MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE
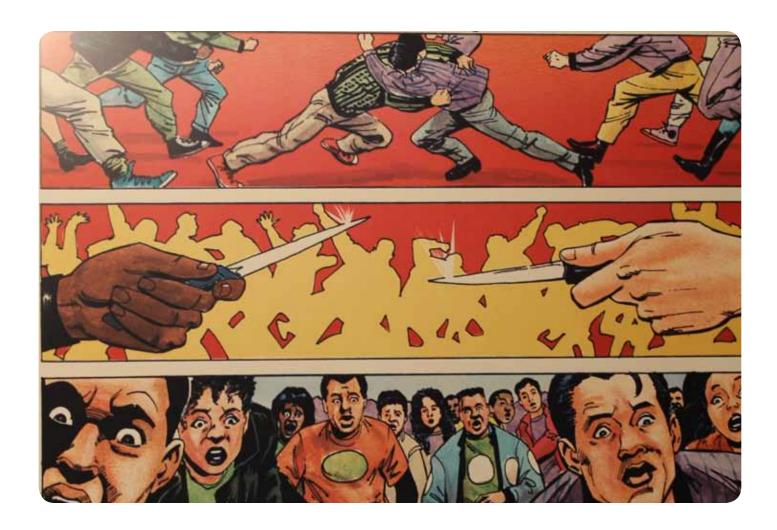A SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER MUSEUM

Teacher's **Guide**

CROSSING THE LINE:
HIGH SCHOOL RACE RELATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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 with an unresolved ending of violence and scapegoating.

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.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING(S)
Students will take away some of the following enduring understandings:
• Changing demographics in our cities can cause conflict and is also a major component of making our cities rich and diverse place to live.
• 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 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 available for students to choose from and draw their resolutions

RESOURCES/LINKS
www.makebeliefscomix.com

PROCESS

STEP 1: READ THE STORY

Have students read "Crossing The Line" independently or as a whole 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. Make black history 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. Instead, 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 Dr. Martin Luther King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings, which emphasize love in action and stem from his "Six Principles of Nonviolence."

PRINCIPLE 1: INFORMATION GATHERING

To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community or institution, you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.

PRINCIPLE 2: EDUCATION

It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstanding and gains you support and sympathy.

PRINCIPLE 3: PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Daily check and affirm your faith in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work to resolve the issue and for justice.

PRINCIPLE 4: NEGOTIATION

Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and plan for addressing and resolving them. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent, but call forth the good in the opponent. Look for ways in which the opponent can also win.

PRINCIPLE 5: DIRECT ACTION

These are actions taken to morally force the opponent to work with you in resolving the issue or injustice(s). Direct action imposes a "creative tension" into the conflict. Direct action is most effective when it illustrates the injustice it seeks to correct.

PRINCIPLE 6: RECONCILIATION

The goal of nonviolence is reconciliation. Through reasoned compromise, all sides of a conflict resolve the issue with a plan of action, where each action step moves them closer to the "Beloved Community". The focus is on the issue or injustice and not on the opponent. Thus, reconciliation includes the opponent being able to "save face".

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. One artistic tip to give students is that they be required 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 King's Six Principles of Nonviolence 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 King's 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 use the six principles to reflect on how they can find resolutions.

museum of tolerance