



MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE
A SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER MUSEUM

Teacher's Guide



CROSSING THE LINE: HIGH SCHOOL RACE RELATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WRITTEN BY JEFF SAPP

learn from the past engage the present shape the future

LESSON: CROSSING THE LINE: HIGH SCHOOL RACE RELATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

RELATED EXHIBIT: CROSSING THE LINE

OVERVIEW

The *Crossing The Line* comic strip is presented behind the Point of View Diner. Dealing with inter-group relations, it is a sad story of violence and scapegoating with an unresolved ending.

OBJECTIVE

- Given the *Crossing The Line* comic strip, the students will be able to create and illustrate a peaceful resolution to the inter-group conflict utilizing King's Six Principles of Nonviolence. (See [Http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy#sub2](http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy#sub2).)



ENDURING UNDERSTANDING(S)

Students will take away some of the following enduring understandings:

- Changing demographics in our cities can help make our cities rich and diverse place to live, but they can cause conflict.
- Principles of nonviolence are applicable to our everyday lives.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S)

- What is the climate of our school?
- Is our school safe and inviting? How so?
- What are ways in which we can peacefully resolve conflicts?

KEY ISSUES/CONCEPTS

- Community
- The Power of Words
- Personal Responsibility
- Crossing Social Boundaries

For additional definitions related to this lesson see key *Vocabulary and Terms*.

SUBJECT AREA/CONTENT AREA CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, Civics, Peer Mediation Programs, Art

TIME & MATERIALS

- 1-3 classroom periods (or 1 period with art given as homework)
- A copy of *Crossing The Line* for each student
- Copies of the graphic novel templates provided for students to draw their resolutions

RESOURCES/LINKS

www.makebeliefscomix.com

PROCESS

STEP 1: READ THE STORY

Have students read *Crossing The Line* independently or as a group. Ask students if the story reminds them of anything going on in their own school community? How does the story end? Does it end peacefully? Why do you think the artist left the ending unresolved?

Be prepared for students who want to discuss the politics around Black History Month. Reinforce to students that “black” history is American history, it is relevant to everyone. Unless students can see the relevancy of black history and how it connects to their own lives, they will see February’s Black History Month as superficial. All students, no matter their race or ethnic background, can benefit from understanding the contributions of ordinary citizens like themselves.

STEP 2: KINGIAN NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

Introduce students to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s nonviolent campaigns and teachings, which emphasize love in action and stem from his “Six Principles of Nonviolence.”

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.’S STEPS OF NONVIOLENCE

STEP 1: GATHER INFORMATION

Learn all you can about the problems you see in your community through the media, social and civic organizations, and by talking to the people involved.

STEP 2: EDUCATE OTHERS

Armed with your own knowledge, it is your duty to help those around you, such as your neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers, better understand the problems facing society. Build a team of people devoted to finding solutions. Be sure to include those who will be directly affected by your work.

STEP 3: REMAIN COMMITTED

Accept that you will face many obstacles and challenges as you and your team try to change society. Agree to encourage and inspire one another along the journey.

STEP 4: PEACEFULLY NEGOTIATE

Talk with both sides. Go to the people in your community who are in trouble and who are deeply hurt by society’s ills. Also go to those people who are contributing to the breakdown of a peaceful society. Use humor, intelligence and grace to lead to solutions that benefit the greater good.

STEP 5: TAKE ACTION PEACEFULLY

This step is often used when negotiation fails to produce results, or when people need to draw broader attention to a problem. It can include tactics such as peaceful demonstrations, letter-writing and petition campaign.

STEP 6: RECONCILE

Keep all actions and negotiations peaceful and constructive. Agree to disagree with some people and with some groups as you work to improve society. Show all involved the benefits of changing, not what they will give up by changing.

STEP 3: GRAPHIC NOVEL/COMIC TEMPLATES

Show students the graphic novel/comic templates and tell them to write and illustrate a peaceful resolution to the conflict presented in *Crossing The Line*. Show them Example One as a model of what you want them to do. Encourage students to color all of the white spaces on the page so as to give their comic a rich, visual vibrancy. Some students will be comfortable with drawing and others won't, so invite them to try out online resources like www.makebeliefscomix.com where they can easily illustrate their written resolutions (see Example Two).

STEP 4: STUDENTS EXPLANATIONS

Have students explain what they've drawn and how it connects to King's Principles of Nonviolence. They can do this orally or in written form.

STEP 5: REFLECTION

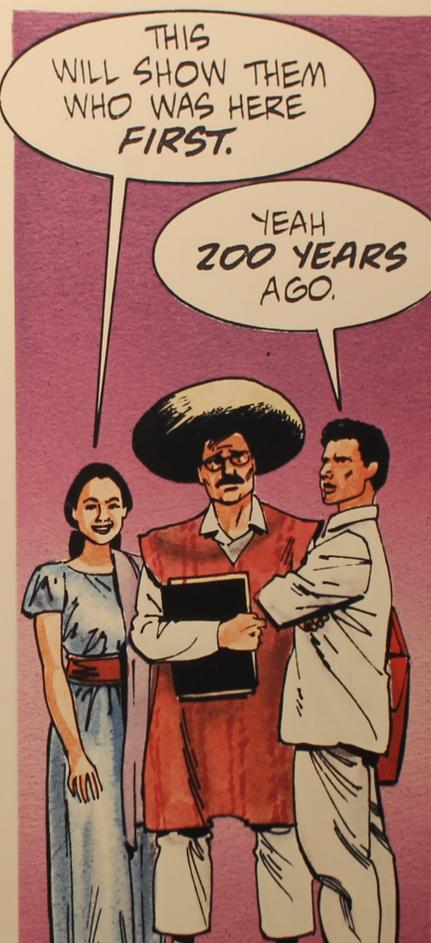
Have students look at Rev. Dr. King Jr.'s Steps of Nonviolence based on his Six principles once more and ask them the following questions:

- Can you think of any examples where you've seen people resolve conflicts well? What are they?
- What do you think people usually do instead of operating from these six principles?
- Now that you know the six principles, how will this help you in resolving conflicts differently?

STEP 6: CONNECTING LEARNING AND THE COMMUNITY – EXTENSION EXPERIENCES

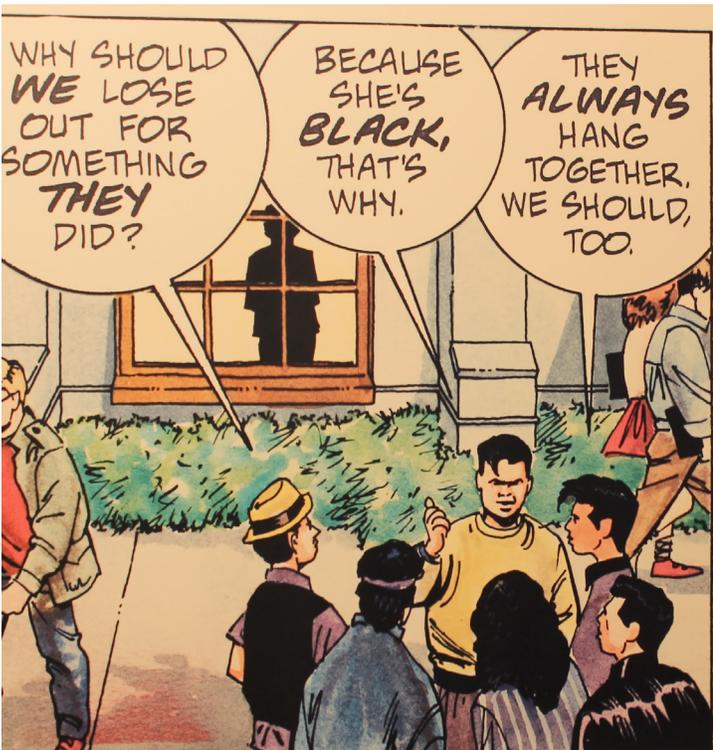
- Invite students to identify school or community conflicts and use Rev. Dr. King Jr.'s Steps of Nonviolence based on his Six Principles of Nonviolence to offer others a way through conflict to a peaceful resolution.
- Have students identify interpersonal conflicts they have in their own lives and apply the steps to seek resolutions.

CROSSING THE LINE















Example 1: Hand-drawn comic strip

