

Building the Beloved Community

Lesson 1: Creating a Covenant

9.20.2020

Objectives: Introduction to community, culture, and creating a learning covenant.

Materials: *youth should have a notebook and pen/pencil for every class, teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop.

Time allotment: suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select “gallery view” to see everyone else.
- Staff will attend to attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: Current Events Trivia (5 minutes)

Prompt youth to raise their hands to answer. One teacher reads questions aloud, another teacher watches to see whose hand pops up first. Once a youth responds, ask everyone else to put a “thumbs up reaction” if they agree or, if they disagree, any other emoji reaction. Confirm if the answer is correct. If the answer is incorrect, call on someone who disagreed to see if they know the answer. If no one guesses it correctly, then read the answer aloud. Repeat.

Questions:

(a) Which basketball star died in a helicopter crash this year?

[Answer: Kobe Bryant]

(b) On what date did the World Health Organization declare the coronavirus a pandemic?

[Answer: March 11]

(c) In which month did Prince Harry and Meghan Markle announce they were stepping down as senior royals?

[Answer: March]

(d) Donald Trump became the third US President to be impeached. Who are the two others?

[Answer: Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton. Note: Nixon resigned before he could be impeached.]

(e) In which country did a US drone strike in January? Bonus: Who was killed?

[Answer: Iraq ; Bonus: Qassem Soleimani, Iranian Quds Force top commander, was killed.]

(f) Which MN city council unanimously voted to defund the police and re-invest in community support and safety in June?

[Answer: Minneapolis]

(g) Which US sport sparked a historic boycott in support of Black Lives Matter this summer?

[Answer: Basketball / the NBA]

(h) Which film won Best Picture at the Oscars this year?

[Answer: Parasite]

3. Chalice Lighting

Light a chalice at your home, invite youth to light their own chalices and say together:

“We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from poet and civil rights activist, Audre Lorde)

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences [that divide us].”

4. Brief Check-in (10 minutes)

Begin a simple ritual for weekly check-in so that everyone’s voice is heard (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Community Time Activities (30 minutes total)

Where Do I Stand? (10/30 minutes)

(a) Ask youth to list numbers 1-11 on a blank sheet of paper.

(b) In response to each question, invite everyone to write down Lots, Somewhat, OR Barely.

- (c) Have a teacher read the first question from **lesson attachment 1a** (Where Do I Stand?). Don't screen share so youth can see everyone.
- (d) Once everyone has written a response, ask those who wrote down "Lots" to raise their hands. Then "Somewhat" to raise their hands and finally "Barely" to raise their hands.
- (e) Invite brief comments about why youth chose their answer.
- (f) Repeat for remaining questions.

Pair Share: Similarities & Differences (10/30 minutes)

Teachers pair up youth to be "chat buddies." Instruct youth to select their partner's name in the chat to write to them privately (if there is an odd number have a teacher participate).

- (a) Give each pair five minutes to identify:
 - Five things they have in common (e.g. lived in same neighborhood for over seven years)
 - Five things unique to each youth (e.g. I was adopted, home-schooled)
- (b) Open a Word document on your computer and **screen share**.
- (c) Ask each pair to share aloud 1-2 common things and take notes.
- (d) Then have each pair share 1-2 unique things and take notes.
- (e) Invite the class to notice how much similarity **and** difference is in the classroom.

Questions for Discussion (10/30 minutes):

- Having identified things in common and things unique to each, how can this information help to make everyone feel included in group discussions?
For example: If someone brings up a Harry Potter reference at an important moment in class discussion, but not everyone has read the books or seen the movie, is that okay?
 - What might we need to do to include everyone?
 - Do we have to set aside everything not shared by everyone in the class?
- What is the balance between sharing what is important to us, and understanding that it may not be important to everyone else?

6. Important Agreements (15 minutes)

Extend community sharing to discuss what community practices/agreements will help "learning together." Because this class is not just about learning new

information but learning about ourselves, how do we create a community where our best selves can emerge?

Open a Word document and **screen share**. Write down the agreements for everyone to see. **Save** the document to draw upon as needed in the future.

***Question to consider for this course:** The agreement to “assume positive intentions” and goodwill is vital for the work of racial justice and multiculturalism. But does that mean what others say/do out of good intentions will never hurt us?

- Are positive intentions (“I didn’t mean to...”) protection from all harm?
- Can we apply the same principle of “assuming positive intentions” when honest, critical feedback is given? (I.e. assuming critical feedback is offered not to shame us but to request change in behavior or language.)
- What do you think about Unity Church shifting from using the language of “safe space” to “brave space”? Does one help achieve the other? Which one?

***Important agreement for all Junior High youth:** youth (and teachers) are asked to attend Unity worship every Sunday morning from 10:00-11:00am, ideally with their families.

***Important agreement for virtual learning:** youth (and teachers) are asked to use as much interactive technology as possible to be fully present (e.g. have video on, unmute to speak, use the chat when prompted).

7. Home Assignment

For next week’s class, please ask youth to plan to show (1) a picture or object that describes or connects to an important family tradition and share (2) a story of a family member that has stuck with them over the years.

8. **Extinguish the chalice**, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

9. **Leave zoom breakout classroom:** click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”