

Religions of Star Trek

Lesson 6: The Enemy, Part 1: “Know Thy Enemy, Know Thy Self.”

Star Date 3.14.2021

Objectives: Explore various “enemies” of the Federation, how they reflect events in our current human history and how they relate to UU principles.

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop, login to Unity’s YouTube account.

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 take attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: Two Facts and One Dream (5 minutes, begin while waiting for everyone to arrive)

Have each youth think about two *factual truths* about themselves plus one thing they *imagine being true* about themselves. They should be able to describe the three things in three sentences (keep it short). Have one youth share aloud then invite everyone else to write in the chat what they think the sharer’s “dream” was. Take turns until everyone has shared. (This is a spin-off of two truths and a lie.)

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 leader of nonviolent civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi)

“It is easy enough to be friendly to one’s friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.”

4. Brief Check-in (5 minutes)

Continue weekly ritual/check-in (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Introduction: “Know Thy Enemy, Know Thy Self” (5 minutes)

Teacher summarizes: Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese military strategist and author of *The Art of War*, said “If you know your enemy and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles...if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.” He was talking about a strategy for winning wars, and knowledge is critical to success. But what if the enemy is yourself?

One of the things that happen in many science fiction stories is that the enemy is often a creation or reflection of our own human history, current events, or aspects of human relations. The Star Trek writers were not afraid to employ this approach when they wrote stories and characters in the Star Trek series. It gave them a chance to explore issues without being directly political and comment on human characteristics without being directly confrontational.

Though the central aim in the Star Trek is to peacefully explore the galaxy, there seems to be no end to conflicts that humans find. Today we are going to take a quick look at two of the more famous Star Trek “alien enemies” and explore how they reflect who we are as a human race.

6. Klingons: From Foe to Friend (15 minutes)

Teacher asks: What do you know about Klingons?

Teacher summarizes: Klingons first appeared in the Star Trek Original Series in 1967. Their look and warrior characteristics suggested “orientalism.” Memories of the Japanese during WWII were still fresh, and the Vietnam War was ongoing. These events colored how the writers created this race as enemies of the Federation.

(a) Screen share (with audio) OS episode “Day of the Dove”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1SHxFAEjEk> (2:52 min)

Later when Star Trek movies came out in the 1980s, and then with NG, Klingons had changed. They were still warriors, and their culture still rough and violent; but writers gave them more positive characteristics and a culture rooted also in honor and loyalty. In NG, viewers were introduced to Worf, the first Klingon serving as an officer in Star Fleet. Klingons had gone from enemies to allies.

(b) Screen share (with audio) NG episode “A Matter of Honor” in which Riker temporarily serves aboard a Klingon ship as part of an exchange program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBg3uBGHCWg> (3:34 min)

Klingons have become so popular that they now have a complex cultural history and their own real life language.

Questions for Discussion:

- What purpose do you think it served to show early Klingons with an Asian appearance?
- Why do you think that changed?
- How does the change from foe to friend relate to real history and life?
- A common Klingon phrase is “It’s a good day to die!” What does that say about Klingon belief and how they face death? Is that different from humans?

7. Romulans: The Cold War (30 minutes)

Teacher asks: What do you know about Romulans?

Teacher Summarizes: In many ways Romulans have a similar history to Klingons. They first appear in the OS as a mysterious, aggressive race that look just like Vulcans. (The two races are believed to have the same ancestors.) The Federation knows very little about them at first, except that Romulans view humans as invading their space territories. For the writers of the OS, the Romulans played the sci-fi equivalent of the Communists during the Cold War.

Question for Discussion:

- Who can explain what the Cold War was?
- Is what happened then still relevant today?
- How do you think the Cold War affected our society?

The Federation’s interaction with the Romulans was never an outright war, but rather a “cloak and dagger” game of spying on each other and testing strength.

(a) Screen share (with audio) OS episode “Balance of Terror”: The enterprise encounters a Romulan ship and sees what Romulans look like for the first time. It causes trouble for Spock, who looks similar, and Kirk finds a connection to the Romulan Captain: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsLxO7-7e0o> (STOP AT 3:03 and go to next clip) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGn948_PXTU (3:29 min)

(b) Screen share (with audio) OS episode “The Enterprise Incident”: Kirk and Spock run a spy game in order to steal Romulan technology: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wD8h-N1_TE (3:16 min)

The relationship with the Romulans in the OS was somewhat more thoughtful than later during the NG series. Though the pattern of secrecy continues in the NG, when the Romulans re-emerge from isolation behind the Neutral Zone, they are much more antagonistic towards humans than before:

(c) **Screen share (with audio)** NG episode “The Defector”: Picard and the Enterprise run afoul of more spy games as the Romulans try to create an opportunity to start a war with the Federation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAGGEw4TcFY> (4:47 min)

Questions for Discussion:

- Why do you think relations with Klingons became friendlier while relations with Romulans did not?
- What historical event(s) happened in the late 1980s that may have influenced the NG writers? (*Hint: Iran-Contra, Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 Over Lockerbie*)
- Why do you think the Romulans don’t just outright start a war?
- Why doesn’t the Federation just go in and destroy all its enemies?
- If the Federation is like a UU community, which of the seven principles comes into play when dealing with these “enemies”?

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:** wait until all youth have left, click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”

Viewing clips, in order of sequence:

Klingons:

- OS episode “Day of the Dove”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1SHxFAEjEk> (2:52 min)
- NG episode “A Matter of Honor” in which Riker temporarily serves aboard a Klingon ship as part of an exchange program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBg3uBGHCWg> (3:34 min)

Romulans:

- OS episode “Balance of Terror”: The enterprise encounters a Romulan ship and sees what Romulans look like for the first time. It causes trouble for Spock, who looks similar, and Kirk finds a connection to the Romulan Captain:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsLxO7-7e0o> (3:42 min; STOP AT 3:03 and go to next clip) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGn948_PXTU (3:29 min)
- OS episode “The Enterprise Incident”: Kirk and Spock run a spy game in order to steal Romulan technology: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wD8h-N1_TE (3:16 min)
- NG episode “The Defector”: Picard and the Enterprise run afoul of more spy games as the Romulans try to create an opportunity to start a war with the Federation:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAGGEw4TcFY> (4:47 min)