



# Reading to End Racism of Boulder Curriculum Guide Middle School Lesson Plans

## **Pre-Set**

Topic 1: Who Am I and Where Do I Come From?

Topic 2: What is Racism?

## **Post-Set**

Topic 1: Combating Racism

Topic 2: Individual and Community Social Action

## **Reading to End Racism of Boulder, Inc. Collaborators:**

Boulder Public Library

Boulder Valley School District

Center for Diverse Communities

Native American Rights Fund

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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*Activities and Handouts Taken From Anti-Defamation League*

## Goals of a Racism Free Classroom

Students will:

1. Develop a common vocabulary for issues of racism including:
  - a. **ally**: One who stands up for the rights of oppressed individuals and groups
  - b. **oppression**: the act of systematically controlling the freedom of a group based upon prejudice.
  - c. **internalized oppression**: when oppressed groups enact oppressive behaviors upon themselves and others in their group thus doing the work of the oppressor.
  - d. **transferred oppression**: prejudicial behavior or harmful acts carried out by one oppressed group against another.
  - e. **prejudice**: prejudice is making a judgment about someone or a group without sufficient knowledge.
  - f. **racism**: any attitude, action or institutional structure that systematically treats people or a group of people as though they were lesser because of their race or ethnicity (skin, hair, eye shape etc...).
  - g. **cultural racism**: the practice of discriminating against an individual or group based upon their heritage or culture.
  - h. **institutional racism**: when practices of an institution benefit the people in power and withhold rights from others based on their race or ethnicity.
  - i. **racial pride**: have a sense of pride and a feeling of empowerment in regards to ones particular racial group.
  - j. **white privilege**: the unearned assets such as privileges, rights, luxuries, and freedoms that come with having white skin in our society.
  - k. **dominant culture**: a dominant group in a society which holds the institutional power. They are usually in the majority, but not always.
  - l. **dominated culture**: a cultural group whose freedoms are controlled by the dominant culture in a society.
  - m. **multicultural**: multicultural means many or multiple cultures.
  - n. **stereotype**: a stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences.
  - o. **diversity**: diversity means different or varied. The United States is made up of people from various backgrounds.
  - p. **bigotry**: bigotry is an unreasonable or irrational attachment of negative stereotypes and prejudices.

- q. **discrimination:** the denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions(employment, housing, political rights etc...)
- r. **culture:** the patterns of daily life learned by a group of people(food, religion, dating, arts, custom, holidays etc...)
- s. **scapegoating:** blaming an individual or group for something based on that person's or group's identity when, in reality the person or group is not responsible.

2. Develop the capacity to recognize and acknowledge prejudice and discriminatory behavior in themselves and others.
3. Develop and put in to practice the skills to confront prejudice and discriminatory behavior in themselves and others.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of democratic principles and of their own personal roles in making justice and equity a reality in the world around them.

## **Guidelines for Teachers**

### **Self Exploration**

Examine your own cultural biases and assumptions. Explore your perceptions and understanding of situations by developing an awareness of your cultural "filters." Share with students.

### **Comprehensive Integration**

Integrate culturally diverse information/perspectives in all aspects of your teaching. Consider moving beyond the constraints of a cultural history month to infusing multiple perspectives into all aspects of the curriculum.

### **Time and Maturation**

Allow time for a process to develop. Introduce less complex topics first, and create time to establish trust. Develop ground rules that allow for honest discussion within a respectful context. Recognize that the long history of mistrust between people in different groups will not dissipate quickly.

### **Accepting Environment**

Establish an environment that allows for mistakes. Since most of us have been unconsciously acculturated into prejudicial and stereotypical thinking, we may not be aware that certain attitudes are harmful to ourselves and others. Acknowledge that intolerant thinking will surface from time to time in ourselves and others. Model non-defensive responses when told that something you said or did was offensive to someone. Assume good will and make those assumptions a common practice in the classroom.

**Intervention**

Be prepared to respond to purposefully directed acts of bias. Students will carefully observe how you intervene when someone is the target of discriminatory and hate-based behavior. Silence in the face of injustice conveys the impression that the prejudiced behavior is condoned or not worthy of attention. Make it clear to students and their families that you will not allow name calling in the classroom. Explain the thinking behind “zero tolerance” when it come to prejudice and discrimination. Your appropriate and timely intervention is critical in establishing a safe classroom environment where all students can succeed.

**Life Long Learning**

Keep abreast of current issues and discuss them with students. Clip articles from newspapers and magazines and post them in the classroom. Let students know that you consider yourself a learner, and that you see yourself as part of the learning process.

**Discovery Learning**

Avoid “preaching” to students about how they should behave. Research indicates that exhortation is the least effective methodology for changing prejudice attitudes; in fact it often produces a result opposite from the desired effect. Provide opportunities for students to resolve conflicts, solve problems, work in diverse teams and think critically about information.

**Life Experiences**

Provide opportunities for students to share life experiences and choose literature that will help students develop empathy. Make your classroom a place where students’ experiences are not marginalized, trivialized or invalidated. Prejudice and discrimination have a unique impact on each individual. Students and their families develop a variety of coping strategies based upon the type and frequency of discrimination they have experienced. It is never fruitful to engage in a debate over who has suffered the most. Oppression is harmful in all of its forms.

**Resource Review**

Review materials so that classroom displays and bulletin boards are inclusive of all people. Insure that supplemental books and videos do not reinforce existing stereotypes. When you see such example in textbook, point them out to students and encourage students to think about them critically and to challenge them.

**Home-School-Community Connection**

Involve parents, other family members and the community in the learning process. Understand that families and the community members provide the context in which students are motivated to learn. We cannot view the school and the home or school and the community as isolated from one another; we must examine how they interconnect with each other and with the world.

**Pre-Set  
Middle School Lesson Plans  
Topic 1—Who Am I and Where Do I Come From?**

**Objectives**

- Help learner begin their thinking about differences through looking at their own family culture, customs and traditions.
- Help learner begin to think about how they have defined their own beliefs based upon values, perceptions and family modeling.
- Learner will examine the various attributes which make them similar to and different from other groups.

**Activity—Identity Masks**

Have student read the poem “We Wear the Masks” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. (Students may need help understanding the language). Help students understand the poem in the context of African American culture in terms of the masks they have worn in order to be accepted into American society.

Possible Questions:

- a. How do they behave around family (different members of their family)?
- b. How do they act at school?
- c. How do they act around friends?
- d. How do you present your culture, traditions and family heritage?
- e. How do they act when they are alone?

Help students make the connections between the concepts of the mask in the Dunbar poem in relation to African American Experience and then help student make the connection to the mask their wear in their own lives.

Tell students that they are going to create a mask which will represent all the different parts of their identify.

They can use a variety of materials for this activity (construction paper, paper plates etc...). For an interactive process for more mature students, have students construct masks using plaster of Paris. This is a process of molding the plaster to a peer's face. It involves students working in pairs and it will influence trust between individuals.

After the mold dries, students can decorate the outside of the mask to represent the view they present to the public. On the inside of the mask they can decorate to symbolize how they feel behind the mask.

Students should share the presentation of their mask with the rest of the class as a way to talk about the ways we portray ourselves that deny who we really are. Also you might address how sometimes the masks can hinder relationships and friendships.

**Pre-Set**  
**Middle School Lesson Plans**  
**Topic 2—What is Racism?**

**Objectives**

- The student will understand vocabulary and terminology around racism including: racism, stereotyping, scapegoat, hate, prejudice, discrimination, tolerance, bias, and assumption.
- The students will discuss what encourages racism.
- The student will understand the repercussions of racism in society.
- The student will understand the difference between fact and opinion.

**Activity--Understanding Terms**

Begin this lesson by writing the sentences below on the board. Have each student identify each statement as an example of **stereotyping, prejudice or discrimination**.

Third graders are all babies (*stereotype*)

b. We don't like the third graders (*prejudice*)

c. Let's not let the third graders play with us. (*discrimination*)

Review the definitions of the terms stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination with the class and then have them identify the statements below:

a. All teenagers shoplift (*stereotyping*)

b. I don't like teenagers (*prejudice*)

c. Teenagers aren't allowed in my store (*discrimination*)

After students have correctly identified each of the statements, add another statement as follows:

Teenagers are the reason why prices are so high.

Ask student to consider the following questions about the statement, using the following questions:

- a. What is the underlying assumption in this statement?
- b. How would you know if this information were accurate?
- c. What are some other possible reasons why prices might be high?
- d. Do you think it is fair to blame teenagers for high prices without more factual information? Explain your thinking.
- e. How might stereotyping lead to blaming?

Write the word “**scapegoating**” on the chalkboard or on chart paper. Explain that scapegoating is when people unfairly blame a person or a group of people for something when, in fact, the blame lies elsewhere. Saying that teenagers are to blame for high prices is an example of scapegoating.

Divide students into small groups and distribute the "Sample Scenarios" handout following this activity.

Have each group select a recorder.

Explain to students that they are to identify which of the concepts listed at the top of the handout are evident in each of the scenarios. Instruct recorders to take notes on the groups thoughts so they can share their findings with the whole group. (Consider reading and analyzing the first scenario together before having students proceed with other scenarios.)

After all groups have presented, have a whole-group discussion using the following questions:

- a. How did you feel working on this assignment?
- b. Did members of your group always agree on the answers to the questions that accompanied each scenario? If not, why do you think there might have been different perceptions about each scenario? How was your group able to reach agreement?
- c. Do you think that stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and scapegoating are ever fair? Explain your thinking.
- d. Do you think scapegoating takes place often? If so why do you think it happens?
- e. Who was hurt in the scenarios that you examined? Explain your thinking.
- f. If stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and scapegoating continue to take place in a community, what might eventually happen?

**Post-Set**  
**Middle School Lesson Plans**  
**Topic 1—Combating Racism**

**Objectives:**

- The student will understand the concepts of target, perpetrator, bystander and ally.
- The learner will practice skills in confronting racism in their everyday life.
- The learner will understand the affects of racism through sharing their stories
- The learner will understand the affects of racism through listening to their peers' stories.

**Activity—Defining Roles (Part 1)**

(The same activity can be use for all levels with adjustment of scenarios to make them more age appropriate.)

Tell students that you want them to think of a time when they had to meet many new people. For example, maybe their family moved and they had to go to a new school where they didn't know anyone, or perhaps they joined a new club or team. Have students remember how they felt during the experience. Ask students to recall what people did to make them feel welcome or what people did to make them feel uncomfortable

After students have shared some of their experiences, tell students that they are going to read a story about someone in a similar situation. Explain that you want them to think about how the story is an example of some of the things they studied earlier (expulsion, stereotyping prejudice etc. . . )

Have them read silently or aloud, " The New Girl"

**Questions:**

- a. How did you feel listening to this story?
- b. Do you think events like the one in this story really happen? Explain your thinking or give an example of an incident similar to Juanita's situation.
- c. Juanita says that she felt "invisible." What do you think she meant by that? Have you ever felt as if you were "invisible?" Describe the situation.
- d. Does this story include example of stereotyping? Prejudice? Exclusion? Explain your thinking.

Distribute copies of the attached chart to students and review the terms and definitions with students.

Target

Perpetrator

Bystander

Ally

Questions:

- a. What does the word "target" mean? Is there a target in the story? If so, whom?
- b. What is a perpetrator?
- c. Was there a perpetrator in the story? If so who?
- d. What is a bystander?
- e. Was there a bystander in the story? If so, who?
- f. What is an ally? What comes to your mind when you hear the term ally?
- g. Was there an ally in this story? If so, who and what did they do?
- h. Do you think most people at some time have been in one or more of these roles?
- i. Which of the four roles do people get to choose?
- j. Which of the four roles do people have no choice about?

In groups of 3-4, have students share experiences being in these different roles. Have all the groups discuss a time in which they have been a target.

- Next discuss when they have been a perpetrator.
- Next discuss when they have been a bystander.
- Next discuss when they have been an ally.

Work to get the entire class to discuss each role for the group before moving on to the next type of role.

Questions:

- a. How did you feel sharing a story with your classmates?
- b. How did you feel listening to other people's experiences?
- c. Which roles were easier or more difficult to talk about?
- d. What are some examples that students in this school are targets of prejudices and their unfair acts in this school?
- e. Why do you think people stand by when unfairness, bullying or other hurtful acts occur?
- f. Why do you think some people decide to be an ally?
- g. What might some people need to help them move from being a bystander to becoming an ally?

### **Reading For Middle School:**

Extend activity by having the students read "The Leo Frank Story" and apply the roles to this story.

After students apply the roles to the stories read in class, tell them that they are going to work on becoming better allies for people.

Have students work together in their groups to develop a role-play of approximately two minutes. They can either design their own original situation or they can select from

those listed below. You can also create situations that will be relevant to your school culture. Make sure everyone has a nametag that identifies which role they will play in the role-play.

After students have developed their role-plays have them act out the situations in their small groups, assuming the role of their nametag.

After practicing the role-play, have students take their nametags off and exchange them with someone else in the group. Using the same situation, have students act out the role-play in their new roles. (Tell students not to duplicate anything that they heard or saw in the first role-play, but consider other ways that people might behave in the same situation.)

After all students have had the opportunity to be in all roles, have students decide which one of their role plays to present to the class. After groups have decided which role-play they will present, have each group briefly explain the situation to the class and then act out the role-play for the class.

Questions for discussion after role-plays:

- a. How did you feel while participating in the target role? The perpetrator role? The bystander role? The ally role?
- b. Did participating in the target role influence how you acted when you were in any of the other roles?
- c. In the perpetrator role, was it difficult to play the role of someone who was unfair to others?
- d. As a bystander, did you find yourself thinking of something that you would like to say or do to interrupt the situation that was taking place? Do you think bystanders often think about what to say or do but don't follow through? What are possible reasons why they don't?
- e. Did your experiences in the other roles influence what you said or did when it was your turn to be the ally?
- f. What strategies were used in these role-plays to confront unfairness and prejudice? What are some other strategies that could be used to confront prejudice and unfairness?

Hand out: "Strategies to Confront Prejudice and Discrimination." Read aloud and discuss.

Read Text: "On Speaking Up for Each Other" handout. Discuss.

Personal Contract: Tell students you would like them to make a commitment to do just one thing differently in their everyday interactions with people. Give the "Personal Contract Agreement" and have them complete it. Have each students talk briefly about their commitment. Tell them you want them to post their agreement in someplace where they will see it every day.

## The New Girl

Juanita was new to the school; her family had only recently moved into the area. Because Juanita and her family were migrant workers, she was used to starting over in new places, but even so it was always hard to meet new friends and get used to new teachers. It was also difficult for Juanita to keep up with her studies because she moved often and because she had to care for her brothers and sisters when she came home from school while her parents worked.

As Mr. Borden introduced Juanita to the class, some students in the back of the room began to giggle. One student whispered loud enough for others to hear, "Look at that outfit! Does this girl get her clothes from charity, or what? Others joined in the laughter. Juanita knew the laughter because she had heard it many times before. She knew the kids laughed at her clothes because they weren't the latest style, and when they found out what her family did for a living she would be nicknamed "lettuce picker." It had all happened before. Mr. Borden paused for a moment while the giggling stopped and then continued by saying, " Let's all make Juanita feel welcome."

As the day continued, Juanita felt anything but welcomed. There was a group of girls who giggled every time they looked her way, and when it was time to divide into small groups to work on an assignment, no one in the group even talked to her; in fact, everyone acted as if she were invisible. When lunchtime came, everyone began running to the cafeteria. A few of the girls, who had been laughing at Juanita all morning, brushed by her and one of them said, as if to no one in particular, "Hope she knows there's no free lunch program at this school. This seemed to be the funniest thing the others girls had ever heard, but as they laughed and continued walking, one of the girls, named Stephanie, said, "C'mon, leave her alone, she hasn't done anything to us."

## Sample Situations for Role Plays

A new student has recently enrolled in your school. He speaks with an accent and wears traditional clothing from his culture that is very different from what most children in the school wear. Other students are teasing him, calling him names like “turban boy.”

One of your classmates is constantly being picked on because of her size. Today one of the kids is bullying her in the cafeteria, saying things like, “Give me that cupcake whale girl, you don't need to eat anymore,” while grabbing for her lunch.

You and a group of classmates are walking home from school. One of the kids in the group starts telling a joke about \_\_\_\_\_ (select a group) in front of your friend (who is from the targeted group).

Three boys go to the playground to play basketball. Connie comes and asks if she can join the game, saying she loves to play basketball. One of the boys starts laughing and making remarks about how girls can't play “boy sports” and tells her to “buzz off.”

The teacher announces that there will be a field trip the following week. A boy turns to one of the students sitting near you and says, “Well, you know that Billy won't be able to go because the trip costs money.”

## Being an Ally (Part 2)

Tell students that the purpose of this lesson is to examine the kinds of things that an ally might do, the motivations an ally might have, the possible consequences of allies' actions, and the possible consequences of inaction.

Ask students to define the word “consequences.” After they have discussed the meaning of the word, write “possible consequences of being an ally” on the board and have students consider what could happen as a result of being an ally. Encourage students to have an open discussion about possible negative and positive consequences that could result.

After students have exhausted the list of possible consequences of being an ally, ask them to consider “the possible consequences of not being an ally.”

List four topics on the board:

- a. Taking Action
- b. Motivations
- c. Possible Consequences of being an ally
- d. Possible consequences of not being an ally.

Next, divide students into small groups. Provide each group with pieces of chart paper and marker. Distribute one of the scenarios below to each group and instruct students to develop it together. Have each identify what action might be taken, what would be the motivation and possible consequences for acting *and* possible consequences for not acting.

Tell student that some thing that happened that could serve as an example in a larger setting was the burning of more than three-dozen churches, with predominantly African-American congregations, between January 1995 and May 1996. Two civil rights organizations, the Anti-defamation League, and the National Urban League, placed advertisements in news papers across the country encouraging people to write letters of support and send donations to help rebuild the churches. Thousands of people responded to the advertisements.

Distribute the "Letters to the Burned Churches" handout. Instruct students to read and listen to the actions people proposed.

Questions:

- a. How did you feel listening to the letter that people wrote?
- b. What were you able to learn about the people who wrote the letters?
- c. What are some of the things that people did to show they were allies to the people whose churches had been burned?
- d. How can being an ally, even to people you don't know, strengthen communities?
- e. What might have been a consequence had everyone ignored the situation.

## Scenarios

- a. One of your friends is always making jokes about people who speak a language other than English.
- b. Some of you classmates laugh when Katie reads out loud in class because she reads slowly and stumbles over some of the words.
- c. When teams are formed in gym class some of the kids say they don't want Leroy on the team because he's fat.
- d. Many of the kids in your class refer to students in the special education classes as "those dummies."
- e. You overhear one of your friends repeating a rumor about a teacher that you know is not true.
- f. The school staff is planning a field trip that you know many of your friends cannot afford to participate in.
- g. You hear your friends complaining that the Korean kids get all the academic awards.

## Post-Set

### Middle School Lesson Plans

### Topic 2—Individual and Community Social Action

#### Objectives:

- Students will examine possible actions that an ally might take.
- Students will consider possible motivations for becoming an ally.
- Students will learn the process of creating an action plan
- Students will learn how to initiate social action on an individual and community basis.

## Individual Action (Part 1)

Distribute the “Young People in Action” handout or have the handout prepared on an overhead transparency. After reading each young person’s story, have a whole-group discussion, using the following questions.

Questions:

- a. What problem or concern did \_\_\_\_\_ identify?
- b. What are some possible reasons why \_\_\_\_\_ decided to act on this problem?
- c. What action or actions did \_\_\_\_\_ take to address the problem?
- d. What type of skills did \_\_\_\_\_ demonstrate when he/she performed these actions?
- e. Even though \_\_\_\_\_ primarily worked alone, what kinds of support do you think he/she needed to make the project a success?
- f. What were the results of \_\_\_\_\_ actions?

Other Questions:

- a. Thinking about the definition of an ally, would you say that all of these young people were allies? Explain your thinking.
- b. What is meant by the term “role model?” How does someone become a “role model?” Give examples of someone you consider to be a role model.
- c. How do you think these students accomplished what they did?
- d. In what ways can a plan be useful when working on a project?

Explain to students that even though these students worked primarily alone and they didn’t have many resources, they were still able to accomplish a great deal.

## Community Action (Part 2)

Inform students that they are going to look at another example of action. This example is community action on a very large and public scale.

Label a piece of chart paper “Rosa Parks.” Below the heading, draw three columns and label them:

“What I know,

“How I know”

“What else I could learn?”

Ask students to say everything that they know about Rosa Parks and write the information in the first columns. Move to the second column, tell how they learned the

information, and then have students indicate what they might not know about Rosa Parks that could be important to understanding her life and accomplishments.

Example: **Rosa Parks**

- What I know?
- How I know?
- What Else I could Learn?

Questions:

- a. Did most of you know the same basic information about Rosa Parks? If so, why do you think that happened?

Tell students that in the next part of this lesson they will learn additional information about Rosa Parks and her role in the Civil Rights Movement. Distribute the “A Case Study in Community Activism” to students. Explain that as they are reading and/or listening to the information, they should think about how Rosa Parks’ accomplishments were the result of working with others.

Questions:

- a. How did you feel as you listened to the information about segregation and “Jim Crow” laws?
- b. Tell something that you learned about Rosa Parks that you did not know before today.
- c. How was Rosa Park’s work a continuation of work that was already underway across the country?
- d. Who were some of the people who paved the way for Rosa Parks’ actions?
- e. Who were some of the people that Rosa Parks worked with in her community?
- f. What were some of the tasks performed by the people who worked with Rosa Parks?
- g. How did the decision by so many people in the community not to use the buses help the cause? Do you think that the Montgomery Bus Boycott would have been as successful without the support of the majority of citizens?
- h. How did each action that was taken help to contribute to the successes of the Montgomery Bus Boycott?

### **Taking Action (Part 3)**

Begin this lesson by telling students that they are going to make a magic wand—a magic wand that they will pretend can make problems disappear or that can improve things in their school. (Have students construct the wand using the star cut out and attach it to a drinking straw. Students are welcome to decorate the wand any way they choose.)

Have students think about something they would like to see improve or a problem that would like to see solved in their school. On one side of the star, have students think about something that they would like to see improved in their school or immediate community and write their ideas in a few words. On the other side of the star, they should write their names.

After the construction of the wands, have students sit in a circle. Tell each person, one by one to wave his/her magic wand and say, "If I had one wish for my school it would be \_\_\_\_\_" (complete statement with what they wrote on their stars). Write down what the students say as they wave their wands.

After all students have identified what is on their magic wands, have students look at the list and identify areas of improvement that were identified by two or more people. In addition, point out suggested areas of improvement that were only identified by one student.

Explain that for the purpose of this lesson, the class is going to split up into groups of between 1 and 7 and focus on a particular problem that they would like to address through action. Give each group a marker and have each group identify a recorder. Each group or individual should select a problem from those listed during the wand exercise to put their energy towards.

### **Individual/Group Action Planning Process (Part 4)**

**Task 1:** Students are to reach consensus about which problem or concern the group will address.

- a. What are some possible reasons why this problem exists?

**Task 2:** Students are to brainstorm a list of possible ways to address this concern.

- a. What are some things that might be tried to solve this problem?

**Task 3:** Based on the interest and skills of the group members, students are to decide on one of the ways to address this problem.

- a. What jobs would need to be completed to solve this problem and who would be responsible for each task?
- b. Who else in the school or community could help with this problem?
- c. What else might be needed to solve this problem?
- d. How would we know if this problem had improved?

**Task 4:** Students are to complete the "Group or Individual Action Plan" handout identifying specific tasks that will need to be completed by each group member.