



UNION

Religious Worlds of New York • Curriculum Development Project

Common Ground in a Troubled and Troubling World: Lived Religion and Social Justice Struggles

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Abstract

In this project, students use provocative primary source documents to explore and analyze the connection between lived religion and the social justice movement in the United States and beyond. In order to stimulate dialogue and discussion, these images should be discussed and researched in class. The project can either stand alone or be embedded within an existing social justice or religious studies program

Target Audience:	Middle and High School Students
Length of Class Time:	Five 50 minute periods
Materials Needed:	Primary Source Documents – Included Below Primary Source Document Analysis Sheets – Included Below Access to internet for additional student research.

Students will:

- Analyze the connection between lived religion and the civil rights/social justice movement.
- Analyze primary source documents (letters, photographs, posters) using document analysis sheets. *All Document Analysis Worksheets have been adapted from [The National Archives, Teaching With Documents](#).*
- Learn the context and historical significance for each primary source document.
- Participate in dialogue and Socratic seminars exploring the ethical and moral reasons why people of faith historically have decided to align their lived religious practice with the social justice movement.
- Discuss common ground within each movement and well as differences in ideology and method.
- Conduct additional research to strengthen understanding.

FURNISH C.F. TELEGRAM RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL
COMMISSIONER OF RESERVE CREDIT BY PHONE

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

WHITE HOUSE

I LOOK FORWARD TO PRIVILEGE OF BEING PRESENT AT MEETING TOMORROW FOUR PM. LIKELIHOOD EXISTS THAT NEGRO PROBLEM WILL BE LIKE THE WEATHER. EVERYBODY TALKS ABOUT IT BUT NO BODY DOES ANYTHING ABOUT IT. PLEASE DEMAND OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT NOT JUST SOLEMN DECLARATION. WE FORFEIT RIGHT TO WORSHIP GOD AS LONG AS WE HUMILIATE NEGROES. CHURCH SYNAGOGUE HAVE FAILED. MUST REPENT. ASK OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO CALL FOR NATIONAL REPENTANCE AND PERSONAL SACRIFICE. LET RELIGIOUS LEADERS DONATE ^{ONE} MONTHS SALARY TOWARD FUND FOR NEGRO HOUSING AND EDUCATION. I PROPOSE THAT YOU MR PRESIDENT DECLARE STATE OF MORAL EMERGENCY. A MARSHALL PLAN FOR AID TO NEGROES.

CFM FURNISHED SPECIAL DELIVERY 3038 BWAY NYC

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ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE

IS BECOMING A NECESSITY. THE HOUR CALLS FOR MORAL GRANDEUR AND SPIRITUAL AUBACITY

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ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

DOCUMENT A



[DOCUMENT B](#)

No. 77.

From M. K. GANDHI, Esq.

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati,

March 2nd, 1930.

DEAR FRIEND,

Before embarking on Civil Disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.

I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

And why do I regard the British rule as a curse?

It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a State bordering on cowardly helplessness.

In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But, when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full Dominion Status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy.

DOCUMENT C



DOCUMENT D



[DOCUMENT E](#)



[DOCUMENT F](#)



[DOCUMENT G](#)

WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	
1	TYPE OF DOCUMENT:
2	UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS:
3	DATES OF DOCUMENT:
4	CREATOR OF DOCUMENT: POSITION TITLE:
5	TO WHOM OR FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THIS DOCUMENT WRITTEN?
6	DOCUMENT INFORMATION: A. List three things the author said that you think are important. B. Why do you think this document was written? C. What evidence from the document helps you know why it was written? D. Describe in what way this document “speaks” to the intersection between religion and social justice/civil rights movement in the USA. E. What questions do you have about this document?

STEP 1. OBSERVATION

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B Use the chart below to list people, objects and activities.

People	Objects	Activities

Step 2. Inference

A Based on what you have observed above, list 3 things you might infer from this photograph.

STEP 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find some of the answers?

DOCUMENT C: _____

WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	
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DOCUMENT D: _____

STEP 1: OBSERVATION			
A	What are the main colors in this poster?		
B	Are the message in this poster primarily visual, verbal or both? Describe.		
C	Use the chart below to list people, objects and activities.		
	Symbols	People	Slogans
STEP 2: INFERENCE			
A	Who do you think created this poster? Why?		
B	Who do you think was the intended audience? Why?		
C	Why was the poster created?		
QUESTIONS			
	What questions do you have?		

COMPARING DOCUMENTS C and D

How are Documents C and D connected?

Using information obtained from both documents create and inference between” lived religious practice” and the civil rights/social justice movement in the USA.

What questions do you have?

What steps can you take to find out more about this connection?

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COMPARING DOCUMENTS E and F

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STEP 1. OBSERVATION

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B Use the chart below to list people, objects and activities.

People	Objects	Activities

Step 2. Inference

A Based on what you have observed about what connections can you make between lived religion and social justice?

STEP 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find some of the answers?