

Power of Myth

Lesson 9: Homecoming and Revealing Our New Names

1.2.2022

Objectives: Explore last phases of the hero's journey in our film texts, and reflect on homecomings in youth's own lives.

Materials: Laptop/Youtube access, lesson attachment.

Time allotments: Suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 25 minute closing service. (end class around 9:50/11:50 to begin chapel 9:55/11:55).

1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins)

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- "Graffiti Wall" questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
 - ▶ What's the longest period of time you've spent away from home?
 - ▶ Which is harder for you, traveling away from home or returning home from travels?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

2. Silly Fun: Tree Pose (5 minutes max)

We say that Unity is a place where people lead lives of integrity, service, and joy. We say that at church we find and keep our balance. So in the spirit of yoga... who can stand on one leg the longest, in a tree pose, *with their eyes closed?!?!*



3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: "We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love."

Teacher reads: (from the poet, T.S. Eliot)

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning."*

4. Transformation and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (20 minutes)

Teacher introduces: First, we are going to engage the well-known Parable of the Good Samaritan. The day before Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, he delivered his last speech to a crowd of sanitation workers on strike in Memphis, TN. In that speech, he looked to this parable.

- Invite a youth volunteer to read aloud the attached parable of the Good Samaritan.

Questions for discussion:

- At the time, Samaritans were aware that they were seen as “less than” by Jews. But it was the Samaritan, not the two religious Jews, who helped the injured Jewish man. Why do you think the Samaritan helped the injured Jew? What is this parable saying about the nature of being on the margins of society?

(Hint: People who are excluded from dominant society can often provide a different perspective. This gift of vision can help reach across differences and lead to compassion for others who are rejected or discarded in their context.)

- How do you imagine the Jew, who was robbed and left to die, was changed after being helped by someone his culture considered, “the worst of the human race”?
- Similarly, how do you imagine the Samaritan was changed by this encounter?
- In his final speech, Martin Luther King Jr. makes a stunning observation about the parable: “I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to **me**?’ But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to **him**?’” MLK is inviting us to consider an important shift in perspective.

What’s an experience or relationship you’ve had which changed your perspective on something or someone?

- After such a transformational experience, what did it feel like to return to your regular life, to “go back home”?

5. Review the Hero’s Journey (25 minutes)

Teacher talks: Today, we are going to focus on aspects of the Hero’s return home.

Pass out the comic handout to review elements of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. Read aloud the final step Crossing of the Return Threshold: “The hero has been utterly **changed** by their journey, and things can never go **exactly** back to the way they were... In many ways, walking back through your own doorway is the hardest trip of all!”

Watch “homecoming” moments from several films. Whether or not youth have seen and know the full plot of each film, help youth begin recognizing characteristic elements of “homecoming” and “revealing our new names”:

- ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:***

After being in Narnia for a long time, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy go back through the wardrobe, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqrm6xyXmuA> (2:51 min, stop at 2:30).

- ***Moana:***

After returning the heart of Te Fiti, Moana says goodbye to Maui and goes back home, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVOq7RYqh7w> (3:32 min, stop at 2:30).

- ***Lord of the Rings: Return of the King:***

The four hobbits finally return home to their Shire, after the end of their long and perilous adventures, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3oXr7XVuhc> (2:54 min).

- ***Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker:***

After defeating Palpatine and celebrating with the resistance, Rey goes back to where she grew up, <https://youtu.be/o-xs54uByU8?t=32>, (3:00 min; set to start at 0:30, stop at 2:45).

Questions for discussion:

- When have you come home after a long trip away? What did it feel like?
- Have you ever NOT wanted to come home from an adventure? Why?
- Have you ever had a friend leave home and come back really different? What was it like for you?
- Can you think of a hero, from film/myth/real life, who isn't even recognizable when they return home? (*Can anyone connect this to veterans, returning home from war?*)
- Read again T.S. Eliot's quote from the start of class: "*We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time.*" What do you think it means to "arrive where we started and know the place for the first time"? Why can't we ever go home again?

6. **Announcement:** Next week is our closing celebration. Thanks for being with us this semester.

7. **Say goodbye until next time:** Extinguish the chalice, saying together: "*May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.*"

8. **Help clean up classroom** before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized

- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets

Viewing clips, in order of sequence:

- ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqrm6xyXmuA> (2:51 min, stop at 2:30).
- ***Moana:***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVOq7RYqh7w> (3:32 min, stop at 2:30).
- ***Lord of the Rings: Return of the King:***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3oXr7XVuhc> (2:54 min).
- ***Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker:***
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