a few steps away.

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: 2 kids at the locker, Sadiqa, and a UU kid

At the class holiday party, Andy Smith’s parents got cheeseburgers for everyone! Our UU kid gets a cheeseburger and is about to sit down with friends. Just then, Mrs. Smith asks Zach what he wants on his cheeseburger and he says he can’t have one because his family is Jewish and keeps kosher. He just asks for some chips. Mrs. Smith says that it’s mean for a family to keep their kids from enjoying all-American things like cheeseburgers. Andy starts to tease Zach for not being a real American.

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: Andy, Mrs. Smith, Zach and a UU kid

The class is throwing a big celebration for Columbus Day. In the middle of a play about Columbus’ landing, Susanna starts to cry. A UU kid near her tries to ask what’s wrong. She explains that her family is part of a native tribe and for them, it’s hard to see everyone celebrate Columbus Day, since his arrival was the beginning of hundreds of years of sad, difficult times for Native Americans. Mr. Collins, the social studies teachers, tells Susanna that she’s an American, too, and should celebrate this national holiday like everyone else in the class.

What does our UU kid do?

3 Characters: Susanna, Mr. Collins and a UU kid

Mee seems pretty happy with her score on first math quiz, until the substitute teacher says, “Well, a ‘C’ isn’t worth getting excited about. I thought you Asian people were good at math.” Mee’s family came to the U.S. from Laos a long time before she was born. She’s confused and sad about her teacher’s comments. A UU kid sits right behind her in math class. Mee crumples up the quiz and stuffs it in her desk.

What does our UU kid do?

3 Characters: Mee Xoua, the substitute teacher and a UU kid

At camp, the kids are picking teams to play basketball. They’ve got into an argument over which team gets an African-American boy named Randall. Both teams want him because they figure he’s great at basketball. Everyone’s so excited and upset over the argument that Randall can’t even explain that he doesn’t play basketball, he plays soccer. When one team finally gets him, he just walks away quietly. Our UU kid follows him to ask what’s wrong. The other kids are yelling, “Hey, how are we supposed to start our game?!”

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: Randall, two team captains, and a UU kid

An argument has just broken out during play rehearsal. The class is about to put on a play about Rosa Parks. During auditions, the best actress was Clara. One half of the group thinks that she should play the role of Rosa. The other half says that Clara *can’t* play Rosa because she’s a white girl and she has red hair! Our UU kid has been chosen as the director of the play and has to make a decision.

What does our UU kid do?

4 Characters: Clara, two kids involved in the argument and a UU kid